

1 Timothy 1:8-18 – “Unashamed”

Summary Statement:

This passage emphasizes the call to endure suffering for the gospel and to bear witness to the truth of Christ, encouraging believers to remain steadfast and unashamed of their faith.

Outline:

1. Unashamed of our Testimony – 1:8-10
2. Unwavering in our Trials – 1:11-12
3. Unyielding of the Truth – 1:13-14
4. Unbroken in our Trustworthiness – 1:15-18

1. Unashamed of our Testimony – 1:8-10

1:8 - *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,*

Paul has just reminded Timothy that God hasn't given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (1:7). This means that Timothy did not have to feel any shame over the life, the ministry, or the people he's been called alongside.

Two specific things he does not need to be ashamed of:

The testimony of our Lord.

What is the testimony [Gk=*martyrion*] of the Lord? **1 John 5:11–12**, *"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."*

The testimony of the Lord is that "[He is] *the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through [Him]*".

Life is found in Jesus alone!

- Now imagine in this day what that would have been like to testify of Jesus. Nero was blaming the Christians for the burning of Rome in 64 AD (which many suspected he was the guilty party).
- The persecution of Christians was intense and brutal at this time. To testify of Jesus was to potentially put your head on the chopping block or draw a large target on your back.

- It's possible that Timothy was starting to hold back a little in testifying of the Lord. Especially as he sees his dear mentor now in a cold, dark prison.
- But Paul encourages Timothy – and us – not to be ashamed of testifying of Jesus. We'll see why we should not be ashamed momentarily.

But secondly, Timothy was not to be ashamed of Paul:

Of me [Paul] **His prisoner.**

Notice what Paul says here. He's not a prisoner of Nero or of Rome. He's not a prisoner due to unfortunate circumstances. He's a prisoner of the Lord.

He would use this language elsewhere in his letters (Eph 3:1; 4:1).

- What Paul is saying here is that this is all happening according to the will of God. It's easy to fight against things that are not comfortable and look for escapes when our circumstances are less than ideal. But sometimes these are the places God has for us to do a work in us or through us, or simply to bring glory to God.
- Paul is on death row, and yet he's being used to write one of the more personable and encouraging letters that not only would have benefited Timothy, but every believer throughout the centuries.

And he tells Timothy, **share with me in the sufferings for the gospel...**

Share in the sufferings for the gospel??? I'd be happy to share a sandwich with you Paul. Maybe share a pizza with you, you are in Italy after all. But share in sufferings? Doesn't sound too enticing.

And yet, that's what we're all called to do. The gospel naturally brings about suffering. People are opposed to it. They rebel against it. Those living out the gospel and sharing the gospel are going to feel the brunt of people's animosity toward it. Christians in this day were being persecuted heavily.

But Paul encourages Timothy to not be ashamed of it. There is no shame in suffering for the gospel because what the world doesn't know is that it's actually the power of God.

We can bear the suffering **according to the power of God**. They're not things we can necessarily bear in and of ourselves, so we need to lean on God to sustain us and strengthen us. And we will be according to His power (*1:7).

- Paul would also say in **Romans 1:16–17**, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the*

righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.””

- The Gospel then itself contains power. It establishes an ongoing dynamic rather than a static declaration.
- Paul reveals this in the next couple verses:

1:9-10 - *who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, ¹⁰ but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,*

Here's what the gospel has done for us:

1. ***Saved us...***

Apart from God we were in a worst place than any prison in Rome. We were objects of wrath. We were guilty before God because of our sin. We deserved His judgment, death and hell. But He delivered us and saved us from that position through His Son Jesus Christ who died on the cross to pay the price for our sin and take away its penalty. It's been said that He has saved us from the penalty of sin, He is saving us from the power of sin, and one day we'll be saved from the presence of sin.

2. ***Called us with a holy calling...***

Holy simply means set apart. We are not to be of this world. We are now set apart to God and for God, to be used in the service of God. That's not just a holy calling, that's a high calling. We're not just saved from something, we're saved to something – to relationship with the Most High. It doesn't get any better than that.

3. ***Shown us grace...***

The gospel (or salvation) is not dependent on our works. Everyone breathe a sigh of relief. Because I know I wouldn't make it if it was dependent on my works. We can't earn our salvation or righteous standing before God. This has all been worked out ***by His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.***

This is more than just some fanciful story somebody made up to make them feel better about themselves. This has been revealed in living colour – in flesh and blood – when Jesus appeared in His incarnation. This is real and historical!

Jesus came to reveal God's plan of redemption. A plan that was set in motion ***before time began.***

4. ***Abolished death...***

The penalty of sin is of course death. We all deserved that. But this death has been abolished. This is the Greek word *katargeo* [kat-arg-eh-o] and it means to cause something to lose its power or effectiveness. Death may still be a thing, but it has no bearing for the believer. It has no power over us because it only brings us into eternal life. When physical life breathes it's last, we're ushered into the presence of the Lord.

That's the next point of what the gospel means to us...

5. ***Brought life and immortality...***

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, those that put their trust in Him are given life. True life, the real life. We don't fear death any longer because it's been replaced by life and immortality. Jesus told Martha in **John 11:25–26**, *"...I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

Do you believe this wonderful truth today?

This is the gospel message. This is the good news! That God has saved us, called us, He's working out His glorious plan in our lives, and has rendered death inoperative. He's given us life and immortality. This is great news. This is the gospel that is worth living for, and it's the gospel worth dying for.

There's nothing to be ashamed in that!

2. Unwavering in our Trials – 1:11-12

1:11-12 - to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. ¹² For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

Paul knew that God had appointed him to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the gospel. This was not an occupation Paul sought out himself. Otherwise he would have packed it in when the going got rough. But because God appointed him, he was ready to keep going even in the face of suffering.

And his suffering was a direct result of proclaiming this gospel. This world is antagonistic towards the things of God. Don't expect fanfare for standing for the truth. But we need to be unwavering in our dedication to the Lord. He's worth it.

- "What is the reason for this link between suffering and the gospel? What is there about the gospel which men hate and oppose, and on account of which those who preach it have to suffer?

Just this: God saves sinners in virtue of his own purpose and grace, and not in virtue of their good works (9). It is the undeserved freeness of the gospel which offends. The 'natural' or unregenerate man hates to have to admit the gravity of his sin and guilt, his complete helplessness to save himself, the indispensable necessity of God's grace and Christ's sinbearing death to save him, and therefore his inescapable indebtedness to the cross. This is what Paul meant by 'the stumbling block of the cross'. Many preachers succumb to the temptation to mute it. They preach man and his merit instead of Christ and his cross, and they substitute the one for the other 'in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ' (Gal. 6:12; cf. 5:11). No man can preach Christ crucified with faithfulness and escape opposition, even persecution.¹

But Paul didn't hold back in suffering. Paul proclaims, ***I am not ashamed***... He knew that life was awaiting him. People may mock and persecute, but God will reward. He's worth it. Let us not be ashamed in any of this but let us be bold to proclaim Jesus Lord of all.

Notice Paul didn't say, I know what I believe, but rather, ***whom I have believed***. Paul's faith wasn't in some orthodoxy, it was in a person – the person of Jesus Christ. He was his life.

What was it that Paul committed to the Lord? His very life. Everything he's done for the Lord has been a surrender of his life to the glory of God.

Acts 20:24, *"But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."*

Paul knows that the greatest thing we could commit to the Lord is our lives. We value our lives. We don't want anything to happen to our lives in an adverse way. But Paul sees that the Lord is able to keep this life safe. He's entrusted it to the

¹ Stott, J. R. W. (1973). *Guard the Gospel the message of 2 Timothy* (pp. 42–43). InterVarsity Press.

Lord knowing that it will pay off in that Day he is with Jesus and is given eternal life! It's a guaranteed investment where the payout surpasses any of the suffering you may endure in this life.

Are you persuaded that what you've given to the Lord, or done for the Lord, will be rewarded in that day we stand before Jesus? Are you persuaded that he is holding your life and will lead you into eternity? May there be no doubt of this.

3. Unyielding of the Truth – 1:13-14

1:13-14 - *Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.*

Paul has laid the foundation of teaching the Holy Scriptures and now he asks Timothy to continue in that.

Timothy was living in a day where the Word of God was being challenged. This has always been the ploy of the enemy. Right from the beginning we see Satan saying, “*Has God indeed said...*” (**Genesis 3:1**). We see this happening more and more today as well. And when the Word of God is relegated to a secondary place, that is when you will see error and deception creep into the church. This was of paramount importance for Timothy to hold fast the pattern of sound words. This again speaks of wholesome words. This Word brings health to our lives.

In faith and love... The Word of God is to be received by faith and in faith. This not only speaks of trust of it, but dependence on it. And in love. Love for God and love for others that motivates you to not only guard it, but share it.

That good thing that was committed to you, keep... Again, this is speaking of the gospel.

The NIV says, ... *carefully guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you.*

- You see, this is more than just holding on to something for someone. It means that you are diligently guarding it, protecting it, and using it wisely.
- Are we doing that with the things God has entrusted to us?

Timothy had something very precious passed down from Paul and ultimately the Lord. And he was to guard it from being corrupted through distortion, dilution, deletion, and addition.

- “With his usual skillful way with words, Paul is saying in effect that as God has guarded the deposit of his life (and will guard Timothy’s) so also Timothy must guard the deposit of the faithful account of the gospel that God has entrusted to him.” ²
- May we be sure to do this very thing.

Paul now gives an example of those who were ashamed of what the gospel produced and an example of one who was not ashamed.

4. Unbroken in our Trustworthiness – 1:15-18

1:15-18 - *This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶ The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; ¹⁷ but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. ¹⁸ The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.*

Paul seemed to be abandoned by many in a time of great need. Phygellus and Hermogenes were two such people that perhaps distanced themselves from Paul so as to not suffer the same fate he did.

Here’s the only place that these two are mentioned in God’s Word and they’re being mentioned for unfaithfulness. What a way to be remembered in history.

- How would people characterize your life if they had to do it in one sentence?

Onesiphorus, unlike the previous two, was not ashamed of Paul’s chain. He came often to refresh Paul and encourage him. Paul prays that he will receive mercy in that day he stands before the Lord.

- Mercy is used here in the sense of reward.
- ***That Day*** is the Judgment Seat of Christ where every believer will stand before Jesus and be rewarded for what they’ve done for Him in this life.

*Live unashamed today, and you won’t be ashamed on that day.

² Knight, G. W. (1992). *The Pastoral Epistles: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 380). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

Points to Ponder:

1. Where am I most tempted to feel ashamed of my faith – work, family, social circles?
 - Do I avoid identifying with Christ when it might cost me something?
2. Am I holding fast to the pattern of sound words, or have I softened truth to avoid tension?
 - What truth of the gospel am I currently neglecting or minimizing?
3. Remember that Jesus bore the shame of the cross that you would not have to. Live in that freedom He has provided for you and do so through the power of the gospel!