

Letters To My Father
Week 22
2 Timothy 1:8-12
“Not Ashamed”

Introduction

For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, The Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. **Mark 8:38**

When this country of ours was founded, the framers of our constitution enshrined in its first amendment, the right of free speech. This means that every citizen of this country is allowed to speak his/her mind without fear of recrimination by the government. Men and women have fought and died to protect this right for us. And until recently, all speech in America was considered protected. People didn't have to agree with what was being said, which is usually the case for any speech. No matter what you say, someone out there won't like it, but as an American citizen, you still had the right to say what you believe. But sadly, those days are coming to an end.

Today, in The US we have the rise of what is commonly called “cancel culture”, meaning that people's opinions are being used against them, so they will refrain from speaking their mind. This has had a chilling effect upon many. For fear of repercussion many are choosing to keep their opinions to themselves so that they won't be persecuted, fired from their jobs, or even criminally charged with so called “hate speech”. And would you like to guess what speech is deemed the most hateful in America? (You do not have to guess, I will answer it for you.) Answer: Anything that *The Bible* refers to as sinful!

If you are a true Believer in Christ today, then you are considered a narrow minded bigot, if you present the truth of the gospel. And what is this truth? That all men are sinners, but Jesus died on the cross to set them free from sin. That whosoever will place their faith in Christ, repent and follow Him, will receive God's forgiveness and everlasting life. This message used to be referred to as “the good news”, but as a result of this perverted and adulterous generation, it is now referred to as “hate speech”. May God have mercy on us!

Although this new wave of cancel culture has caused many within the church to stop openly sharing their faith, may I remind us that this is really nothing new. In the Apostle Paul's day, Christians weren't just shunned for sharing their faith, they were burned alive or fed to the lions. For over three hundred years, the gospel was considered not only to be hate speech, but also, treasonous to the Roman Empire. And I am certain that as a result many who called themselves Christian were silent about their faith in order to save themselves from persecution. But thankfully, many were emboldened by The Spirit to share their faith in spite of hardship, and it is because of these few faithful followers of Christ that the gospel endures today. Where would we be right now were it not for those who were willing to lay down their very lives so that the gospel of Christ might be spread into all the world?

This gospel is so vital, so powerful in its ability to deliver those who hear it from death to life, that it will not, nor cannot, be silenced. We have an obligation to share with any who will hear this great message that we have been entrusted to deliver. We cannot let the devil with his wicked schemes hinder the gospel, for it is the only hope for mankind in the present and for generations yet to come. As Paul would say,

For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but One of power, love, and sound judgment. **2 Timothy 1:7**

So how can we be bold in our faith, in a world that is so hostile towards everything of God? We can go out in the power of The Holy Spirit, that's how. We need to be reminded, as Timothy was, that there is nothing to fear. Our God is in control, and we needn't worry about “fitting in” in this world, for we never will. We are *Sojourners* here, *Set Apart* for a holy calling, *Secure* in our salvation, whatever may come our way. Therefore, we will not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

I Am A Sojourner (vs. 8)

So don't be ashamed of the testimony about our LORD, or of me His prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God.

2 Timothy 1:8

I can only imagine where Timothy was when he received Paul's letter. Perhaps he was in his house with the shades drawn, living in constant fear of the knock on his doors from the armed soldiers sent to take him away. After all, everyone knew he was a close associate of Paul. And everyone knew that it was Paul who had sent him to Ephesus to pastor the church there. And now, Paul was in Mamertine prison awaiting execution. Timothy had to believe that he was next. It was only a matter of time, he must have thought.

Then came the knock at the door. Timidly he opened it to see a man standing there with a letter from Paul. He wondered what the message inside would be. Perhaps Paul was warning him to flee the city for parts unknown until the immediate danger had passed. How surprised he must have been to read those words, "**Don't be ashamed of the testimony about our LORD, or of me... Instead, share in the suffering...**" Those words must have been a bit terrifying to a man who wasn't exactly known for his intestinal fortitude! Paul wasn't encouraging Timothy to back down, but rather, he was directing him to double down!

So why are we supposed to stand firm against the opposition from this world? Why are we supposed to swim so forcefully against the tides that are arrayed against us? Because we do not belong to this world. We are only passing through. And no matter how we try, we will never fit in down here. I always cringe when I see those bumper stickers that encourage "co-existence" with this wretched world. It is impossible for the child of God to belong here. This is why the Scriptures tell us to take hold of eternal life (**1 Timothy 6:12**), for we will never find our place *in this world*. It is foreign to us, because we have been given a new nature that is not of this world.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of The Father is not in him. For everything in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's possessions - is not from The Father, but is from the world. And the world with its lust is passing away, but the will of God remains forever.

1 John 2:15-17

Just as Abraham was called away from his home in Ur and directed by God to journey to a land that God promised to show him, we have been called out of this world. We are merely sojourners here, and therefore, it is a waste of our time to try and "co-exist". We have been commanded to be pillars of truth in a world that doesn't like truth. And to follow Christ *is* to go against the grain. Remember that, the next time you are tempted to just blend in. It is impossible for us to blend in. We simply do not fit. So don't waste your time trying. Take your stand for Christ, for in the end that is all that will matter.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me will find it.

Matthew 16:25

So, say this out loud to yourself this morning: "*I am a sojourner in this world.*" We are strangers in this land, and will never belong, no matter what. This is exactly why the world will always berate the Believers in Christ; for dogs will always bark at strangers. So don't try to fit in with this world. Do not hide who you truly are, rather, join with those who suffer for the sake of the gospel and rely on the power of God.

I Am Set Apart (vs. 9-10)

He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His Own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. This has now been made evident through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, Who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

2 Timothy 1:9-10

The reason that we do not belong to this world is because we have been ***“called with a holy calling”***. The word *“holy”* (*hagios* in the Greek) means *“set apart”*. You have probably heard me say this before, but your toilet in your house is made of the same basic material as your fine china. The only difference is that one of them has been set apart for a noble purpose and the other, well, not so much. To be called by God to a holy calling is to be set apart from what we once were in order to fulfill a nobler purpose. That purpose is to glorify and magnify the Name above all names, by sharing His gospel.

Now, it is very important for us to understand that God chose us for this noble purpose ***“before the world began”*** (*vs. 9*). God, in His omniscience, has always known who would be called and chosen as His people. It did not surprise God when you got saved, my friends. He knew it was going to happen way before you were ever born! And because of His Own *“purpose and grace”*, He chose you to be His representative in this world.

Now, we know that *grace means to be given something that we do not deserve*. But what did Paul mean, when he said it was God’s purpose to call us. The Greek for the word rendered *“purpose”* in the text is *“prothesis”*, and it literally means *“proposal”*. God, before time began, intended, or had a plan (proposal), for those whom He called to be used for His glory. We are chosen in Him to be witnesses for Christ. This proposal was always *“hinted”* of, or foreshadowed, in the *Old Testament*. But when Christ came in the flesh, died, and rose again, He made this proposal manifest. In other words, when Christ came, he initiated the plan that was there all along. When you accepted Christ, you become a part of that foreordained plan, and The Holy Spirit filled you and enabled you by His power to fulfill it.

This calling has nothing to do with our worthiness, but rather, it was simply an act of God’s grace. We were chosen, not because we *were* good, but because God *is* good! And as such, we are to live our lives in gratitude for this great honor that we have been given. We no longer belong to this world. We are the sons and daughters of God. This world is not our home. We are merely passing through on our way to the promised land. And it is incumbent upon us to bear witness to Christ and His gospel, as we are on our way to the glory that has been promised to us.

And why can we carry out this mission without fear of what this world may do to us? Because our LORD has defeated death itself! Death, for us, is no longer a thing to be feared. This is why Paul could encourage Timothy to join with him in suffering for the sake of the gospel, as he himself awaited the executioner’s sword. Paul wasn’t afraid to die, for Christ has conquered death! Neither should we fear what can harm us no longer. Thanks to Jesus, we too can say:

Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, death, is your victory? Where, death, is your sting? **1 Corinthians 15:54b-55**

So, we can stand unashamed of the gospel, for Christ Jesus has already done the hard part. He has defeated death! I was struck this past week by reading the words of John Phillips in his commentary on ***2 Timothy***. He used as an illustration, the paralyzed man that was lowered through the roof to Jesus for healing (***Luke 5:17-26***). When Jesus saw the man, He said, ***“Friend, your sins are forgiven.”*** The Pharisees, who were present at the time, almost lost their minds, claiming that Jesus had blasphemed God by saying that He could forgive sins.

Jesus’ response to them was incredible. He asked them, ***“Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?”*** Then He calmly instructed the man to rise up from his bed and walk, and the man was instantly healed. Now don’t miss this. Which of those two things was in fact *“easier”*? In order to forgive sins, Jesus had to die on a cross and be raised from the dead! All Jesus had to do to heal the man was to speak the word. The former is definitely the more difficult of the two. So here is the point: We do not need to fear anything that this world can do to us, for our Savior has already done the hard part. He defeated sin, death, the grave, and hell itself. So, let us stand firm in the calling we have received, unafraid, and unashamed. We were chosen and set apart for this mission before the world began. This world has no power over us. So let us share in the suffering for the sake of the cross of Christ! So say this with me... ***“I am set apart for God’s purpose.”***

I Am Secure (vs. 11-12)

For this gospel I was appointed a herald, apostle, and teacher, and that is why I suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day. **2 Timothy 1:11-12**

Paul made it abundantly clear, that even under the sentence of death by execution, he would not deny the great calling that he had received from his LORD. He reminded Timothy that he had been appointed as a *herald* (*keryx* in the Greek), meaning *one who is vested with official messages, as from a king of magistrate*. He was an apostle, one sent as an ambassador to represent the authority of a king. And he was also a teacher, as it was incumbent upon him to teach all who would listen the very truth of God's Word. Nothing on this earth would dissuade Paul from carrying out what he considered to be his royal duty to the King of kings and LORD of lords. And for this reason, he was also called to suffer. When Paul was called by Christ, this is what was commanded of him:

...this man is My chosen instrument to take My Name to the Gentiles, kings and Israelites. I will show him how much he must suffer for My Name. **Acts 9:15b**

Paul had always known what was to be required of him. He knew that it was God's plan for him to spread the gospel and to suffer harm for doing so. But he never wavered from his duty, for he knew for certain that God would be with him. His faith never wavered. He knew that he was a stranger and an alien in this world, for he was set apart for God's eternal purpose. And he knew Whom he had believed.

There are so many famous verses in the Scriptures. You know the ones that I mean. They are the ones that we hear over and over again, and because they are often times quoted as "stand alone" verses, we think we know their intended meaning. But sometimes, when put in their proper context within the passages from whence they came, they can mean so much more. I cannot tell you how many times that I have heard **2 Timothy 1:12** quoted as a stand alone verse. **"I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed..."** But when we understand the full message of this verse, it becomes even more meaningful, and powerful.

Paul wasn't *ashamed* (*epaischynomai*) to be a prisoner of The LORD, for he knew Christ personally. He had met Him face to face on the Damascus road. And that meeting with the divine Christ was all that it took to convince Paul that he would be safe in His care. He became convinced that Christ was able to **"guard what had been entrusted"**. The Greek here is particularly vague. It should literally read in English, *"He is able to guard my entrustment."* Many scholars believe that Paul is referring to the calling that God has entrusted to him. In other words, God will see to it that Paul's mission is carried to its full completion. This seems plausible within the context of the text.

But "my entrustment" could also mean that Paul has entrusted himself into the watchful care of Christ Jesus, and he was, therefore, safe and secure come what may. I personally believe that the reason for the vagueness of the text is because both interpretations should be implied in this case. God will indeed finish the work that he has begun in us, and He will also keep us safe in Him to the very end. So, in other words, what God has entrusted to us (our calling) is secure, and what we have entrusted to Him (our very souls) is also safe. Safe until when? Until Christ returns to take us home where we belong!

We are sojourners in this world, set apart for God's purpose, and that purpose will be fulfilled, and we shall be secure in the arms of Jesus until He returns to take us home where we belong. This is why we must never be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, my friends. So don't be afraid to take your stand for truth in this world. Yes, many will hate you for it, but you will never fit in here anyway. You cannot belong to this world and belong to Christ at the same time. So, be willing to lose your life, in order to find it. And remember, we are not home yet! Say it with me, **"I am secure in Christ Jesus."**

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me... **Psalms 23:4a (KJV)**

TRUTH!!!