

Running the Race of Faith
2 Timothy 1:8-15 (Week 02) 04/19/2026
Do Not Be Ashamed of the Gospel

This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰ and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹ for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, ¹² which is why I suffer as I do. 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. ¹³ Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. ¹⁵ You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶ May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, ¹⁷ but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me— ¹⁸ may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day!—and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus. (2 Tim. 1:8-18)

Introduction & Review

- As we continue our study through 2 Timothy, written by the apostle Paul from a Roman prison.
- We discover that Paul had a problem.
- Yes, he was suffering, bound with chains, **condemned to death and awaiting execution.**
- **But that wasn't his problem.**
- He'd suffered before, he'd been in prison before, and he'd faced death before...
- In fact, during his **first imprisonment in Rome,**
- he wrote these **well-known** words to the **Philippians...**

²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)

- Prison, suffering and even death were **not Paul's problems.**
- His problem was that his **friends and allies** in ministry had **largely abandoned** him.
- As he wrote in **verse 15...**

¹⁵ You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me... (1 Timothy 1:15)

- Asia refers to the province Asia-Minor, modern-day Turkey.
- And Ephesus, where Timothy is located, is in this province.
- So, Paul isn't saying that every person **in Asia** rejected him.
- Probably he means, **all the people who could've supported him** turned away when he was arrested in Troas. (in Asia)
- And this must have been devastating for Paul!

- He'd sacrificed greatly to bring the gospel to these very people and now they **abandon** him.
- But that's not the worst of it.
- Now, it seems **Timothy**, his **beloved child in the faith**, is being tempted to turn away from Paul.
- **And why would he or anyone do that?**
- Most likely because of fear.
- Fear of being associated with a known criminal and social stigma (the ridicule) involved.
- And fear of Nero's persecution, being arrested and imprisoned themselves.
- So, Paul's condemnation tested **all who knew him**.
- And many failed the test and turned away from him in shame.
- But worse than having his friends, associates and **even disciples** being ashamed of him,
- A **greater problem** was the effect this had on His message, the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- For as people turned away from Paul, they also turned away from **His message**.
- And so, in **verses 8-18 (our text for today)** Paul seeks to **deal with this problem**.
- His purpose is to **convince** Timothy that he should not be ashamed of the gospel or of him **as its messenger**.
- And I believe this passage, this message, is crucial for the church today.
- Because **we have a problem**.
- Like Timothy we can be tempted to be ashamed of the gospel and those who preach it.
- We **worry that the gospel message** or messengers might **offend people** because it does.
- We **struggle with the exclusive claims of the gospel** in a culture that says we must **COEXIST**.
- We **fear** that if we share the gospel, this will cause people to ridicule us,
- To think and say we're strange, weird, religious nutcases.
- And all of these things, along with others **can cause us to be ashamed of the gospel**.
- And that my friends is a major problem,
- **possibly the greatest problem in the contemporary western church**.
- Because **being ashamed of the gospel** means we will not proclaim it as we are all called to do.
- Jesus gave his church the responsibility **for sharing the gospel** with a lost world.
- Each of the **gospels** (Matt, Mark, Luke, John) includes a call to **go forth proclaiming the gospel**.
- And so does the book of Acts, just before his ascension, to his disciples Jesus said...

***⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* (Acts 1:8)**

- The church of Jesus Christ (all believers), **empowered by the Holy Spirit**,
- have the responsibility of **being Jesus' witnesses** to the ends of the earth.
- We have responsibility of **proclaiming the good news of who Jesus is and what Jesus did to all people**.
- And being ashamed of this gospel in any way shape or form would certainly put a damper on obeying Jesus's Command.

- So, as we examine Paul's words to Timothy, it is my prayer that...
- We will be instructed and inspired **by the Holy Spirit**.
- That our hearts will be transformed.
- That when we leave this place there will be no feelings of shame for the gospel,
- but instead, we'll be strengthened in our resolve to be (like Paul) a messenger of the gospel.
- To proclaim this glorious message to our friends, family, neighbors, co-workers and **to the ends of the earth. AMEN!**
- **And that brings us to our text where Paul begins with...**

1. The Exhortation

- In **verse 8** Paul writes...

⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord (that is the gospel of Jesus Christ), nor of me his prisoner (the Apostle Paul) ... (2 Timothy 1:8)

- That word **ashamed** in the Greek simply means to feel shame.
- And I think we all know what that feels like, **we've all been ashamed**.
- It's an emotion that we often experience **when things get uncomfortable**.
- When we or someone close to us do something considered **wrong** or **odd** or **embarrassing**.
- And shame has been around a long time.
- The first people to experience shame **were the first people**.
- Before the fall, **before their disobedience to God**, Bible says...

²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:25)

- But immediately after **the fall**, not only did **sin enter in but with it came shame**.

⁷ ... they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God... (Genesis 3:7-8)

- Why did they cover themselves? Why did they hide from the LORD.
- **Because they were rightly afraid and ashamed of what they had done in disobedience to God!**
- And we too **can rightly experience** shame when we disobey the LORD.
- Unfortunately, the shame doesn't always come **until our sin** is discovered and pointed out.
- So like **Adam and Eve** we can rightly **experience shame for our sin**.
- But we can also experience shame when we've done nothing.
- **For example**, when someone we are associated with behaves badly.
- If a relative is loud, obnoxious, or ill-mannered in public,
- shame sweeps over us because **we feel connected to the person's bad behavior**.

- We can also be **ashamed of ourselves** even when we do nothing immoral.
- Bad hair, tripping over something, not knowing the right answer to a Bible question,
- especially if you're a pastor, **all can make us blush with shame.**
- And as I said, at the heart of our **shame is really fear.**
- But don't take my word for it, **we find it in our passage.**
- If we back up to **verses 6, we find** Paul reminding Timothy to fan into flame the gift of God.
- And don't forget, Timothy's gifts (teaching and preaching the gospel) were what God Paul thrown into prison.
- **And so, the reason** for this reminder seems to be that **Timothy is suffering from fear.**
- Because in **verse 7** Paul encourages Timothy with these words...

7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7)

- Fear is causing Timothy not to use his gifts as he should.
- And Paul wants him to know that his fear is not of God.
- Instead, God has given him power, love and self-control that he might continue using his gifts.
- And then comes **verse 8** which begins...

8 Therefore

- Paul is saying, because your fear is not from the Lord.
- Because God has given **you power, love and self-control.**

do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner...

- Fear of what others might think and say about his association with a condemned criminal,
- Fear of facing persecution himself, all of this is causing Timothy to feel shame.
- And so, Paul exhorts him...your fear is not from the LORD!

8 Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, (2 Timothy 1:8)

- Timothy, don't give into fear, don't be ashamed of me or the gospel I preach.
- Remember God has given you power that will overcome all fear and shame.
- So instead of being ashamed of me or the gospel.
- By God's power, and this is radical, **share in suffering for the gospel.**
- Paul says, Timothy, instead of being ashamed of me and the gospel **you must join me in suffering for the gospel.**
- In the face of opposition to the gospel, **the proper response is not fear or shame.**
- The proper response is to continue **proclaiming the gospel,**
- even if it means ridicule, suffering, imprisonment and death.
- This is Paul's (Spirit Inspired) exhortation to Timothy.

- And this is the **Spirits Exhortation** to each and every one of us.
- God has not given you the spirit of Fear.
- Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony about the LORD,
- But instead, by the power of God, proclaim that testimony,
- proclaim the gospel Jesus Christ even it means suffering.
- Even if it means people won't like you.
- Even if it means people will say bad things about you,
- Even if it means losing a job or a friendship.
- Even if it means imprisonment and death.
- Because like Paul and Timothy all believers are called to **share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.**
- **AMEN!**
- Now following this exhortation comes...

2. The Explanation

- When I was a kid and **my parents told me to do something.**
- If I asked them **Why?** What do you think they said? **Because I said so?**
- Now that's not always an **unreasonable answer.**
- In fact, sometimes that's the answer we get from God when we ask him **why we should obey this or that command.**
- Because he said so, **that's the only explanation we should need.**
- But in this case, Paul follows his exhortation with several **explanations or reasons** why Timothy and you and I should not be ashamed **of the gospel or its messengers.**
- **And the first is that...**

A. The Gospel is Powerful

- Paul is **imprisoned** because of his

testimony about our Lord

- He's suffering for **the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ**, and he's feeling no shame.
- If you remember from last week, in **verse 3** he says...

³ I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience... (2 Timothy 1:3)

- And in **verse 12**, about his imprisonment he will say...

¹² I am not ashamed... (2 Timothy 1:12)

- Paul's conscience is clear.
- Yes, he's in prison, but he's not ashamed of the gospel or being in prison for proclaiming it.

- In fact, several years earlier he'd written these words to the Romans...

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes... (Romans 1:16)

- The gospel is the greatest message, the greatest truth ever told.
- It is the only message that **has the power of God for salvation.**
- And here in **2 Timothy 9 & 10** Paul wants to remind Timothy **of the Gospel's power.**
- **He begins...**

9 [God] who saved us and called us to a holy calling...

- The gospel tells us that salvation is a work of God.
- God saved us and he called us, and He empowers us to live holy lives.
- The gospel includes our **salvation and our sanctification.**
- And why did God save us...

not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace

- What a glorious powerful message for a sinful people.
- In our heart of hearts we know we can do nothing to save ourselves.
- And that's what the gospel confirms, **we are saved not because we purpose to be saved,**
- Not because **we earn our salvation with works,**
- But only because of **God's purpose and grace. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians...**

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, (Ephesians 2:8)

- The gospel is a **message of grace**, that our salvation is a **gift from God.**
- And how is possible **for God to give** such a gift to sinful a people... **Well again...**

not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,

- Jesus is at the heart of the **gospel message.**
- We receive **God's grace, salvation, eternal life and so much more in Christ Jesus.**
- And **when did he give us these things**, well Paul says, "**before the ages began**"
- Again, this shows that our salvation had nothing to do with our works.
- Because we received it not only before we were born but before creation itself.
- **This is the power of God for salvation, again, Paul tells the Ephesians...**

4 ...[God] chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love (Ephesians 1:4)

- So, the gospel proclaims that salvation does not come through our own works.
- Instead, it is a past (pre-creation) choice of God's grace in Jesus Christ.
- But the gospel also says that God's past choice **resulted Christ's appearing in our world.**

- **Verse 10**, referring to salvation, Paul writes...

10 and which now has been manifested (Salvation has come) through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus,

- There came a point, in the fullness of time, that Jesus was manifested,
- He left heaven, entered our sinful fallen world.
- By the power of God, he was born of the Virgin Mary,
- he set aside his divine rights and became one of us,
- So that as a man, he could **be our Savior**.
- As Paul wrote in **his first letter** to Timothy...

15 ...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.... (1 Timothy 1:15)

- And how did he do that; how did he save sinners? Well, **verse 10** continues...

Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, (2 Timothy 1:10)

- As we talked about **on Resurrection Sunday**,
- Through this death and resurrection, **Jesus abolished (defeated) death**.
- For those who trust in Christ, for those who are in Christ, **death holds no power over us**.
- Yes, unless the Lord returns, we **will all experience Physical death**.
- But that doesn't matter because, through **his finished sacrificial work on the cross of calvary**,
- and by his miraculous resurrection, Jesus Christ not only abolished death
- but brought true life and **immortality** to light.
- For those who put their faith in the **finished sacrificial work of Christ**.
- Those who trust **that by his death Jesus paid for our sins and took on the wrath of God that we deserved**.
- Those are, by God's grace, through faith placed **in Christ Jesus** receiving life and immortality.
- And here is the question: **How do we know all of this?**
- Because we've heard and read the Gospel, and that's Paul's point.
- Again, to the Romans, Paul writes...

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, (Romans 1:16)

- And this truth, that the gospel is the power of God for salvation,
- is exactly what he is trying to convince Timothy and each one of us to believe.
- Paul is saying, look Bro, **it's the glorious gospel** that is the power of God for salvation.
- Therefore, **how can anyone be ashamed of it**.
- Yes, there are reasons for shame, **but the gospel is definitely not one of them**.

- And oh, by the way, Paul continues, **it is this powerful gospel...**

11 for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, 12 which is why I suffer as I do. (2 Timothy 1:11-12)

- Like no other person in all human history, **Paul is connected to the gospel of Jesus Christ.**
- As we saw last week in verse **1 of 2 Timothy**, Paul introduces himself as...

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God... (2 Timothy 1:1)

- God appointed Paul not only as an apostle of Jesus Christ,
- But a preacher and teacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- And when he introduced himself to the **Romans he wrote...**

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, (Romans 1:1)

- As we just saw, the gospel is the only message that brings salvation and eternal life.
- It is by faith in Jesus Christ that men and women are saved.
- And it's the gospel that contains the message **about Jesus that must be believed.**
- Therefore, for the gospel to bring salvation and eternal life into the lives of people,
- It must go forth, **it must be communicated**, it must be **heralded and heard.**
- And God in his love, mercy and sovereignty, has a plan to make the gospel known.
- And that plan involves his people, **and in this context one person in particular...**
- Paul, who once **hated the gospel** and persecuted those who followed it.
- Was then, by God's sovereign grace **appointed a preacher, apostle and teacher** of the gospel.
- **What a turn of events.** John Stott summarizes Paul's **three roles** this way...

The apostles formulated the gospel, preachers proclaim it like heralds, and teachers instruct people systematically in its doctrines and in its ethical implications. (John Stott)

- Paul filled all three roles. **God appointed him to bring the gospel to Gentiles.**
- That often-meant **preaching**, the public proclamation of the gospel,
- And it also meant **teaching**, as Paul journeyed from town to town **preaching the gospel...**
- He also instructed believers **both in person and through letters** (like 1 & 2 Timothy)
- And don't forget Romans, which is the ultimate manifesto of the gospel that Paul preached.
- And so, we have the **powerful gospel** that brings salvation and eternal life.
- And we have Paul who is suffering in prison as a direct result of being appointed as an apostle, preacher and teacher of this gospel.
- And what he's saying to Timothy and us is DUDE how can you be ashamed of me,
- when I am suffering in prison for this powerful message.

- Therefore Timothy, and all believers, do not be ashamed of me or the gospel.
- **Instead, boldly proclaim its saving POWER to a lost world, even it means suffering.**
- Don't be ashamed of the gospel for it alone has the power to save!
- And what that means is the gospel is the most important most valuable message ever proclaimed.
- Therefore, Paul continues...

B. The Gospel is Guarded by God

- **In the middle of Verse 12 Paul writes...**

¹² ...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. (2 Timothy 1:12)

- Although Paul doesn't say what he is not ashamed of, **it is probably his imprisonment.**
- Others, including Timothy, might be ashamed that he's in prison for preaching the gospel.
- But Paul says, **I am not ashamed.**
- There should be no shame in **unjust imprisonment in the service of the gospel.**

for I know whom I have believed

- Paul says, I've put my faith in God, in Jesus Christ.
- God is in control of my life, he has me in prison for his purposes,
- Therefore, why would I be ashamed, **In fact,**

I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

- And what had God entrusted to Paul?
- What had God appointed the Apostle Paul to preach and teach? **The gospel of Jesus Christ.**
- To the Galatians he wrote...

¹¹ For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. ¹² For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 1:11-12)

- Jesus Christ entrusted Paul with the gospel.
- **And so, what he is saying to Timothy is that...**

He is convinced that God is able to guard until that day the gospel of Jesus Christ

- **Do you see how important this is?**
- Paul is saying that even though he, **the apostle to the Gentiles,**
- the one who received the Gospel from Jesus Christ himself, **is in prison.**
- Even though he will **soon depart this world, the gospel will be protected.**
- The truth is, until that day, until Christ returns,
- as long it's necessary for the pure true gospel to be proclaimed, **Because God will guard it.**
- And what I think that means is that God will see to it that the gospel remains pure.

- He will guard **it against loss or corruption**.
- And he will make sure it continues to be proclaimed to a lost world.
- Now that's not to say, that people (false teachers) cannot distort the gospel for their own purposes, **they certainly have, can and do**.
- We saw it in **1 Timothy, we'll see it in 2nd**, and we see it in our world.
- But what Paul is saying is that ultimately, **these false teachers** will fail.
- The gospel message may be distorted for a time by one man or group of people.
- But, by God's sovereign power, even after the great apostle Paul is Gone...
- God will protect his gospel and there will always be those who **persevere** in preaching and teaching the gospel.
- And this should bring great comfort to us, just as it did for Paul.
- The **Lord protects the gospel of Jesus Christ**, which includes...
- The **Old Testament** which pictured and prepared the way for Christ.
- The **Gospels**, which testify to **the manifestation** of Christ.
- The **Book of Acts** which **shows the proclamation** of Christ.
- The **Epistles** which contain the **explanation** of Christ.
- And the **Book of Revelation** which shows us the **culmination** of Christ's work.
- The point is the whole Bible is about Jesus it is all the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- And throughout history people have tried to discredit God's word.
- They've called it myth, fairy tales, legends, delusion even.
- While others have tried to change it or add to it,
- Claiming they have received new revelation that is superior to the gospel.
- **But God has and will continue to protect his word.**
- The gospel we have today is the same gospel that Paul preached some 2000 years ago.
- And in this context, what I think Paul wants Timothy and us to see **is the great value of the gospel**.
- How can you be **ashamed of something that God has and will guard throughout history**.
- **This is the most important powerful message every spoken or written**,
- and God will guard it as long as it is needed,
- that is **until Christ returns and the Word of God dwells among us again. AMEN!**
- So, Paul has explained both the power and God's guarding of the gospel.
- Next, he focuses on what Timothy **must do regarding the gospel**.
- Don't be ashamed of the **Gospel, instead...**

C. The Gospel Must Be Embraced

- **Verse 13** begins with a command for Timothy...

13 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me... (2 Timothy 1:13)

- That word “**Follow**” translates the Greek term **echo**.
- **Which includes the meaning of holding fast to, embracing something of great importance.**
- And what is of great importance?
- ***The pattern (the path the way) of the sound words that you (Timothy) have heard from me (Paul)...***
- That word **sound** is a **medical term** which literally means to be whole, healthy, without disease.
- But Paul uses it figuratively, **meaning uncorrupted**.
- So, Paul is saying, “Timothy, follow (hold fast to; embrace the way) found in the uncorrupted, true words, what I have taught you.
- And what had Paul taught Timothy? **In a word, the Gospel**. – That’s two words but you get the point.
- Embrace **the gospel**, for it is **SOUND, it is TRUTH**, it is the pattern you must follow.
- And how is Timothy to embrace the gospel he received from Paul, Paul says...

in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus

- And what I think Paul is saying to Timothy and all believers...
- Is that we are to embrace the gospel...
- Both with faith in Christ Jesus, **that is trusting the sound words, the truth of the Gospel**.
- **Believing who Jesus is and what he has done for you.**
- But also, **we must embrace the gospel with love for Christ Jesus**.
- Truly trusting that God so loved you that he gave his only Son to die for you,
- This should produce **a great love for Christ Jesus within you**.
- Put simply the gospel must be embraced both by putting our faith in Jesus and Loving Jesus.
- **So, the gospel is not something to be ashamed of it is something to faithfully and lovingly embrace.**
- And for those who embrace it Paul explains...

D. The Gospel is Guarded by Man

- Now that should sound familiar since our second point (B) from verse 12 was...
- **The Gospel is Guarded by God**
- But in **verse 14** Paul calls Timothy to Guard the gospel.

14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. (2 Timothy 1:14)

- Here the **good deposit entrusted to Timothy**, refers to **verse 12** where Paul wrote...

12 ...I am convinced that he (God) is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me. (2 Timothy 1:12)

- So, the good deposit was first entrusted to Paul.
- And then in **verse 13** he writes

13 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me... (2 Timothy 1:13)

- So, Paul received the good deposit and then he passed it on to Timothy.
- And Timothy is charged **with guarding this good deposit**.
- And just to be clear, **the good deposit is the Gospel**.
- And this isn't the **first time Timothy** has received this command.
- At the end of **1 Timothy** Paul gave the same command.

20 O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you.... (1 Timothy 6:20)

- As we learned in **1 Timothy**, he was to **guard the gospel against false teachers**.
- And the **need to guard the gospel continues today**.
- In our **world, like Timothy, Pastors and all believers** are called to guard the gospel against false teachers, heretics, a **godless culture**,
- Everyone and everything that seeks to corrupt and destroy the word of God.
- Now you might be thinking, Paul just said **that God would guard the gospel**.
- Why is he now calling Timothy to guard it as well, isn't that redundant.
- Well notice that Timothy wouldn't be on guard duty alone but...

14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

- Really **verses 12 and 14** should be understood together.
- Yes, God will guard the gospel, and how will he do that?
- By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us...
- God uses his Spirit filled Children to guard the good deposit that he has entrusted to us.
- So, we should know what it means to **guard the gospel**.
- That word guard in the Greek typically means to guard against something.
- For example, in **Luke 11** we read...

21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; (Luke 11:21)

- In this verse it means to **guard against robbers**.
- But in other places in the NT, it's used to guard against sin like greed or idolatry.
- And so, what Paul is saying to Timothy and us, is that we must guard the gospel against those who would seek to damage, corrupt or destroy it.
- Because there are people who hate the gospel.
- **They hate God and the truth of His word.**
- There are always people who seek to harm the church, its leaders and its message.

- We find one example of this in **Chapter 4**, Paul writes...

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. 15 Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. (2 Timothy 4:14-15)

- And **Alexander** is not alone.
- Our world is filled with people who seek to **harm the church and oppose its message**.
- Some do it openly out of hate **for God and His People**.
- While others do it, actually thinking they are helping the church.
- They hope to rescue the faith from irrelevance by making it more **palatable** to the prevailing culture.
- Their thinking goes something like this.
- If you would just not be so exclusive in your claims about Jesus.
- If you would just interpret those lists of sins a little differently.
- Your message would appeal to a lot more people and you could have a lot more diversity in the church.
- But the gospel, the word of God, must not be changed to accommodate current culture.
- Which by the way, is just as evil as the Roman culture that imprisoned Paul.
- And so, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we must guard the gospel,
- not only against those who would seek to destroy it, **make it irrelevant**,
- but in our day, especially against those who would seek to corrupt it by trying to make it relevant.
- And so, how can Timothy, how can we be ashamed of this powerful, valuable, message that God guards through his spirit filled people.
- So, we've seen the explanations Paul gives for not being ashamed of the gospel.
- And then Paul gives us...

3. The Examples

- **2 Timothy 1:15-18** presents two examples.
- **An example of Shame** and an **example of faithfulness**...
- In **verse 15** we see the shame...

15 You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. (1 Timothy 1:15)

- We know almost nothing about **Phy-gel-us** and **Her-mo-genes**, except their names are hard to pronounce and they "turned away" from Paul.
- That phrase "**turned away**" is one word in the Greek and it **a decisive rejection**.
- These guys didn't accidentally make a wrong turn.
- They specifically chose to turn away from Paul, and his message.

- The passage doesn't say why they turned away but the context does.
- Because of his imprisonment, these men, along with many others,
- were afraid and therefore ashamed to be associated with Paul and the gospel he preached.
- Because don't forget, it was preaching the gospel that got him thrown in Jail.
- They were probably afraid of suffering the same fate.
- And the point here is, unfortunately there are people who will turn away from the gospel and its messengers in fear and shame because of potential suffering.
- And the application is, **don't be like these guys**, don't be driven by fear,
- don't be ashamed of the gospel.
- Even if it means suffering, ridiculed or imprisoned by society.
- And that takes us to the example of faithfulness to Paul and in the gospel.
- **Verse 16...**

16 May the Lord grant mercy to the household of O-nes-i-phor-us, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, 17 but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me— 18 may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day!— and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus. (2 Timothy 1:15-18)

- **Onesiphorus** demonstrated his faithfulness by searching for an imprisoned Paul until he found him.
- **Demonstrating** that he was **not afraid and not ashamed of Paul**, his situation or his message.
- **Onesiphorus** is a great **example in today's world**.
- Because in some places it can still be **dangerous to identify openly with church leaders**.
- This was true in the Soviet Union throughout the twentieth century.
- And at present, it remains true in China, some Islamic nations and other places.
- As **Daniel M. Dor-ian-i** said...

When the church is under fire, to give aid to an imprisoned pastor becomes a courageous act of faith. (Daniel M. Doriani)

- And that is what Onesiphorus did.
- The Roman Emperor Caesar Nero went a bit nuts and turned against Christians.
- He had Paul arrested and imprisoned.
- And by visiting Paul, "Onesiphorus identified himself" with an "enemy of the state and his illegal religion."
- And so, Paul prays...

16 May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus

- And...

May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day

- Because Paul prays for **Onesiphorus'** household.
- And he says “**on that day**” which probably means **the day of Judgment**.
- Some think that **Onesiphorus** died before Paul wrote his letter.
- And if that's true, **he probably died at the hands of the Romans,**
- **because of his faithfulness to Paul.**
- This is not certain, but Paul certainly offers Onesiphorus as an example of courage in the face of hostility.
- And again, this is a good example for us.
- Because there are always places where Christians face the threat of prison, loss of property,
- **even death.**
- And even in places **where religious freedom is well established,**
- believers are often ridiculed for being stupid, uniformed, science deniers...
- And if our beliefs cause us to oppose our cultures “**progressive**” agendas,
- We are accused of bigotry, homophobia, xenophobia, islamophobia and the list goes on.
- **Therefore, even in Western democracies like the USA,**
- **it can take courage to identify with Jesus.**
- **To not be ashamed of the gospel or those who proclaim it.**
- **And that takes us back to Paul's exhortation, the main point of this passage.**

8 ...do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, (2 Timothy 1:8)

- **Onesiphorus, exemplified obedience to this exhortation.**
- Whenever the gospel and its messengers are rejected or ridiculed.
- Believers can be tempted to experience fear and shame.
- But it is my prayer that as we allow Paul's words to Timothy speak to each of us.
- As we have the exhortation, the explanations and the example of Onesiphorus.
- That we will not be tempted by fear to turn away from the gospel in Shame.
- But By the Power of God, we would be people who fearlessly proclaim the gospel.
- Even if it means our own suffering.

Would you join me in prayer to that end!