

Suffering, Shame, and the Gospel – 2 Timothy 1:8-12

2 Tim 1:8-12 – message is about suffering, shame, and the gospel

There are some things in life for which we should *rightfully* be ashamed, aren't there?

Like cheating on your taxes; Or cheating on your spouse

Or acting like a fool at a party; Or pouting about too little playing time in sports

All things for which we should rightfully feel shame

But there are others things in life for which we *shouldn't* be ashamed

Like doing our best in a race, but coming in last

Or showing up at a wedding rehearsal underdressed b/c you forgot to pack your clothes

Or living in a trailer b/c that's what you can afford

We shouldn't feel ashamed about those things

And according to Paul here, taking a stand for the gospel falls under the same category

When it comes to that he says, when it comes to the gospel . . .

Don't be ashamed (v8a-b)

8a – *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord*

B/c you have the faith, and the ability (gift), and the tools (power, love, and self-control) to fulfill your calling and ministry . . .

Don't be ashamed of the gospel – *the testimony about our Lord*

Don't be embarrassed about who Jesus is and what he did

You know it's good; You know it's profitable; Needed; Fruitful

So don't be afraid to *share* it, and don't be afraid to *show* it

- In some parts of the world, people are literally dying for the gospel – to spread it & get it
- Meanwhile, we're scared to even refer to it – let alone explain it or ask someone if they've embraced it

And Paul says – don't be afraid of that

Don't be afraid to speak up like Peter and John

Who said to the authorities in Acts 4 – you can do whatever you want to us, but we can't *help* but speak of what we've seen and heard

Is it easy? I think not

Even *Paul* asked for prayer to do it, and do it boldly as he ought (Eph 6:19-20)

It's *not* always easy; But it *is* necessary

Rom 10:13-14 – *Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?*

Without someone telling them – someone who's not ashamed?

They can't – they can't believe if they don't hear, and they can't hear if you don't tell

So don't be afraid to share it – easy or not; it's necessary

- And don't be afraid to show it

Don't be afraid to live what you believe, openly so

Like praying in public

Whether it's before a meal in a restaurant

Or on your knees in your driveway like we were as elders a few weeks back when we took a notion to meet at Darrell Henriksen's house

His neighbors were in their driveway talking with some friends or family . . .

And when it came time for us to finish our time of prayer, we knelt down like we normally do, and prayed

I want you to know that you have elders who are not ashamed of the gospel

Of sharing it, or showing it

- And neither are those who are getting baptized next weekend

45 people are going to stand up and unashamedly identify with Jesus Christ, and the gospel he embodies

Some of you however, have dug your heels in b/c you're ashamed of your faith in Jesus

And you run the risk of him being ashamed of you

Like he said in **Mk 8:38** – *"Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."*

If that's you, be ashamed no longer

The consequences are not good, and the command is quite clear here in 2 Timothy

- Share it, show it, and support others who do as well

That's what Paul's getting at in the middle of v8 – *don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner* [Christ's prisoner]

As a side note, that's an interesting way to put it, don't you think?

I think Paul is saying, that despite his imprisonment at the hands of Nero, Jesus is ultimately the one who constrains him

He's a prisoner of Christ first and foremost

If it weren't for him and his purposes, he wouldn't be there, Nero or not

So don't be ashamed that I am, he says

God is still on the throne; All is not lost; And Satan hasn't won

- Let me ask you something – when it comes to the gospel, are you ashamed or unashamed?

Are you gripped by the fact that it's the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, and that it *must* be heard in order to be embraced?

Do you share it, show it, and support it?

Make an honest assessment of your life, and if necessary, make a change – to share it, show it, and support it

When it comes to the gospel . . .

Expect to suffer (v8c)

8c – *share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God*

Suffering is part of the Christian life – it comes with the territory

In this age of narcissism – where it's all about me and it's all about ease . . .

We have this mistaken notion that when we give our life to Christ, it's going to be bliss from there on out – and it's simply not true

Yes there will be joy and peace and contentment and blessing – from both God *and* his people; totally

But there will also be suffering, hardship, and even persecution

Look at 2 Tim 3:12 – suffering is a part of the Christian life

Phil 1:29 – *It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake*

1 Pet 2:20b-21 – *If when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.*

Acts 14:22b – . . . *through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*

Jn 16:33b – *“In the world you will have tribulation.”*

1 Pet 4:12 – *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.*

- Suffering is part of the Christian life – the Bible says so, and the saints of old endured it
Like Paul himself, who endured terrible suffering for the cause of Christ
Or Timothy, who went on to suffer his *own* imprisonment, according to Heb 13:23
Or any one of the OT prophets like Jeremiah or Hosea or Elijah

And then there's the writer of Hebrews who cites a whole slew of people who were tortured for their faith, mocked, flogged, imprisoned, chained, stoned, sawn in two, killed, forced into poverty, mistreated, afflicted, and homeless

And that doesn't include the *last* 2000 years . . .

Where countless believers, just like you and I, have suffered for the gospel – expect it

- And when you do, make sure you see it rightly
It's not necessarily a curse, or Satan's attack, or God's discipline
Sometimes it's his *design*, or the thing he *uses* to –
Increase our faith (2 Cor 1:9); Multiply our reward (2 Cor 4:17)
Awaken the church (Phil 1:14); Draw attention to Christ's suffering (Co 1:24)
Re-position his people (Acts 8:1); Magnify God's power (2 Cor 12:9-10)

If you're a follower of Jesus Christ, expect to suffer – but see it rightly

It could be discipline, but often times it's God's design, or the thing he allows to accomplish his purposes

- And keep in mind that we're in this together
That's why Paul says – *share* in suffering; you're not alone
Misery *does* love company when it comes to suffering for the gospel, and it's found in the body of Christ
- But whatever you do, don't try to muster the strength to make it on your own
It says that we are to share in suffering *by the power of God*
That is, according to the strength *he* provides

That's great assurance

That though we will sometimes suffer for doing what's right, and spreading the gospel, and taking a stand . . .

God's strength and God's power is *available* and *sufficient* for our every need

Expect to suffer, yes – the Bible says it and the saints of old did it

But when you do – see it rightly, stick together, and draw on God's strength

So that you too, like the first disciples, can actually *rejoice* that you're counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name (Act 5:41)

When it comes to the gospel . . .

Get it right (v9-11)

Otherwise you suffer for nothing, and have cause for shame

And Paul helps us out on the spot here in 2 Timothy . . .

With **5 Great Truths About The Gospel**

B/c he well knows that there's no glory in suffering for what's wrong – look at v9

Now, that's a head full

And the first great truth about the gospel is that . . .

1. God does the saving

It's all him and none us; We play no part in it

Our good deeds have nothing to do with it – it's *not b/c of our works*

Nor do our good thoughts have anything to do with it

And there's nothing we can do to deserve it

It's solely a result of his *divine purpose and grace*

- When I was in college, I went sailing with my roommates on Lake Michigan
It starting getting really hot, so they suggested we jump in go for a swim
By the time I came up fr the plunge, the boat was already 20 yards away and going fast
And it dawned on me that they weren't going to stop and wait for us . . .
They were going to sail around in a big circle to pick us up

And by the time they did, I was spent; In fact, I thought I was going to die

And when it finally came around, it was all I could do to say help

And when I did – they reached down, pulled me out of the water, and saved me

That's exactly how it is with God and the gospel

We *do* nothing, and *can* do nothing, except humbly acknowledge our need for help . . .

And cry out for a Savior

And when we do, he joins us in the water, to bring us safely ashore

2. The gospel was not plan B

9 – God planned and prepared the grace of the gospel from *before the ages began*

Before the creation of the world; Before times eternal

As far back into eternity as your finite mind can fathom – God had a plan for our redemption

Before Adam and Eve were ever created, let alone sinned, God had a solution

Christ's life, death, and resurrection was not an afterthought

3. We're saved for a reason

9a – *God saved us and called us to a holy calling*

Which includes living for Christ and being his faithful ambassador

That's what 2 Cor 5:20 says – *we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.*

When God saved you, he reconciled you to himself . . .

And set you apart (*called you*) – to testify about what he did, and to live it out

Your life in Christ is not a card game – where you hide your hand

When it comes to the gospel, we're saved for a reason – to share it and show it

4. Jesus is the key

9c-10a – the grace of God is completely wrapped up in Christ; completely

His entire plan, the whole gospel, God's entire work of grace – revolves around Jesus

There is salvation in no one else . . . (Acts 4:12)

There *is* no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved

He *is* the way, the truth, and the life

And it's *only* through him that we come to the Father

He's the key – always has been, always will be

5. He conquered death and offers life

10b – *he abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*

That is, through belief in his death and resurrection on our behalf for the forgiveness of our sins . . . through that, the gospel . . .

He *abolished death* – in that the grave will no longer hold us, or separate us from his presence . . .

He abolished death and offers us life – full and immortal, never ending *****

No wonder we need to get it right – as God's ambassadors to spread the gospel, life and death literally hang in the balance

Which was one of the main reasons I'm sure, that Paul was willing to suffer as he did . .

Having been appointed to preach and teach the gospel as an apostle (11-12a), he was no doubt burdened for the souls of men and women

- And then he finishes his thought in v12 by saying . . .

“I suffer, yes” – *But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.*

When it comes to the gospel – don't be ashamed, expect to suffer, get it right, and . . .

Trust the Lord (v12)

That's the essence of what Paul says and models for us in v12

I suffer, and I'm not sure *how* this is all going to play out, but I know that it will

And I trust the Lord to do it

- That last phrase is sometimes translated – “what I've entrusted to *him*,” or “my deposit”
It's not that the syntax is vague or difficult, or the manuscript evidence sketchy
Rather, it can go both ways, and therefore depends on the context
And based on the context I'm inclined to agree with the ESV translators, b/c in v14 Paul turns to Timothy and says (14) . . .

It seems likely to me that there's a parallelism here, as opposed to a contrast . . .

Between what's been entrusted to Paul, and what's been entrusted to Timothy

God has entrusted something to both of them, that he's able to guard by his Spirit, until the day of Christ's return

And that something is the gospel – the message and means of salvation . . .

And their responsibility to share it – with the gifts and tools he's provided

The same gospel and the same responsibility that's been entrusted to *us*, as Christ's ambassadors

- And Paul is absolutely convinced that we don't have to worry about God accomplishing his purposes through that gospel
But that he *is able* and *will* safeguard what's been entrusted to us until Christ returns, when the message and means of salvation is no longer operative or needed

We don't have to concern ourselves with that – with the thought that God might not be able to pull it off, especially using us

His plan is sure; The outcome is certain

- What we *do* need to concern ourselves with, is the responsibility he's given us to speak up and be good ambassadors
And under no circumstances be ashamed when we do

We *do* need to come to that place, like Paul, where we say – it doesn't matter what happens to me, or what scorn I bear . . .

I'm not ashamed, b/c I trust the Lord; I *know* whom I believe

I *know* that he's the powerful one

Able to protect my soul no matter what happens to my body

I *know* that he's the faithful one

Always with me despite the abandonment of friends

I *know* that he's the sovereign one

In full control despite my limited view and shaky faith *****

I know, and I trust – that he will help me and guide me every step of the way . . .

To do his will, speak his truth, and keep on for the gospel – unashamed

Do *you* know? And does it show?

Don't be ashamed