

Will Jesus Be Ashamed of You?

Are You Ashamed of God's Way of Life?

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We live in a society that has made people too embarrassed to stand up for any virtues and good principles. People are even too ashamed to differ with others on politics and religion, opting for passive indifference. Many are embarrassed in such meaningless areas of life as the clothing they wear, the vehicle they drive, or the beer they drink, or if they think others will look down on them for their choices.

In many cases their embarrassment has become so ridiculous that they are downright ashamed of their lack of having the latest and greatest material things. Or, they are ashamed to be thought of as intolerant, biased, or narrow-minded. The result is a society that stands for nothing good??only wickedness. We live in a society that feels no shame for its sinfulness.

Sue, our son Christopher, and I recently bought a used vehicle. This is always an eye-opening experience, in regard to the world. The process of buying a car today is one we all dread I am sure. Although our society recognizes the dishonesty of used car salesmen in general, I'm sure there are some who are forthright in their transactions, but they are very much in the minority. And that is what we found the week before last.

It's not that the occupation is wrong, but it is the corruption of the people involved in these dealerships and the conduct of individual salespeople that is shameful. It seems that many of these people are incapable of feeling ashamed about any of their selling techniques at all.

We went to several different new and used car dealerships. Everyone tried to play games with the numbers. The only way to get a straight answer was to keep pressing the salesman with the same direct questions over and over again.

I would say, "What's the best price you can give me on the vehicle?"

They would say, "What monthly payment do you want?"

I would say, "I want to know for how much you'll sell me the vehicle."

They would say, " We can get you a monthly payment of this amount."

I would say, "We'll get to the monthly payment later. I want to know what your bottom line is on the vehicle."

They would say, "We can get you into the vehicle for something that will fit your budget."

I would say, "I don't want a 30 year mortgage payment. I just want to know for how much you will sell me the vehicle."

This dialog, and similar ones were repeated over and over again as they tried to hide the fact that they were trying to take advantage of us. The thing that struck me about these salesmen was that they were not the least bit ashamed of their deceit and the other areas of deceit in the

transaction.

This Babylonish society is not ashamed of its wickedness, but happily wallows in it. For most worldly people, their feeling of shame comes when they are thought of as having any association with the true God—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They are unbearably ashamed if anyone thinks they agree with the teachings of the Bible. But God will one day openly shame them.

It's already beginning to happen as we see the sins of this nation and other Israelitish nations being exposed to everyone. Eventually, they will all be exposed and they will be ashamed. David expressed this reality in His plea to God to avenge his people.

Psalm 35:26 Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion who rejoice at my hurt; let them be clothed with shame and dishonor who exalt themselves against me.

David also expressed his desire in his plea for deliverance and forgiveness in Psalm 25, which coincides with the meaning of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Psalm 25:2-3 O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me. Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.

Sometimes members of God's church feel ashamed of God's way of life. We might call it embarrassment, but it is a type of shame. Younger adults and youth are especially pressured to feel this way by the bombardment from the world.

One of our daughters went to a United feast site in England this year, where she was able to spend some time with some other young people that you might consider to be a part of the church from both the U.K. and the U.S. She was very depressed and distressed over their attitudes toward God and His way of life.

Anytime she mentioned God or His teachings while in public they would caution her to be quiet lest someone overhear her mentioning something of God or His way of life. They were so ashamed to be associated with God's way of life, I have to ask the question—"Why did they bother to go to the feast at all if they are that ashamed of God's truth?"

I think I know the answer—only to have fun—freeloading off their parent's support at the feast. Many times the parents are afraid to leave them home alone because they are problem children during the year. So the children end up going with this attitude of being ashamed of the very belief that they are supposedly there for—worshipping God. They end up causing problems at the Feast. This does not just happen at United, we had similar problems in our Feast site as well.

In English we have various terms to describe an ashamed feeling: "feeling shame, put to shame, mortified, embarrassed, humiliated, chagrined, discomfited, disconcerted, distressed, guilt-stricken, and conscience-stricken," to name a few.

The state of mind of being embarrassed or ashamed of God's way of life manifests itself by the feeling of inferiority or unworthiness with regard to the world. We are restrained by this

anticipation of shame in a way that interferes with our commitment to Jesus Christ and His teachings.

Jesus Christ said He will be ashamed of certain people upon His return.

"How can we be sure we're not one of them?" Even though we attend with God's church, Are we sure Christ will not be ashamed of us?"

We will read Mark 8: 34-38. Keep in mind that this is parallel to Matthew 16: 24-27 and Luke 9: 23-26.

Mark 8:34-38 When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Mark 8: 38 is what I will call the emblem of this sermon.

According to the *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, copyright 1996, the term "ashamed" is: "Almost exclusively moral in significance; confusion or abashment through consciousness of guilt or of its exposure. Often including also a sense of terror or fear because of the disgrace connected with the performance of some action. Capacity for shame indicates that moral sense (conscience) is not extinct. "Ashamed" occurs 96 out of 118 times in the Old Testament. Hebrew bosh, "to feel shame", with derivatives occurs 80 times." So the Bible speaks of "shame" and "being ashamed" many times.

When Christ used the expression, "ashamed of Me and of My words," he was drawing a contrast with the attitude of willingness to lose one's life for His sake and the gospel's, as mentioned in verse 35. To be ashamed is to deny Christ in the hour of trial rather than to owe him even at the risk of death. It is to take one's stand with this sinful generation instead of with Christ. In simpler terms, it is to be friends with the world.

The term "adulterous" is used spiritually to describe unfaithfulness to God. In like manner, when Christ comes as Judge, He will be ashamed and will disown those who have disowned Him.

Christ hinted at one of the main reasons of the disbelief of the Jews. They saw nothing in the person of Jesus Christ that corresponded to the pompous notions that they had formed of the Messiah. If Jesus had come into the world as a mighty and opulent man, clothed with earthly glories and honors, He would have had a multitude of partisans, and most of them would have been hypocrites.

Christ's Words were another subject of offense to the Jews: the doctrine of the cross must be believed; a suffering Messiah must be acknowledged; and poverty and affliction must be borne; and death, perhaps, suffered in consequence of becoming His disciples.

Of Him, and of His Words, the world is, to this day, ashamed.

As the unbeliever refused to acknowledge Christ before other people, Christ said, so also would He refuse to acknowledge the unbeliever before God and His angels. That puts the ball in our court as far as whether we are going to feel embarrassed and be ashamed of God's truth.

Four results are seen in verse 38 for following the cause of Christ:

1. The disadvantage that the cause of Christ labors under this world. It is to be owned and professed in an adulterous and sinful generation; in such a generation the cause of Christ is opposed and run down, and those that own it, are exposed to criticism and contempt. That is a given in this world.
2. There are many who, though they agree that the cause of Christ is a righteous cause, are ashamed of it because of the reproach that accompanies the professing of it. They are ashamed of their relation to Christ, and ashamed of the credit they cannot give to His Words. They cannot bear to be frowned upon and despised, and therefore throw off their interest, and go down the stream of a prevailing apostasy. In their shame, they end up following an easier belief. They end up going off into some other church or belief system.
3. There is a day coming when the cause of Christ will appear as bright and illustrious as now it appears mean and contemptible; when the Son of man comes in the glory of His Father with His holy angels, the brightness of His Father's glory, and the Lord of angels.
4. Those that are ashamed of Christ in this age when He is despised, *He* will be ashamed of in that age when He will be eternally adored. Those who were not willing to share with Him in His disgrace now, will not share with Him in His glory then.

Commitment to the gospel of Christ provides a way for the power of God to complete us for God's purposes according to His will. That power is necessary for us to resist being ashamed at God's way of life.

Paul didn't mince words in his zeal to preach the gospel of Christ. He wasn't embarrassed or ashamed about his commission to preach the gospel at Rome. He didn't consider his task to be unworthy or to be a "pipe dream" in any way.

He was always ready to challenge the philosophies and religions in Rome that vied for the public's attention because he knew through experience that God's power is at work in the proclamation of the good news that is able to transform lives.

Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

The Greek word for "power" is *dynamis*. It has sometimes drawn out the reaction that the gospel is dynamite! This is out of place here because the emphasis is not on blowing false religions out of the way or blasting a trail of success for God's truth or even delivering people from habits they have been unable to shake off. Paul himself went on to explain in what sense "power" should be understood here in this section of Scripture. The stress doesn't fall on its mode of operation but on its effectiveness. It offers something not found anywhere

else—righteousness from God.

The Greek word *pisteuo* from which is translated the English word "believes," is a profound word. Belief in the content of the gospel is only part of its meaning. Above this it means, "trust or personal commitment"—to the extent of "handing over" oneself to another person. Though belief does involve response to a truth or a series of truths, this response is not mere intellectual assent but rather wholehearted involvement in the truth believed. If a person is not going to truly believe and be committed and convicted, then they will not have that wholehearted involvement in the truth. And the natural process in the human mind is to be embarrassed and ashamed when someone ridicules it.

To believe in Christ is to commit ourselves to Him. To trust Christ is to become totally involved in the eternal truths taught by Him and about Him in the New Testament and the Old Testament. Such total involvement brings moral earnestness, a dedication and consecration apparent in every aspect of life.

There are some things, regarding the gospel, of which a man like Paul might be tempted to be ashamed. Jesus was thought of by the Jews as a criminal hanged on a tree. The doctrine of Christ seemed plain. There was little in it to interest the scholars. Those who professed it were despised. And it was ridiculed everywhere. From the world's perspective, as it is today in our society, everything having to do with God's truth is negative.

Still, Paul was not ashamed of it. He was a Christian that was neither ashamed of the gospel nor a shame to it.

I Corinthians 4:9-13 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things until now.

The Jews had cast him off, and regarded him as an apostate; and by the wise among the Gentiles he had been persecuted, and despised, and driven from place to place, and regarded as the filth of the world, but still he was not ashamed of the gospel. We can very much expect to be treated the same way by the world. So why be ashamed of God's way of life when we can expect these things to happen?

People should be ashamed of crime and folly. They are ashamed of their own offenses, and of the follies of their conduct, when they come to look stupid. But they are not ashamed of what they feel to be right, and of what they know will contribute to their welfare, and to the benefit of their fellow human beings.

The Jews, by not believing on Jesus Christ, by not receiving Him as the promised Messiah, but trusting in others, have been disappointed, ashamed, and confounded, from that time to the present day. Their expectation is cut off; and, while rejecting Christ, and expecting another

messiah, they have continued under the displeasure of God, and are ashamed of Him.

On the other hand, those who have believed on Christ have, in and through Him, all the blessings of which the prophets spoke. Paul believed on Christ Jesus; and in believing he had life through His name. Through Christ, he enjoyed an abundance of grace; so that, being filled with that happiness that an indwelling Christ produces, he could cheerfully say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

This is something we need to reach for. We need to *not* be ashamed. We need to be able to speak, without doubt, about all that has to do with Christ and His Word. The power of God to His salvation is what enables us to truly believe the gospel. It is what enables us to not be ashamed of God's way of life.

Paul challenged the ministry to endure afflictions and not to be ashamed of the gospel. In the Greek text these verses are one continuous movement of thought. The five imperatives in this challenge contain the main point of Paul's reminder to Timothy: 1. Submit to the power of God. 2. Don't be ashamed. 3. Share suffering with brethren. 4. Hold fast by believing in faith. 5. Commit your life to God. These are things that Paul said would help us not to be ashamed.

II Timothy 1:8-12 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who 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, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

I Timothy 1:13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

In verse 8, Paul admonishes us not to be ashamed to bear our testimony to the doctrines taught by Jesus. Paul knew that it was possible that a young minister like Timothy may feel an occasional embarrassment at public pressure against the teachings of Christ, or may even come close to feeling ashamed under severe persecution.

This is not to say that his faith was so weak that he was in danger of being overtly ashamed of the gospel, or of shrinking back. Just that through experience Paul realized that Timothy's commission, as a minister of God, would set him up for severe persecution and strain. Paul sought to warn Timothy of the danger ahead of time. It seems that Paul was speaking from experience, although Paul's personality sure did not seem like the type of personality that would ever be ashamed of God's truth.

The testimony of Christ is the gospel in general, which proclaims Christ crucified, and redemption through His blood. In the sight of the world, there appeared to be reasons why a person would be ashamed of this—ashamed of Jesus who was crucified as a troublemaker. But,

when this gospel became the power of God to the salvation of everyone that believed, it was something to be exalted in. Whenever someone was converted, their whole mood and mind changed from being ashamed of the teachings of God, to being so thankful at having received it.

We have no reason to be ashamed either of the testimony of our Lord or of His disciples; if we are ashamed of either now, Christ will be ashamed of us hereafter.

In verse 8, Paul urges, "But share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God." Expect afflictions for the gospel's sake, prepare for them, count upon them, and be willing to firmly stand with the suffering saints in this world. Paul very clearly explains to us that we can expect these persecutions and these things to happen. He warns us that because we are human, we may be tempted to be ashamed of these things and it is something we have to very seriously fight and resist.

Don't just sympathize with those who suffer for it, but be ready to suffer with them and suffer like them (speaking of our brethren). If at any time the gospel is under attack, anyone who truly hopes for life and salvation by it will be content to suffer with it.

We share in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God in three ways:

1. We are likely to bear afflictions or persecutions when we obtain strength and power from God to enable us to bear them.
2. All Christians, but especially ministers, must expect afflictions and persecutions for the sake of the gospel.
3. These afflictions and persecutions will be proportioned according to the power of God resting upon us.

Paul encourages us that:

I Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

That is a guarantee from our Creator. Our participation in the afflictions of the gospel is according to the power of God.

If we are persecuted because we have held close God's truth, we have no need to be ashamed, but instead we should glorify God in our trial. Christ suffered by the Jews because He was holy; we suffer because we resemble Him. Peter's own shame at his betrayal of Jesus was probably in the forefront of his mind when he wrote this.

I Peter 4:12-19 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a

murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

What are some of the things we learn from this regarding not being ashamed? We are to regard God's truth as honorable in every way. We are not to be ashamed to be called a Christian. We are not to be ashamed of the doctrines of God's church. We are not to be ashamed of the Savior whom we profess to love. We are not to be ashamed of the society and fellowship of those who are true Christians, poor and despised though we may be. We are not to be ashamed to perform any of the duties demanded by God's truth. We are not to be ashamed to have our name cast out, and ourselves subjected to criticism and contempt.

We should be ashamed only of that which is wrong. We should glory in what is right, whatever may be the consequences to us.

Now, though we are not subjected to open persecution today (at least not at this point)—not to the same extent as Christians were in the apostles' time—we are frequently accused by the world because of our religious beliefs. Though the rack of the middle ages may not be used, and the fires of martyrdom are not kindled, we are still called to "suffer as a Christian."

In the near future we may be openly detested and despised. Our views may be regarded as bigoted, narrow, and severe. Derogatory nicknames, because of our opinions, may be applied to us. The same essential Spirit that was given to the early Christian martyrs will help us. We are never to be ashamed of God's truth, no matter what results may follow from our commitment to it. That brings us to the point that we have to be willing to accept death rather than to feel ashamed.

Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren.

Hebrews 2:10-13 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You." And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."

In verse 11, the phrase "He who sanctifies" does not merely signify one who sanctifies or makes holy, but the One who makes atonement or reconciliation to God. He that sanctifies is He that makes atonement; and they who are sanctified are they who receive that atonement, and, being reconciled to God, become His children by adoption, through grace.

As the Son of God sent from the Father into humanity, Christ does not hesitate to identify

Himself with His own. We are His brethren. Jesus Christ, who sanctifies; and believers, who are sanctified, are one. This is a further illustration of the unity of the Savior and the saved.

Psalms 22:22 I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You.

Isaiah 8:17-18 And I will wait on the LORD, who hides His face from the house of Jacob; and I will hope in Him. Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel From the LORD of hosts, who dwells in Mount Zion.

These Old Testament scriptures "show," that Jesus Christ and Christians are brothers. And He is not ashamed to call us brethren. To call us brethren is an endearing thought. The author says, God is not ashamed to be called their God by the faithful.

Hebrews 11:13-16 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Since they had such an elevated aim, He was willing to speak of Himself as their God and Friend. They acted and became His friends, and He was not ashamed of the relation that He sustained to them.

We should not think that God is ever "ashamed" of anything that He does. The meaning here is that the faithful act in such a way that makes it appropriate for Him to show toward them the character of a Benefactor, Protector, and Friend.

While imprisoned in Rome, the apostle Paul was confident that his release would come, but he didn't know if he would be physically released prior to his spiritual release. Paul looked to the unfolding of his Christian life and his ultimate hope of standing unashamed both before human judges and before Christ.

Philippians 1:19-20 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

While Paul's personal desire was to be with Christ, the need of the church convinced him that he would soon be released and continue working for their advancement in the faith. He did not believe he was going to die.

Paul viewed his deliverance as being accomplished in two ways. The first was the effective prayers of the Philippians on his behalf. The second was the support furnished by the Holy Spirit, here called "the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

He believed that the present opposition would work out for good because his fellow brethren were praying. As a result, the Spirit of Jesus Christ would provide a bountiful supply of that which was necessary for the existing emergency.

If we interpret "deliverance," in verse 19, in the broadest sense, we understand Paul to say that regardless of the outcome of his immediate physical circumstances, he had every reason to expect spiritual victory to be his. Paul knew this spiritual victory would ultimately come in the form of spiritual salvation.

The Greek term, *apokaradokia*, translated "earnest expectation" in verse 20, is an interesting word. Literally it means to look intently into the distance with outstretched head. Paul's expectation was twofold: That he would not be ashamed that is, be disappointed by the failure of divine help; that Christ would be magnified in his body. (The human body is the natural sphere for the outward expression of the inner man). The phrase, "Whether by life or by death" does not reflect indifference on Paul's part about his fate, but concern that in either case Christ must be honored.

In this time of waiting for the settlement of his case, Paul had a well-founded hope that he would not be ashamed. This is a broad statement referring first to his appearance before the authorities for the final disposition of his case. There may also be overtones of his ultimate appearance before Christ because he spoke of the possibility of death and of the advantage of being with Christ. Paul was mentally prepared for life or death—whatever the will of God was.

The earnest desire and hope that Paul had was not, primarily, that he might be released; but it was that, in all circumstances, he might be able to honor and glorify God by living or by dying—whatever decision that God made. He thought of God's honor as a much more important matter than to save his life. If we can arrive at that point, there is no way that we could ever be ashamed at Jesus Christ and His Word.

Life with Paul was the secondary consideration; the main thing was to stand up as the supporter of the way of God, and to maintain its truth. He had the confident hope that he would continue to maintain the type of courage characteristic of his ministry in the past. But knowing the fierce persecution he was facing, he was genuinely concerned to be able to withstand it. He knew that on his own that he couldn't, but he knew with God's Holy Spirit he would have the strength to withstand it.

The expression "with all boldness" in verse 20 conveys the thought of openness, courage, boldness, or confidence—whether toward God or people. Paul was hopeful and determined that he would do nothing of which he would be ashamed. Even in his upcoming heavy trials before the emperor, he didn't want to deny the truth of the doctrines of Christ. He was going to be firm to maintain its principles. Even the dread of death would not lead him to do a dishonorable thing.

We see (in Paul's writings) him going through a process, so to speak, of his feelings or desires to not be ashamed under any circumstance. Paul believed he was convicted; that he would not in any way shrink back from his conviction of God's truth. It was not just a preference to him. If his beliefs were just a preference he might be ashamed to contend for God's truth.

A preference is merely a greater liking of one thing over another; something preferred but not mandatory; merely a first choice, with other choices able to replace it.

In contrast, a conviction is the state of being convinced of the truth. The agent of conviction is the Holy Spirit; and the means of conviction is either the Word of God, or God's general revelation of His demands through nature and man's inborn consciousness of a sense of right and wrong. That inborn consciousness is the Holy Spirit in us. The purpose of conviction is to lead a person to repent of his sins and to turn to God for salvation and eternal life in the process glorifying God.

I'm not talking about the meaning of conviction as a law term, which is "being found guilty," but that heartfelt, deep, solid stance that we get when we are immovable by anything, including death. Conviction is the forerunner to repentance and is often accompanied by a painful sense of exposure to God's wrath. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, showing the heinousness of sin. Without conviction to God's truth we will be ashamed of God's way of life at times of pressure and persecution against us. Then, our hypocrisy is manifested for all to see.

Paul seemed to struggle with similar things as Job. The difference is that initially Job was contending for his life, but Paul was contending for Jesus Christ and His gospel.

Job 13:13-19 "Hold your peace with me, and let me speak, then let come on me what may! Why do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hands? Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him. He also shall be my salvation, for a hypocrite could not come before Him. Listen carefully to my speech, and to my declaration with your ears. See now, I have prepared my case, I know that I shall be vindicated. Who is he who will contend with me? If now I hold my tongue, I perish.

Back in Philippians 1:20 Paul says, "according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." Paul may be thinking in terms of his coming testimony before his imperial judges. It would not be as easy to give a courageous witness in those circumstances, apart from the help of the Holy Spirit. So we cannot expect to not be ashamed of God's truth without the help of the Holy Spirit under dire circumstances—unto death.

Paul was not relying on his own courage, but on the action of the Holy Spirit that would produce this result in response to his and the Philippians' prayers.

Paul's mention of his own devotedness to the service and honor of Christ is an example for us to do the same. He said, "According to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed." Notice, five areas of Paul's commitment mentioned in Philippians 1:20.

1. Our desire is that Christ may be magnified and glorified, that His name may be great, and His Kingdom come.
2. Our desire is that Christ is magnified in our bodies—in our lives. We present our bodies as a living sacrifice, and yield our members as instruments of righteousness to God. We are willing to serve His purpose, and be instrumental to His glory, with all our heart and soul.

3. It is for the glory of Christ that we serve Him boldly and without being ashamed of Him, with freedom and liberty of mind, and without discouragement. Our boldness is a reflection of the honor of Christ.

4. When we make Christ's glory our desire and purpose, we make it our expectation and hope. God willing, if we truly aimed at it, it will certainly be attained. If in sincerity we pray: "Father, glorify Your name," we can be sure of the same answer to that prayer that Christ received.

5. If we desire that Christ be magnified in our bodies, we have a righteous indifference whether it is by life or by death. By this right priority in our lives we make ourselves useful to His glory, whether by our works or sufferings, by our diligence or patience, by our living to His honor in working for Him or dying to His honor in suffering for Him.

The apostle John admonished us to abide in Christ so that we can have confidence and not be ashamed when Christ appears. Very simply, John explained what it means to remain or abide in Christ; basically, to practice righteousness.

I John 2:28-29 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

The English word "confidence" here is from the Greek word *parrhesian*. In Acts and in Paul's writings it describes the boldness given through the Spirit for witnessing. It's also a favorite word of John's to describe the freedom that belongs to us before God in prayer and at Christ's coming.

John strongly urged that we have a duty of perseverance and constancy in trying times, so that when Christ appears we can have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. Those who have continued with Him throughout all their temptations will have confidence, assurance, and joy, at the sight of Him.

On the contrary, those that have deserted Him will be ashamed before Him; they will be ashamed of themselves, ashamed of their unbelief, their cowardice, their ingratitude, and their folly in forsaking so glorious a Redeemer. They will be ashamed of their hopes, expectations, and pretences; and ashamed of all the wages of unrighteousness by which they were induced to desert Christ.

Verse 29 confirms that if we know that He is righteous, we know that every one that does righteousness is born of Him. If we live in righteousness, we also abide in Christ. If we abide in Christ we abide in the law and the love of Christ, and consequently in our allegiance and obedience to Him. This means we must *do*, or *work*, or *practice righteousness*.

We are renewed by the Spirit of Christ, after the image of Christ. We are created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has foreordained that we walk in them as Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:10.

To be embarrassed or ashamed of Jesus and His words has serious consequences. It's the equivalent of wanting to save our own physical lives at all cost. In the end, at the judgment, the

Son of Man, Jesus Christ, will be ashamed of that person.

Luke 9:26 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."

We can find comfort in the example of the faithful patriarchs. Because they trusted in God, they had no reason to be ashamed of God or themselves. Jesus Christ will be righteously proud of them as He resurrects them to eternal life.

Psalms 22:3-5 You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; they trusted in You, and were not ashamed.

Israel's praise came to God in His holy sanctuary as expressions of gratitude. It is partly this attitude of gratitude to God for the blessings He has given to us that steers us away from worldly embarrassment toward God's way of life.

The act of trust is mentioned three times in these verses. This trust was a confident hope in God's love for His people. A confidence that helps to keep us from being ashamed in dire situations of persecution.

The Hebrew word *buwsh* (boosh) from which comes the English word: "ashamed" (NKJ), "confounded" (KJV), or "disappointed" (NIV); has a root that means "to pale" (for example, when the blood drains from your face). By implication it means to be ashamed; also, by implication, to be disappointed. This is the feeling that those will have who have been ashamed of Christ and His Word.

We have no good reason to be embarrassed or ashamed of Christ and His Words. God's way of life produces: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, and other eternal blessings beyond our imaginations.

With God's help and God willing, we have the potential by trusting God to be delivered shameless from this evil world.

May Jesus Christ and God the Father not be ashamed of us, as we stand immovable in loyalty, faithfulness and dedication to Jesus Christ and His Words.