

A Father's Farewell

2nd Timothy

Unashamed To Suffer for the Gospel

Key idea:

Christians are not to be ashamed of the Gospel but must be willing to suffer for clearly proclaiming it and living a life of holiness in the midst of an unbelieving and unholy culture.

Key text:

2 Timothy 1:8–18

So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,⁹ who has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.¹¹ And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.¹² That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.¹³ What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you — guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.¹⁵ You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.¹⁶ May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.¹⁷ On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me.¹⁸ May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.

Key points:

1. Paul's central desire surrounds the Gospel, which he describes in verses 9-10 with several key ideas:
 - a. We are saved and called to a holy life, not because of anything we have done (9)
 - b. It is based on God's purpose and grace (9)
 - c. God's grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before time (9)
 - d. The Gospel was revealed in the coming of Christ our Savior (10)
 - e. Christ's coming and the Gospel destroys death and reveals eternal life (v10)

2. Paul commands Timothy to guard the precious deposit of the Gospel, following the pattern of sound teaching laid down by Paul, with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in all believers.
3. To guard the deposit of the Gospel there are two requirements:
 - a. We must not be ashamed of the Gospel
 - b. We must be willing to suffer
4. We may be tempted to be ashamed of the Gospel because it is considered foolish to the lost world.
5. We may be tempted to be ashamed of our brothers and sisters in Christ, especially if they are being punished for faithfulness to the Gospel.
6. Suffering is part of the faithful Christian life and ministry. Suffering for the Gospel has two main causes:
 - a. Suffering comes as we are ridiculed, ostracized, and persecuted for living a holy life in line with God's Word.
 - b. Suffering comes as we actively proclaim the Gospel to the lost around us.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's text and teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. When I look at the five aspects of the Gospel Paul gives in verses 9-10 (see key point 1 above), which do I think about the least? Which provides the most comfort to me?
3. Why do I think Paul takes time to describe the Gospel to Timothy (and us)?
4. Why is Paul concerned to remind Timothy to guard the deposit of the Gospel? What happens if believers do not consciously remind themselves of the Gospel regularly? What happens if church leaders do not guard the Gospel?
5. Am I surprised to think that Paul would be concerned that Timothy would be ashamed of the Gospel? How big a danger is it for me to be ashamed of the Gospel?
6. Can I think of a time I was ashamed to confess the Gospel to others? What were the underlying reasons I was ashamed to proclaim the Gospel? How can I overcome this so that next time I will be ready to proclaim the Gospel in similar circumstances?

7. Why were some people “ashamed” of Paul and his imprisonment? What made them want to distance themselves from Paul?
8. Why does Paul say that living a godly life will bring persecution? Why do people mock, ostracize, or openly persecute Christians for trying to live in line with God’s Word revealed in Scripture? Can I think of an example in my life where my attempts to live in a godly manner were ridiculed or led to some form of suffering?
9. Why is it the act of proclaiming the Gospel that brings ridicule, ostracization, and pressure to be quiet?
10. Why is it that often people don’t care what I believe, but only become upset if I act upon my belief, either by acting in a manner consistent with my beliefs or by sharing my beliefs with others? How do I see this in our present cultural circumstances?
11. Who will I call to encourage this week? What specific members of BRCC will I commit before God to pray for and call?

Preview of Next Week: 2 Timothy 2:1-7