

Don't Ever Be Ashamed of the Gospel

by Bryan Gibson

Either before or after you read the rest of this article, read 2 Timothy, chapter 1. Paul's inspired message to Timothy (and to us) is very simple: don't ever be ashamed of the gospel. This message is delivered in two ways: through a series of very pointed exhortations, and then through a number of different examples, both good and bad. Let's identify the exhortations first.

1. "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" (v. 8).
2. "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (v. 6).
3. "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (v. 13).
4. "That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us" (v. 14).

Let's see if we can sum up these words to Timothy (and to us): I know it's not easy; I know you're being persecuted, but don't ever become the least bit timid or ashamed of the gospel. Hold on to the truth you've been taught. Practice it, preach it, and defend it—no matter what the consequences may be.

As we indicated earlier, this chapter is more than just a series of exhortations. Exhortations are good, but if you can back them up with some examples, they become even more powerful. Here are the ones Paul uses in this chapter:

1. Timothy's own mother and grandmother, who both possessed an "unfeigned faith" (v. 5), and who taught him the Scriptures from childhood (2 Timothy 3:14-15).
2. Paul himself, who said, "...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" (v. 12).
3. Onesiphorus, who "was not **ASHAMED** of my chain," who ministered to Paul, both while he was in Ephesus, and while he was in prison in Rome (vv. 16-18).
4. And then in contrast to these good examples: "...all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes."

Combine the exhortations with the examples and you've got one powerful message. Let's see if we can sum it up again: Timothy, don't be a coward like Phygellus and Hermogenes. They turned away from me, because they were ashamed of the gospel. Stand up for the Lord and His gospel—like me, like Onesiphorus, like your own mother and grandmother. If we can do it, so can you.