

2 Timothy 1:8-12 | “Not Ashamed”

Preached on January 15, 2023 by Pastor Matt Brown

Please turn in your Bibles to 2 Timothy 1, and we will be covering verses 8-12 this morning.
[pause]

“There’s nothing to be ashamed of.”

Have you ever heard that phrase or used it in your conversations? [pause]

When we use that phrase, we aren’t using it in an absolute sense.

We aren’t saying that there’s absolutely nothing in the world to be ashamed of, but rather, we use it in relation to specific situations. [pause]

Let’s say that you have a teenager, who has their first pimple.

Your teenager is so distraught over this, but as a parent, you say, “There’s nothing to be ashamed of. Everyone gets pimples, especially in their teens.” [pause]

Or this often happens when someone feels embarrassed about crying in front of someone else.

What does the person usually say, who is there comforting them?...

“There’s nothing to be ashamed of! You can cry, it’s hard, I know.” [pause]

Or maybe you feel ashamed that you have to tell someone else that you are really struggling.

They would probably say, “There’s nothing to be ashamed of. We all struggle.” [pause]

Or maybe it’s when you don’t know something, and sometimes a person will say the same kind of thing. [pause]

What causes us to feel ashamed over something?

Well the definition of ashamed is being “embarrassed or guilty because of one’s actions, characteristics, or associations.”¹ [pause]

So we are ashamed of something because we consider it embarrassing or wrong, or we think that other people consider it embarrassing or wrong. [pause]

Regularly, being ashamed comes from thinking, “What will other people think?”

“What if they think it’s low, or embarrassing, not cool, ugly, or wrong?” [pause]

While there are *some* things to be ashamed of, what Paul does here is essentially tells Timothy, “There’s nothing to be ashamed of.”

¹ From the built-in dictionary of Google Docs.

But he isn't talking about pimples, crying, struggles, or a lack of knowledge - instead, he tells him that he shouldn't be ashamed of Christ.

Let's read the passage to see this...*[READ VERSES 8-12]*

Apparently, fear of other people and suffering was a temptation for Timothy.

Yet isn't that like all of us? *[pause]*

Paul wanted Timothy to be faithful, and he didn't want potential suffering to derail him.

And that's why he is talking the way that he is here, for being fearful of suffering can interfere with faithfulness. *[pause]*

If you think that suffering might ensue if you preach Christ - that might lead you to shy away from proclaiming Him.

We even saw last week that Timothy had a temptation to shrink back from using his spiritual gift to its fullest because of fear. *[pause]*

Paul doesn't want that, and that's why he says, "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." *[pause]*

We get the main point up front, right away. It is...

Do not be ashamed of Christ, but be willing to suffer for the Gospel.

Being ashamed of Jesus is a real temptation and possibility.

That's why Paul highlights the need to *not* be ashamed. *[pause]*

For Timothy, following and preaching Christ meant suffering.

And really, this is what Jesus has told us continually about following Him.

He told us that the world would hate us, and would persecute us because it hated and persecuted Him.² *[pauseeee]*

So Timothy was faced with a choice.

Would I be ashamed of Christ and avoid suffering, or would I proudly cling to Christ and suffer?

And this is the same choice that each of us faces as well. *[pauseeee]*

There are a few things that Paul tells Timothy to not be ashamed of.

First, he is not to be ashamed of "the testimony about our Lord." *[pause]*

² See John 15:18-25.

That is, he shouldn't be ashamed about what was testified, witnessed, and declared about Christ.

This is really the truth about Christ, and all that entails following Him. *[pauseee]*

Are you ever ashamed of Christ?

Are you ever ashamed of the message of the Cross, or really anything that is proclaimed in the Bible? *[pause]*

What if someone mocks Christ for dying on the Cross - what then?

What if someone says, "That old-fashioned stuff is so outdated and antiquated - we have progressed far past that."?

What if believing in what Christ affirmed about gender and sexuality means you are ostracized in your family?

What if by admitting that you believe in these things means that people make fun of you?

What if by acknowledging that you follow these teachings, it would lead you to lose your job? *[pauseee]*

If we become ashamed, what are we showing?

We care too much about what the world thinks, or our fear of suffering trumps our commitment to Christ.

Yet what did Jesus say?

"For 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."³ *[pause]*

Do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord!

But also, Paul says, "nor of me his prisoner." *[pauseee]*

Paul was in prison on account of preaching Christ.

If you think about it, prison is often a shameful place to be in because usually you are there for shameful reasons.

Not for Paul, of course, though.

He was there because of preaching Christ. *[pause]*

³ Mark 8:38.

But in that day, prisoners were especially shamed as they were often publicly humiliated and beaten.

So to identify with a prisoner was a bold move, and was seen by many as a shameful thing. [pause]

People would look at Paul in prison and think, “Look at Paul, such a bold witness for Christ, yet there he is behind bars. Is that really the power of God?”

Or even, “How could he throw away his life just to talk about this Jesus guy?” [pause]

Our world can’t comprehend why we would risk so much for a person named Jesus, and they often see it as shameful to face suffering just to talk about him.

And so identifying with Paul would be identifying with shame. [pauseeee]

Timothy must be willing to do this because Paul’s imprisonment is directly linked to the testimony of Christ.

Paul is there *because of* the testimony about Christ. [pause]

So we must also not be ashamed of those currently suffering for Christ, and who take a bold stand for Him.

To do so would be tantamount to being ashamed of Christ. [pause]

Let’s say someone is being made fun of because they are a Christian.

Being ashamed of that person would look like keeping quiet, and acting like you don’t identify with them, so that you don’t get attention, too. [pause]

Does being ashamed of Christ look like silence in your life?⁴

That could easily be a temptation for us since silence seems like the path of least resistance. [pauseeee]

Sometimes Christians are ashamed of other Christians because they speak the truth that is unpopular in today’s world.

That ought not to be!

We should be willing to identify with those who are persecuted for Christ because they are persecuted *for Christ*. [pauseeee]

So instead of being ashamed, what are we called to do?

⁴ Knute Larson makes this point well in *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, vol. 9, *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 267.

“Share in suffering for the gospel.” *[pause]*

Not being ashamed of Christ leads often to suffering, and so therefore, that’s why Paul can call Timothy to share in the suffering. *[pause]*

Literally, Paul is saying, “Join in suffering,” with Paul and others, who were suffering for the gospel.

Be willing to go through and endure suffering for the gospel, like so many others are doing. *[pause]*

Are you willing to suffer for Christ and what He has done?

We should be willing to go through smaller suffering like being made fun of or mocked.

But also, we should be willing to lose a job, lose relationships, lose our reputation and status, lose money, and even lose our lives for Christ. *[pause]*

That is the basic call that Paul is making upon Timothy.

Don’t let fear and intimidation cause you to be ashamed of Christ, but be ready to suffer for His name. *[pause]*

What a serious and challenging command!

It’s one that each of us must reflect upon and examine in our own hearts.

It’s not easy.

It’s not like it’s choosing what flavor of ice cream you will eat.

But it’s a choice that every believer is confronted with, and each of us must count the cost of following Christ.⁵ *[pauseee]*

So how can we do this?

What Paul is calling us to do sounds so daunting at first.

Do we just look inward and think, “OK, yeah. I can do this.”? *[pause]*

How could anyone be willing to suffer for the gospel?

Paul actually gives us the “how” in this passage, and oh what glorious reasons that he gives!

First...

A. Remember the power of God.

⁵ See Luke 14:25-33.

If you don't think you have the resources to accomplish something, you don't try it. *[pause]*

I don't think any of us would go and try to climb the Empire State Building like we were Spiderman.

Why? Because we know we can't do it.

We know that we don't have the power or ability to climb it by just walking up to it and climbing. *[pause]*

So one of the keys to enduring suffering for Christ is to remember that God gives you what you need to endure it.

For Paul reminds Timothy of the power of God *in him*. *[pause]*

In order to see this, we must think of the "therefore" of verse 8.

Paul just said that God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love, and self-control - THEREFORE, do not be ashamed of Christ, but share in suffering. *[pauseeee]*

Through the Spirit, God gives us power to endure hardship!

He empowers us to be able to undergo persecution for the faith.

The dynamite power of God is at work in us to do it! *[pause]*

You don't have to fear or cower away, but God's power comes to you through the Spirit within you. *[pause]*

We need the power of God, in order to step up unashamed and suffer for Him.

Our own strength and motivation will never do the trick. *[pauseeee]*

When you start feeling fear arise in you because some suffering may be around the corner, remember, "God has not given me a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power."

"I can do this because God empowers me to do this."

As Paul says, "share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God." *[pauseeee]*

But it's not only the power of God in us that we can remember, for we can also remember the power of God *for us*. *[pause]*

Look where Paul goes next in verses 9-10...

He talks about the power of God displayed in our salvation.

He explains how God saved us and called us, how Christ appeared and abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. *[pause]*

Talk about *power*!

If you are ever doubting the power of God, remember the gospel!

That's exactly why Paul says in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." *[pauseeee]*

God saved us.

We were in our sins, under the penalty of death, and on our way to Hell.

Yet Christ appeared and saved us from sin and death. *[pause]*

Christ actually abolished death!

Christ didn't just give death a slap on the wrist.

He didn't just minorly injure death.

He made death inoperative; he put a stop to it by His death and resurrection! *[pause]*

Though as Christians, we may die physically, we go on living as we are transported to the presence of Christ.

This is because we are spiritually alive!

And really, if you think about it, our physical death isn't the final word, for when we are resurrected, it actually nullifies our physical death, like Christ's resurrection did for him. *[pause]*

Death doesn't have the victory, for it's swallowed up by victory!⁶ *[pause]*

By abolishing death, Christ brought life and immortality to those who trust in Him.

He gives us eternal life, and someday our mortal bodies will take on immortality in the resurrection.⁷ *[pauseeee]*

So how does the power of God in the gospel help us to go through suffering?

Because if God in power could save us, abolish death, and bring immortality to us, then don't you think He can give you the power to endure suffering for His name? *[pause]*

But also think of it this way...

If Christ has abolished death, and brought us life, then why fear physical suffering?

⁶ A reference to 1 Corinthians 15:55.

⁷ A reference to 1 Corinthians 15:54.

Physical death is no longer fearsome, for physical death doesn't quench my existence, but I go on with Christ.

As Paul said, "to die is gain."⁸ *[pause]*

Remember the power of God for you in the gospel! *[pauseeee]*

Also, remember *who* you believed in.

Paul says, "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." *[pause]*

Paul's not ashamed because he remembers *who* he believed in.

He didn't believe in some made up mind creation, he believed in the all-powerful Lord! *[pause]*

Really think about who you believe in.

He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe!

He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.⁹

He can do all things, and no purpose of His is thwarted.¹⁰

As Job says, "He snatches away; who can turn him back? Who will say to him, 'What are you doing?'"¹¹ *[pauseeee]*

Paul could face suffering for the name of Christ because he remembered, "I know whom I have believed." *[pause]*

Do you ever think about that when you face hardship?

If you encounter any suffering for Christ, just remember, "I know whom I have believed. I know He is able!" *[pause]*

That's where Paul goes in what he says in verse 12.

"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." *[pause]*

God's power convinces Paul that God will come through in the future.

Does God's power convince you that He will do what He said He will do?

Do you believe that He is reliable and able? *[pauseee]*

⁸ See Philippians 1:21.

⁹ A reference to Revelation 22:13.

¹⁰ See Job 42:2.

¹¹ Job 9:12.

For Paul, he knew that God was able to guard what was entrusted to him.

That is, Paul knew that God would guard the truth, the gospel.

He would preserve and protect the message that Paul was entrusted with sharing, so Paul could be confident in his mission.

He didn't have to worry about serving a failing mission, but God would do what He planned.

So that meant that Paul could willingly endure suffering for this mission because it wouldn't fail. *[pauseeee]*

Believer, God will come through, so don't be ashamed of Him!

Remember who you believe in!

He is able to do all that He has said He will do! *[pauseeee]*

Do not be ashamed of Christ, but willingly suffer for Him, for just remember the power of God.

He empowers you to endure suffering.

He has powerfully saved you and defeated death, so what do you have to fear?

He is the all-powerful One, who will come through on His purposes. *[pauseeee]*

In order to be not ashamed, and willingly suffer for the Lord, we also need to...

B. Remember the grace of God.

Imagine someone lovingly saved your life from drowning.

What love and kindness!

Now imagine it's a week later and someone is making fun of that person that saved you.

Wouldn't you feel compelled to stand up for that person, even if it meant being made fun of? *[pause]*

Certainly, because you were so impacted by their grace in saving you. *[pause]*

So how much more should we be willing to face suffering for Christ, who eternally saved us by dying for us, even while we were enemies of Him? *[pauseeee]*

Think of it: he *saved* us!

How could we be ashamed of the One who saved us out of grace?!

How could we not be willing to face anything for Him?! *[pause]*

Paul makes it clear that he saved us by grace because he says that we were saved, “not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace.” *[pause]*

How much more clear do you need to get to show that our salvation has nothing to do with our works?

Works have no role in saving us at all, but it is all of grace! *[pause]*

His purpose and grace saved us!

It was his intention and love that determined, initiated, and accomplished our salvation.

From beginning to end, salvation is of grace. *[pause]*

In fact, Paul even says that this grace was given to us in Christ before the ages began! *[pause]*

Isn't this so remarkable?

Before the creation of the world, God's grace was aimed towards us in that he purposed to save us in Jesus!

Before we even arrived on the scene, God loved us and was determined to save us through Christ. *[pauseeee]*

God's grace has always been around, not just at the Cross.

But it was in Jesus' coming, death, and resurrection that that grace was “manifested”. *[pause]*

Grace has always been towards us, but in Christ it was revealed clearly to us in time and space. *[pauseeee]*

You know, we can hear of God's grace for us before time began, and we can be impacted by that, for we hear about it.

But when we think of the Cross, we see His grace in action in history for all to see. *[pauseeee]*

You want to know what love and grace look like? Look to Jesus.

He died for us, and saved us by paying the penalty for our sins and rising again.

Our works did nothing to save us, for they couldn't.

But it was all of grace - magnificent, marvelous grace!

We didn't do anything but place our faith in Him! *[pauseeee]*

If you are trusting in your own works to save you, even a little bit, then see that that's not the way to be saved.

Instead, place yourself wholly on the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

He did the work to save you, and you must receive it by grace through faith.

Admit your sin, admit your need, and look to Him to save! *[pauseeee]*

Do not be ashamed of the One who saved you in grace.

How could we?

He has forgiven us, and given us eternal life so that we no longer stand condemned in our sins.

How could we not be willing to boldly stand for His name, so that more people could experience His grace? *[pause]*

If you ever start to feel ashamed of Christ and afraid of suffering, remember the grace of God.

Remember the glorious eternal things that God has done for you, and when you remember those things, how could this light, momentary affliction deter you from living for Him?¹² *[pause]*

It's living for Christ that is the third thing to remember...

C. Remember your holy calling.

Amidst everything in this passage, there's a little part in verse 9 that could easily be overlooked.

The portion in verse 9 is that He has "saved us and called us to a holy calling". [pause]

So God has not just saved us, and that's it.

That's actually how many people view salvation.

Many people merely think, "I've got my ticket to Heaven, I'm good to go." And then their faith doesn't impact how they live at all.

That's not the testimony of Scripture. [pause]

Instead, we are saved and called to a special privilege and responsibility - we are called to live a holy life. *[pause]*

That's why after Paul gives those famous verses in Ephesians how we are saved by grace through faith.

He then goes on to say, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."¹³ *[pause]*

¹² A reference to 2 Corinthians 4:17.

¹³ Ephesians 2:10.

Christ has graciously saved us, and now we are to live differently.

We now have a holy calling, a holy purpose, for which we live - we live for Christ. *[pauseeee]*

You see how this is so relevant to what Paul is talking about?

The way we do not be ashamed of Christ, and instead, be willing to endure suffering is to remember that Christ not only saved us in grace, but He has called us to live differently.

Your life purpose should be to live for Christ, and how can you live for Christ, if you're ashamed of Him?

How can you live for Christ, if you aren't willing to face suffering for Him? *[pauseeee]*

Paul knew and clung to this truth.

That's why he points out that he's been appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher for the gospel, and this is why he suffers. *[pause]*

Paul knew that God had saved him and called him into a holy calling: to live for Him.

And so if God appointed him to proclaim, teach, and be an authoritative leader in the church, then how could he turn away from his calling?

How could he be ashamed of the one who called and appointed him?

He had a purpose and mission from God Himself. *[pauseeee]*

Christian, God has a purpose and mission for you.

He has saved you, but not only that, he has called you to a holy calling!

Step into your calling, and live for the One who powerfully and graciously saved you in Christ! *[pauseeee]*

We can willingly endure suffering for Christ when we remember our God and our calling.

Do not be ashamed of Him, but remember who you have believed in - the all powerful Lord!

He has powerfully saved you from death's clutches, and has given you eternal life.

He has graciously saved you, and even planned your salvation before the ages began.

He has called you to a high and holy calling: to live for the Master of the Universe.

He gives you power to endure, grace for each day, and His power gives us confidence that His mission will not fail. *[pauseeee]*

I don't know what you face for Christ now, and I certainly don't know what we will face in 10, 20, 30 years from now.

But no matter what comes our way, in order to be faithful, we have to be ready and willing to suffer for our amazing Savior.

For, "He was despised and rejected by men."¹⁴

He was mocked, scorned, laughed at, and beaten, yet he endured the cross, despising the shame for us.¹⁵

He wasn't ashamed to be identified with us, even though we were in a shameful state.

So how could we be ashamed of Him?

How could we not be willing to identify with and live for such a Savior, no matter the cost?

¹⁴ Isaiah 53:3.

¹⁵ A reference to Hebrews 12:2.