

May 2, 2021 - II Timothy 1:8-12 - “Serving God Unashamed”

Introduction:

I can still remember standing outside of Independents Hall in Philadelphia along with a number of other students from Homiletic class 101. We were for the first time to give a gospel message to the crowds of people leaving their offices and going to lunch. Needless to say, I was nervous but probably not as bad as the student who was designated to go first. However, I was dealing with something else something that I believed would hinder my performance and make my message ineffective. That something was fear and shame. I was to some degree ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I was learning not to be ashamed of the gospel and this process was my teacher. So, the preaching marathon began. I heard a student tell the professor that one of the people who had witnessed his sermon had been offended by the message. His response was: “The Gospel is offensive”.

Paul tells us in Romans 1:16, **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.** If we are honest we all have struggled with this at one time or another for various reasons. I will share a few that are the most prominent. Paul begins in verse eight stating to Timothy, *“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord:* What He is declaring is an important principle for Christians...

I Don't Be Ashamed of the Gospel vv.8a

1. The Gospel is offensive and this is the number one reason we fail to witness”. The Holy Spirit convicts people of the truthfulness of the message... people are sinners. We are all guilty of Christ death and hell is our just desert. We must always remember the power is in the message and it delivers one from the penalty and condemnation of sin.

2. **Second**, we are ashamed of the Gospel because we are a man pleasers rather than God pleasers. That is human nature. In a day of political correctness Christians are more worried about what their peers think than what God thinks. Overseas many are martyred for their faith and even in America Christians are being shamed, persecuted and jailed for their beliefs. So we become ashamed because we want to please ourselves by avoiding any fear or pain. In the end we will answer to God with what we did with the Gospel. We are to be good stewards of the message. In Matthew 10:28 Jesus said, **And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**

3. **Third**, we are ashamed of the Gospel because we don't really believe the complete power of the Gospel. There is no doubt that in a world that wants instant gratification, self-sacrifice is a tough sell. Part of the problem is that churches preach a Gospel that promises that Jesus will fix all our problems... So, when things get tough, many people bail out. A long-term commitment to our Lord involves self-denial (**Luke 9:23 &24**) it is hard to swallow for those that have been told The American Dream is the way of happiness. The Christian life is not easy but the true way to eternal joy is in Christ alone. So, that leads us into the heart of Paul's message...

II Don't Be Ashamed of Me or Afflictions vv 8b -12

1. Paul continues, “**nor of me his prisoner: But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God (1:8b)**. Another aspect of serving with courage is “not to be ashamed of other Christians”. Sometimes we are tempted to be ashamed of a brother or sister in Christ. Maybe it has to do with their boldness in expressing their faith or their unwillingness to compromise their convictions... We may not agree with their methods or convictions, but we must cherish their commitment to the Lord and the fact we are part of the same spiritual family. Again, we must not be ashamed of the gospel and those that preach it. **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**

2. Suffering, ridicule, or persecution in any form is not something we will endure by our own power but by the power of God. This kind of enduring power is not available until we need it. When we are suffering for the gospel, we will receive supernatural strength according to the power of God (2 Timothy 1:8b).

Do you know why most Christians never really experience the power of God in their lives? They are never in the midst of circumstances where they need it. This goes back to my third reason we are ashamed. They just “go with the flow.” But when you endure suffering, in whatever form, because of the Gospel, you will experience God’s supernatural power in your life. This kind of power is reserved for those who are not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord (1:8a). Look with me at **II Corinthians 12:9, 10**. We serve in His powers.

3. The message that Timothy is not to be ashamed of is God’s plan of salvation. The emphasis in next three verses is on grace. God saved us; we did not save ourselves (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). He called us, not on the basis of our good works, but wholly on the basis of His grace. There are four kinds of grace: (1) Saving grace (Ephesians 2:8-10); (2) Sanctifying grace (2 Corinthians 9:8); (3) Sustaining grace (2 Corinthians 12:8-9); and (4) Serving grace (Hebrews 12:28). Serve God with courage serve Him without being ashamed.

Paul identified himself, saying, “I have been sent as an apostle under authority to communicate the truth of God through proclamation. That’s his calling. “That’s my duty,” he says. “And for this reason” – verse 12 – “for this reason I also suffer.” for what reason? “For doing his duty. I suffer because I preach. I suffer because I preach truth. I suffer because I claimed to be the representative of God, who preaches truth. That’s why I suffer.” Nevertheless...I would remind you that at the writing of this, the apostle Paul is facing death. He is waiting at the blade of the axe that will sever his head. He realizes it is only a brief time.

Conclusion:

The result of serving God with courage and not being ashamed is effective. God asks us to be available. He asks us to serve Him to the best of our ability; knowing that He is the One who makes us effective. If you are here without Christ as Savior, there will come a day when time will be up. It is good news that God thought of you and loved you before you even existed. Find new life in Christ today before it is too late.

