

2 Timothy 1:8-18 - Not ashamed of the Gospel

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 May 2025

Preacher: Ray Sims

[0 : 0 0] Good morning, Church. The reading today is from 2 Timothy 1, verse 8 to 18. It's found on page 1195.

! By the power of God, he has saved us and called us to a holy life, not because of anything we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And of this gospel, I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.

That is why I'm suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and I'm convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you. Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. You know that everyone in the province of Asia Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Homorgens. May the Lord show mercy to the household of Manisuerus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord. On that day, you know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus. Amen.

Thanks, Dorette. If you keep your Bibles open to that page, if you've closed them already, it's page 1195. And we'll look at that passage together. Let's ask God to help us, shall we, as we look together at his word today.

Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for what you've taught us week by week. Thank you for this book of 2 Timothy.

[2 : 3 8] And we pray that you would quieten our hearts and speak to our souls this morning through this passage and show us what you want us to see. Give us responsive hearts that we may respond correctly to you.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, you're in good voice this morning. And we've all been singing and rejoicing at how wonderful it is that God loves us. He loves us so much that he sent Christ to die on the cross for us. And we've been enjoying those songs today. So it's rather shocking as we look at this passage this morning, that Paul is urging Timothy not to be ashamed of the gospel. This suggests that it's very possible that you and I, who have experienced God's love, we can be ashamed of this message. We're going to explore this a little bit further this morning and hopefully see how this applies to us. If you're new to the book of 2 Timothy, if you haven't been here for the last couple of weeks, then let me set out for you very briefly what the passage has, what the book is about.

Paul is chained up in prison, probably chained to a soldier, and he's chained up. He's in prison because he's been preaching the gospel, and he is awaiting execution. He has a death sentence.

Yet his concern we've seen already is not for himself, for his relief or his comfort. But it's this, that the gospel will continue to be preached faithfully, and will continue to be passed on to the next generation faithfully.

So in our passage today, verses 8 to 18, we're given at least two clear commands there. And there are these. Don't be ashamed of the gospel, and guard the gospel.

[4 : 53] Now Steve showed us two weeks ago in our overview of 2 Timothy, that these are themes that run right through the book of 2 Timothy. But they're particularly concentrated in the passage we're going to be looking at this morning.

So that's, don't be ashamed of the gospel, and guard the gospel. So the first command is this, don't be ashamed of the gospel. Paul links shame and suffering three times in this passage.

I wonder if you've noticed it as we've gone through the reading. In verse 8, he says this, You see those, the idea of shame and suffering coming through there.

Verse 16, Shame is a dreadful thing.

Now we looked at it a bit lightheartedly just now, telling each other of embarrassing moments. I wonder how honest we were to the person next to us. Is there something else which is deeper than that?

[6 : 21] Which of course I wasn't going to share anything. I told Alvina sitting next to me. I'm not telling you my secrets. But shame is a dreadful thing.

It's a feeling that we have all had, and we all feel it at various points in our lives. Perhaps we've been caught out lying. Perhaps we've acted very badly to a good friend.

Someone we should have loved we've treated badly. And perhaps we still feel the pain of those experiences today. Perhaps our mind goes to them from time to time.

It haunts us. Well let me tell you this. Sometimes shame is well placed. And sometimes it's misplaced.

Let me explain what I mean. Well placed shame we probably understand. It's when we act badly to God. We're ashamed of that. Or when we act badly to others.

[7 : 21] And that kind of shame is right to feel. It's right to feel ashamed when we've acted in that way. And we should apologise. We should repent. And then move on.

But there is also misplaced shame. Let me give you two examples of that. If we're Christians. And we keep feeling the guilt of past sins.

That we already know we've been forgiven of. That is misplaced shame. Why? Because we're forgetting that the wrong has already been forgiven.

Christ has died for those sins. Our sins are covered. And to continue to feel shame denies the fact that God's forgiveness is complete and covers every sin.

So if you have that shame, stop it because it's misplaced. You are forgiven if you are a Christian of every sin. There's another category though of misplaced shame.

[8 : 24] And that's when we're embarrassed about doing the right thing. And we're embarrassed because of what it looks like to other people. This too is misplaced shame.

And it's this category, this last category that Paul is talking about here in 2 Timothy. His opponents felt that he should be ashamed for declaring the gospel.

But he says, I'm not ashamed. I'm going to continue to declare the good news. And you're not going to silence me. Even in prison, he wasn't silenced.

That's why we have the book of 2 Timothy. He urges Timothy to be like-minded. He says at the end of verse 8 this. Join with me in suffering for the gospel.

What's he saying here? Is he urging Timothy to become imprisoned himself and to face a death sentence? Well, no. Clearly he's not doing that. But he is urging him to endure whatever suffering comes his way for the gospel.

- [9 : 31] So how does this apply to us today? We've seen perhaps what it meant to Paul, what it meant to Timothy. How does it apply to us today? I'd like to ask two questions.
- And that may tease it out. First of all, to ask you, what opposition do we face as Christians in 21st century London? Thank God it's not at this moment imprisonment and death.
- But perhaps it's rejection or exclusion by friends or even sometimes family. Maybe our work colleagues don't understand why we won't cut corners and cheat a little bit.
- Or tell the odd white lie. And they may even accuse us of being dogmatic or too puritanical. Puritanical. But there's another question.
- When are we tempted to pull back because we're embarrassed about being a Christian? Let me put a few scenarios to you again. Friends at school are sharing unkind jokes about someone.
- [10 : 42] Or posting inappropriate messages. Do you say something? Or do you just want to disappear and become invisible?
- Or maybe you're asked at school or at work. This question often came up to me at work. What did you do at the weekend? And what do you reply to that?
- Well, you try and think of everything you could say without mentioning that you went to church. Because that's just too embarrassing. Because you know they don't know the gospel.
- You know they don't love the Lord. And you don't want to be seen as different from them. Though painful, we have to admit that this is the other end of the scale of suffering.
- Yet even these small things can cause us to keep quiet about the message. Or compromise our lifestyle so that we don't cause waves.
- [11 : 40] We fit in with what's around us. Look, the honest truth is this. Sometimes you and I fear rejection of friends more than we feel we want to honour God.
- The good news is that when you and I find ourselves in this position, and we all do from time to time, there's forgiveness. Do you remember Peter who blatantly denied Jesus three times just before Jesus' crucifixion?
- Well, he found reinstatement as Jesus restored him at their beach breakfast when he asked him three times, Peter, do you love me? Paul is not ashamed of the gospel.
- This next section here, verses 9 to 12, tell us why Paul is not ashamed of the gospel. And up there on the screen are two verses, verses 9 and 10.
- I'll read them, but please follow along on the screen or in your Bibles. Why is he not ashamed?
- [13 : 12] Because he sees and rejoices at what God has done for him in the gospel. Now, if you've closed your Bibles, you need to keep them open because when I've got my slides wrong, when the next slide comes up, the text disappears.
- So if you can follow in your Bibles those two verses, it will be helpful for you. What has God done that makes Paul rejoice so much? Well, we're given here at least three reasons, and they're not in order, so follow with me.
- Verse 10, we're told that through Jesus, God has destroyed death and brought life. Is this not a strange thing for the Apostle Paul to be saying at this point in his life?
- Remember, he's awaiting execution. Death is imminent. Yet he says death is destroyed. So what is he saying? It's not that death is eliminated, but rather that death has been defeated.
- And there's a difference there. It doesn't hinder, death doesn't hinder the reality of eternal life that the believer enjoys. It starts now and will go on into eternity.

[14 : 27] Physical death is a certainty. But so is life with Christ because of his resurrection. Paul talks extensively about this in 1 Corinthians 15 that we're not going to look at now.

But if you want a treat later on, you can go through 1 Corinthians 15 and see the great benefits we have because of Christ's resurrection. Because Christ has been raised, so will we.

So the second thing he rejoices about here is in verse 9. He rejoices that he has been called. God has called us. Now most translations here say he's called us with or called us to a holy calling.

We're therefore not just called for any old purpose. We're not called primarily to preach. We're not called primarily to serve in the Sunday school.

We're not called to be a doormat. We're not called, first of all, to welcome people at the door. Whatever it is, the ministries that we're involved in.

[15 : 38] We're called primarily to a holy calling to be set apart for God and to be living for him in every area of our life.

So can you see salvation here in verse 9 is not small, as Steve was saying two weeks ago. It's huge. It's not just about forgiveness of sin, although that's fantastic.

It's wonderful. It's about being called by God to live a holy life, set apart for God and living holy for him.

Third point he rejoices about, verse 9. What we have in salvation is totally undeserved. It's not something we've earned, achieved, decided or conceived.

It's something God has done, and it says here why he's done it. He's done it because of his own purpose and grace. So this is why Paul is not ashamed of the gospel, because it's life-giving, a high calling, and all of God's grace.

[16 : 52] If we're Christians, we can rejoice as Paul did through hardships, because the gospel is true, and it is marvellous. It's bigger than any circumstance we may be in.

It's much more significant than our temporary suffering. Maybe you're here this morning, and what I've said has sounded very strange to you.

Maybe the idea that people would gladly endure suffering for what they believe, particularly about a message which came to us 2,000 years ago.

Maybe that's a bit strange. Talk of resurrection after life, and after physical death, well, that seems strange too, perhaps. The idea of being called to follow God is something that others may experience, but not you.

That's not your ball. It's not your game. Well, perhaps you can't accept that there's nothing that you can do to please God. Have you spent your whole life trying to do good, trying to gain God's approval, or at least be kind to other people?

[18 : 15] And to accept that God's gospel is nothing to do with that, but it's only the undeserved favour that God shows you in the gospel, that can save you, that can save you.

And it's a blow to our pride when we hear that, perhaps. But as we've seen in this passage, this life, this salvation, is not for those who are good enough.

It's not for those who aspire to it, or who deserve it, or who are religious enough. And you've proved it this morning by coming to church. It's not about that.

It's not what we can do, but it's what God has already done. What has God done? Let me try and be as clear as I can in this.

There's a verse in Hebrews chapter 12, verse 2, which is there on the screen, if it's not too small for you to read. And it tells us that it's through the shame and suffering of Jesus that we have this gospel.

[19 : 24] So suffering is indeed the foundation of the gospel. Hebrews 12, verse 2 says, Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, for the joy set before him, he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Can you see in that verse shame and suffering? Christ was the initiator of this gospel, and he did this in shame and suffering for us.

He experienced shame of death on the cross so that we could have the treasures of the gospel. So as we think on that this morning, how can we be ashamed?

How dare we be ashamed of that gospel, of that good news? Even if it's going to cost us friendships or credibility with others.

Now we're going to skip a few verses and come back to them at the end. Verses 15 to 18 are a list of people who have been ashamed of Paul, and therefore ashamed of the gospel.

[20 : 47] Many had deserted. One stood by him. Let me read it to you. You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hymogenes.

May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me.

May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day. You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus. So Paul had preached and planted churches in Ephesus and in the surrounding province that was then called Asia, but now it's known as Western Turkey.

And we read about that in Acts chapter 19. Many seem to respond to the gospel. There was a great turning to the Lord. But it seems now that many from this region had deserted Paul, had given up on that gospel.

And Paul refers to this in 2 Timothy 4.16. They were enthusiastic and responsive in good times, but they were fearful of standing by Paul and his uncompromising gospel.

[22 : 19] They were fearful when it came to the possibility of persecution and suffering. But this guy, Onesiphorus, I hope that's the right pronunciation.

If any of you want to correct me after, please do. Onesiphorus is singled out as one who stood by him and was not ashamed of his chains in verse 16. The challenge to us then, as we sit here today and as we go into our week, this coming week, is to stand fast for the gospel in tough times and not to be ashamed.

There's a second application I'd like you to think about this morning. And that's to remember to pray for our brothers and sisters around the world who live in areas where there's intense persecution, either from governments or from religious extremists.

Many of them regularly face the prospect of imprisonment or even death. So how are we to pray for our brothers and sisters who are imprisoned or mistreated for the gospel?

You don't need to turn to it, but you can make a note if you want to. So Hebrews 13 verse 3 tells us that we're to remember them as though in prison with them.

[23 : 48] It's hard to imagine perhaps what it's like being in prison if we haven't experienced it. But we're told to imagine that we are in their position, that we have been imprisoned.

We face a death sentence. We are under persecution because we have preached the gospel. And what would you like somebody to pray for you if you were in that situation?

Courage, strength, endurance, peace, joy through suffering. Perhaps pray for your family who have no father or mother at that time.

Pray for the persecuted church. Keep yourself informed of what's going on. There's organisations that can help you with that. Open doors, which we talk about regularly here.

And they will help you to pray regularly for them. The second command, and this will be briefer, is to guard the gospel. This is found in verses 9 and 10. The passage tells us that there are two ways we can guard the gospel.

- [24 : 55] Two things about guarding the gospel. The first is this, in verse 12, that God guards the gospel. Paul says, this is why I'm suffering as I am, yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed.

And I'm convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. Read that again because it gets quite dense at the end there.

I am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. Now, just to confuse things further, different Bible translations translate this slightly differently.

The NIV says what we just read, he's able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. The English Standard Version says, he is able to guard until that day what's been entrusted to me.

So it could be that it's been entrusted to us, or it could be what we've entrusted to God. Okay? But whatever it is, whatever way around it is, it doesn't matter too much.

- [26 : 11] The question is, what is this thing that has been entrusted to us, or that we have entrusted to God? And we're not told, but the context is, it's the message of the Gospel.

This whole chapter is about the message of the Gospel. So this means two things, both that the Gospel will continue to be proclaimed until Christ's return, and that the Gospel will continue to be effective in your life, and my life, if we're Christians, until Christ returns.

Why does God guard the Gospel? Well, for our sake, yes, for our benefit. But also, God guards the Gospel for his own honour and glory.

Think about this. It's the Gospel that declares who God is, and what he has done for us. Is that not honour and glory to God?

He guards the Gospel because it is defending, it is proclaiming, it is guarding his own honour and glory. It brings him glory. So, secondly, Timothy must guard the Gospel.

- [27 : 29] Read this in verses 13 and 14. What you've heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus, guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you.

Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit, who lives in us. How is Timothy to guard the Gospel? How are you and I, therefore, to guard the Gospel?

Well, it's put in two ways in these two verses. The first is, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, verse 13. Can you see there in verse 14, to guard the good deposit.

These statements, they're talking about the same thing, but they have different emphases. Keep in the pattern of sound or healthy teaching, as Paul advised Timothy.

Timothy had to remember the example of godly living from his mother and grandmother, that we read in verse 5. We read that last week. And that he's also had, the teaching he's already had from Paul.

- [28 : 34] He's to keep it, and he's not to deviate from it. He's to guard it. He's to keep the pattern of sound teaching, what he's been told. When Paul is, and he's also to guard the good deposit.

Well, what is the good deposit? It's the Gospel again. A treasure worthy of guarding. So when Paul is executed, and when Timothy is left to pass on this Gospel, he's to remember what he has been taught, and he's not to deviate from the pure Gospel.

He's told this particularly, because we read about chapter 4, verse 3 and 4, there will come those into his church that will teach a false Gospel.

So he has to guard it. Okay, so that's enough about Paul and Timothy. How again does this apply to us today? False teaching was not only rife in the first century, Church.

It's all about us today as well. What I mean is those who would add to the Gospel, or those who would take away, subtract from the Gospel.

[29 : 58] I've got one illustration in this talk, or I'm very poor on illustrations, and I apologise now, but this one is worth listening to. You have a glass of water, right? Well, you have water.

I was told in my chemistry lessons that water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen. David's nodding.

Thank you, David. So if you take out the hydrogen, what have you got? Have you got water? No, you've got oxygen. Okay? My grandchildren love kind of ribena or blackcurrant squash, and when I pour that into the water, is it still water?

No, it's squash. It's juice. If you add anything, or if you take anything away from the Gospel, it's no longer the Gospel. That's why it's so important.

It's important as a church, but it's important for you and I too, as individuals, that we guard the Gospel. We don't add additional rules.

[31 : 04] We don't take out essential elements, even though they're unpopular, like you need to repent of your sin. If the Gospel is God's initiative, he is guarding it, then to change it in any way, for whatever reason, it won't be the Gospel, it won't be profitable, and it's actually fighting against God.

So pray that as a church, we will stay true to the Gospel. We won't be tempted to add in extra rules. We won't be tempted to soften up the message to make it more palatable, perhaps.

So just finally, how are we to guard the Gospel? There in verse 14, we're told, with the help of the Holy Spirit, who lives in us. That's what the NIV says.

The original, more accurately, puts it slightly differently, and some translations have, by the Holy Spirit. I prefer that, because it helps me to realise that it's not something I have to do.

It's not up to me to guard the Gospel, in a sense. The Holy Spirit, as we call on him, as we plead with him, as we pray to him, he would do that for us.

[32 : 29] He would do that through us. So, as individual Christians, and as a church, we need to regularly seek God about this, that we may keep this Gospel pure.

Just in summary then, we've seen that Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel. We've seen his charge to Timothy, and to us, to guard the Gospel. And, we need to ask God, to help us, to do that very thing.

Let's pray now. Father, we do thank you, for your marvellous Gospel. For those of us, that have experienced forgiveness, a new life in Jesus.

Lord, we rejoice. We thank you so much. Thank you that it wasn't up to us. We couldn't do it. So you did it for us.

Thank you, Lord. Help us, Father, as a church, and as individuals, to guard this precious Gospel, and to be true to you, and not ashamed.

[33 : 33] In your name. Amen.