

## 2 Timothy

### I. Introduction

A. **2 Timothy 1:6-12** . . . For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. [7] For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. [8] **Therefore** do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, [9] 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 granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, [10] but now has been revealed by 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 an apostle and a teacher. [12] For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

B. Last Sunday we considered the value and importance of God giving us a disposition or mindset of power, love, and discipline – **power** to remain faithful and unshakable in the face of opposition; **love** that deals appropriately with the most difficult or cantankerous person; and **discipline** that reveals itself through careful thinking so that we use power and love according to godliness. Today, we are going to consider the destructive power of shame, the price of boldness, and the power from God that enables us to suffer for righteousness sake.

### C. Prayer

### II. The destructive power of shame, the price of boldness, the power of God

A. [8] Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God.

1. (*DSB paraphrase*) Therefore do not let **shame** silence you in those situations where you could openly stand with God and declare truths from God's word about how we are to live. Don't let **shame** stop you from acknowledging you are a co-worker with me in evangelizing unbelievers and teaching believers how to live godly lives – even though I am in prison for these things. Rather, join with me in

- paying the price of serving God and speaking the truth of God to whomever will listen – for God will empower you to deal with whatever suffering you are forced to endure for His sake.
2. There are three things in **vs 8** that we ought to consider because they affect how, when, and where we stand with and for God.
    - a. **First**, there is the probability of being shamed for serving God and speaking the truth of God to whomever will listen.
    - b. **Second**, you will pay a price for openly talking about (1) believing in God and (2) the wisdom of living according to God's word.
    - c. **Third**, it is the empowerment of God that enables you to endure the cost of publicly standing with and for God.
- B. The probability of being shamed for serving God and speaking the truth of God to whomever will listen.
1. Shame has a good side and a bad side, a productive side and a destructive side.
    - a. The bad or destructive side of shame is when it deters us from doing what we ought to do – that is, when it gets in the way of doing what is the right, loving, or godly thing to do.
    - b. As Christians, when shame deters us from serving God as we ought, or from loving others by speaking truth to them, or from standing in solidarity with believers who are being mistreated for their faith in God, we have allowed shame to become bad or destructive. And this destructive side of shame not only negatively affects us, it negatively affects those around us.
  2. For example, when shame stops us from giving help to those who need it, or deters us from speaking truth to those who need to hear it, we are harming them – possibly for eternity.
    - a. When, out of shame, we hide our identity as a Christian, we allow the darkness to grow darker and the light to grow dimmer.
    - b. When shame keeps us from standing with and supporting fellow Christians who are being mistreated for their faith in God, we are weakening the testimony of the church and abandoning them in their time of need. In **vs 15**, Paul talks about this happening to him during his imprisonment in Rome, for as he said, “all who were in Asia turned away from him.”
    - c. Finally, this kind of shame damages our relationship with God – as it did with Peter. And if we don't repent and change our ways, it can damage our relationship with God for eternity.

- (1) Jesus talked about this in **Mark 8:38**, “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”
    - (2) Paul restated Jesus’ words in **2 Timothy 2:12b**, “If we deny Him, He also will deny us.” That is the sign of a seriously damaged relationship between God and us.
  3. We live in a society that in some ways despises shame, yet in other ways uses it to coerce it’s non-compliant members – including Christians – into compliance. We see this happening all around us in how unbelievers respond to the Christian’s view of God in light of their views of God, and how they respond to Biblical morality in light of their morality.
  4. So what are Christians to do?
    - a. Paul’s answer in **vs 8** is rather simple, “do not be ashamed.” However, for most of us that simple answer, though easy to say, is not so simple to apply.
    - b. Why? Because it can be costly to stand with God and for God in a world that increasingly despises God and treats godly ethics and morality as being restrictive, narrow, unduly judgmental, and in some ways unjust.
    - c. It is in times like these that shame can become a motivating reason to hide our light or silence our mouth or distance ourselves from believers who are more open and bold about standing with and for God than we believe it is safe to be.
- C. Without question, there is a cost to acknowledging you believe in God and talking about the wisdom of living according to God’s word.
1. For Paul, the cost included 39 lashes with a whip – five times, being beaten with rods – three times, being stoned – one time, spending time in jail, being falsely accused and maligned as someone who is in ministry for personal fame and fortune, being persecuted by Jews in predominantly Gentile areas of the world, and eventually being put to death. I think we can agree that these are serious costs.
    - a. We have the OT accounts of God’s prophets being mistreated and murdered, of Daniel being fed to the lions and his three friends being thrown into the fiery furnace. And though Daniel and his friends lived, others didn’t.
    - b. **Hebrews 11:35-38** provides a gruesome account of the price people paid for standing with and for the Lord.

- c. Currently, Christians are being brutally killed in Nigeria, and imprisoned or forced into re-education camps in China – just to name two countries that are currently persecuting Christians.
  - d. In some middle-eastern countries it is a legally punishable act, including the punishment of death, for a Muslim to convert to Christianity. And in many Muslim communities, it is an acceptable practice for a father or an uncle to put to death a family member who converts from Islam to Christianity.
2. And though this kind of brutal treatment of Christians is happening in only a few areas of our world, milder forms of persecution are on the increase almost everywhere.
- a. For example, in the western world, it is now an acceptable practice to publicly ridicule and shame Christians by calling them self-righteous, judgmental, and intolerant. Some are being ostracized by family members, friends, co-workers, and people in their community. And some have been forced out of their jobs because they won't support the world's changing moral codes.
  - b. The point being, there is a cost involved in standing with and for God – and being shamed is one of those costs.
3. According to the Lexham Bible Dictionary, shame is a mix of dire feelings that result from public exposure, embarrassment, disgrace, social rejection, ridicule, and dishonor – all these things can negatively affect our sense of well-being, reputation, social standing, and our financial stability. And it is these kinds of costs that tempt us to care more about self-preservation than about God's honor, or the good of our community, or the spiritual well-being of those nearest and dearest.
4. Jesus warned us that we might experience such times.
- a. **Matthew 10:24-25**, “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. [25] It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household!”
  - b. **John 15:18-20**, “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. [20] Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”

- c. The point Jesus is making is that we should not expect to be treated better than He was treated. The reality is, if Jesus could not stand with and for God without being mistreated, neither can we.
  - d. And I don't think Jesus was making this point to comfort us, but rather to urge us to be realistic about the fact that it can be costly to stand with and for God.
5. Which brings us back to our question, what are Christians to do?
- D. Paul answers this question in **vs 8**, where in essence he says that the empowerment of God will enable us to endure the cost of publicly standing with and for God.
1. The scripture states it a different way in **Philippians 4:13**, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."
    - a. According to **Ephesians 3:16**, we ought to be asking God to strengthen us with His power in our inward being so we can maintain a proper relationship with Christ, love others as we ought, and be confident that we are safe in His love – regardless of our circumstances.
    - b. According to **Colossians 1:10-11**, we can live lives worthy of our Lord, faithfully pleasing Him in all respects, and patiently bearing fruit in every good work **because** He strengthens us with power by His glorious might for these very things.
    - c. And as you recall from our study of **2 Timothy 1:7**, it is God who gives us the disposition or mindset of power, love, and discipline so that we are able to **replace** timidness and shame induced silence **with** a courage and boldness that openly and clearly stands with and for God.
  2. For an example of someone who endured public shaming yet remained faithful to God, faithful to the message, and faithful to the work He was called to do, consider Jesus. And we will only consider the hours leading up to and including His crucifixion.
    - a. He was spit on, hit in the face and head, stripped of his clothes, ridiculed, insulted, made to carry His own cross through the streets of Jerusalem – streets which just a week prior brought Him into Jerusalem to cheers and praise and worship. And finally, He was nailed to a cross between two known thieves.
    - b. How did He endure such shame and remain faithful to God and God's word? You may want to answer that question by saying He did it because He could. After all, He was God.

3. Though there is truth to this answer, Jesus was as human as you and me. His sinlessness, faithfulness to God, and boldness in standing with and for God was not because He was God, but because (1) He worked at drawing near to God, and because (2) He was serious about obeying God in spite of the cost to Himself, and because (3) He entrusted Himself to God, even when His propensity for self-preservation was strongest – as it was during His prayer time in the garden of Gethsemane.
4. We get a picture of how Jesus did this in **1 Peter 2:21-24**, “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, [22] Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; [23] and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; [24] and [in spite of what it was costing Him], He [went on to bear] our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds [we are] healed.”
5. What Jesus did, we can do. Though shamed and mistreated, though the price may be more than we want to pay, we can – like Jesus – draw from God the strength to bolster our courage and feed our boldness in order to stand with and for God.
6. The reality is, we are not alone when standing with and for God. Nor are we left to our own strength and courage. Our boldness is not dependent on an assertive, take-charge personality.
  - a. And though we cannot see the infusion of God’s strength or the reality of God’s presence, we have both in fullest measure.
  - b. And though we may come out of the lion’s den like Daniel or be stoned to death like Steven, we won’t be and cannot be separated from the love of God which is ours in Christ Jesus – in this life and throughout eternity.

### III. Conclusion

- A. (*DSB paraphrase*) Therefore, do not let **shame** silence you in those situations where you could openly stand with God and speak about truths from God’s word about how we are to live. Do not let **shame** stop you from acknowledging you are a Christian – even though it may cost you more than you want to pay. Instead, join with those Christians who have and still are paying a price for serving God and speaking the truth of God to whomever will listen – for God will empower you to deal with whatever suffering you are forced to endure for His sake.