*Introduction*

The passage before us in 2 Timothy this morning is a vital one. It runs from verse 6 through 18. In fact that whole last half of the chapter... really surrounds one theme and that is the theme of "Not being ashamed of Christ."

Not being ashamed of Christ is mentioned in verse 8. It is mentioned again in verse 12. It is mentioned again in verse 16. That then is the theme of this portion of Scripture.

And we're going to be looking at this section for the next couple of weeks DV.

We cannot hurry our way through it, it's just too important. It speaks directly to my own heart very pointedly and I need this perhaps far more than any of you do. And so I don't want to rush. I do want us to grasp the truth here in a way that we can understand the whole picture. But also I want to give time to the details which are so very, very, vital.

At the time of the writing, Paul is in a dungeon in Rome. He has been incarcerated in prison for the last time in his life and he is here writing the last epistle of his life.

This is his last will and testament, the final words of the Apostle Paul, just a little time before his death and entering into the presence of the Lord he had served so faithfully.

And in the midst of it is this one saint of God whose heart seems to be divorced from his circumstances and set on this young man, Timothy, to whom he writes.

Paul knows he's at the end of his own life and ministry. He knows they'll just be a matter of days perhaps before his life is snuffed out in this world. But the ministry must go on and he knows that in great measure it is in the hands of young Timothy.

Timothy must take the torch, the baton, the mantle, he must carry on and so Paul writes this epistle to strengthen him.

Timothy perhaps is not of the same constitution as Paul. He's not that strong character, that forceful dynamic personality who can stand against any one person or any group of people in any event and hold his ground unwaveringly for the cause of Christ.

There aren't many like that and certainly Timothy didn't have all that same strength that Paul had. In fact, it's probably very likely that Timothy drew strength from Paul and now that Paul would be gone it was of some burden to him that Timothy find strength within himself from the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Timothy has to carry on. And he is perhaps by nature timid and he is under tremendous stress because as a young man he's trying to set the church at Ephesus right and that means he has to attack at the highest levels of leadership as well as at the level of the people.

He has to be able to defend himself against all kinds of philosophical theological error that's floating around. And also the Romans have now unleashed a wholesale persecution against Christians whom they have blamed for the burning of Rome which Nero himself had incinerated. And it may well be that for the cause of Christ Timothy too could be imprisoned and his life taken away.

But so much has been invested in Timothy, he has been the protege of Paul. Paul has been his mentor for several years. It's vital that that which is entrusted to Timothy be able to be used to its maximum in the generation to come and so Paul is deeply concerned that Timothy hold the line. Perhaps the sum of the epistle is in chapter 2 verse 1 where Paul writes, "***You therefore my son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus***." The whole epistle is a call for strength in spiritual service against opposition.

The basic structure of the epistle is an exhortation to Timothy to be strong and to do his spiritual duty no matter what comes against him.

The first five verses acted as a motivation to Timothy. Now we come to verses 6 to 18 and they go a step beyond motivation. Any time you want to put someone in the Lord's work, you start with motivation. There has to be a reason for them to do that. And he piled up those motivational elements in the first five verses.

But then it is necessary for effective service to Christ to have a pervasive attitude. And what is that attitude? It is the attitude of not being ashamed of Christ...to put it in the negative. To put it in the positive, being courageously bold to speak for Christ.

That's the underlying necessary attitude for anyone who is going to have an effective ministry for the cause of the Kingdom. There must be a willingness to be courageous and bold for Christ, no matter what that costs, no matter what that means, no matter what opposition that may bring up.

So, in these verses Paul speaks to the matter of not being ashamed three times because that's the heart of what he wants to say regarding Timothy's attitude. It is a call for Timothy to be courageous, to be bold, to have an uncompromising, unflinching commitment to proclaim Jesus Christ no matter what it costs.

And anyone who is going to be effective has to take that position.

Now let's face it, this is a very practical word for us.

Every one of us have had occasions in our lives, including me, when we have been ashamed for one reason or another to speak of Christ or to be linked with Christ. Perhaps we were embarrassed.

Perhaps we were afraid we'd be rejected.

Perhaps we were afraid that we didn't have inadequate words to say.

Perhaps we were afraid that we had lived in such a way that if we were to speak of Christ people would say, "Wait a minute, that's not consistent with what I know about you and the way you live."

So whether it's at work or at school or in our social contacts, all of us from time to time have been ashamed to speak of Christ.

There have been times in my life when I have had occasion to speak for Christ and said nothing and should have said plenty. We've all gone through that, fearing rejection or embarrassment, or worrying about putting our position, our reputation in jeopardy because of a strong identification with the gospel of Jesus Christ. And if we're going to be successful in serving the Lord, we've got to get the place where we have victory over that shame or embarrassment or fear, whatever it might be.

And it's not just persecution. Timothy was under the threat of persecution that could have cost him his life but the Bible says even the fear of man brings a trap. Just being afraid of what people say about us, or how they will react to us if we boldly proclaim Christ is enough to clam us all up on some occasions.

We're not alone. Let us to go back for a moment to Matthew chapter 26 and a very familiar and almost classic portion of Scripture.

In Matthew chapter 26 our Lord Jesus was on trial and during the trial, you'll remember Peter hung around the courtyard, the rest of the disciples had left him and fled. They were all not only embarrassed but they were frankly afraid for their life. And when Jesus was taken captive, they ran as fast and as far as they could into hiding because they weren't about to put their life on the line which shows the weakness of their commitment.

But Peter maybe a little stronger than they were hung around at a distance. But when the test came in this very classic account, you remember what happened beginning in verse 69 ***Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee." 70 But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."***

***Matt 26:69-70 (NKJV)***

Just flatly lied rather than be identified with Jesus Christ and be in any kind of jeopardy. "And when he had gone out to the gateway, another servant girl saw him and said to those who were there, This man was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied it with an oath, I do not know the man." Another lie and this time with an oath. "And a little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, Surely you too are one of them for the way you talk gives you away," had that Galilean accent. "And then he began to curse and swear, I do not know the man. And immediately a cock crowed and Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, ***Before a cock crows you will deny Me three times. And he went out and wept bitterly.***"

Now that is the classic illustration of being ashamed of Christ. And we have all sort of climbed on the bandwagon to condemn Peter.

In the past we've all thought how awful, how terrible, how weak, how unthankful, how unloving, how ungracious to treat Christ so. How sinful to lie in that way. And yet without exception everyone of us who loves the Lord Jesus Christ have had our moments, too, when we might have spoken for Christ and failed to do that.

We may not have cursed and swore and denied association, but we've all been ashamed of Jesus at some point in some place at some time.

But it's wonderful to look at the story of Peter because you learn that... even Peter was recoverable. And in John chapter 21, do you remember that Jesus met Peter on the Sea of Galilee shore after His resurrection, and He said to Peter three times, "Do you love Me? Do you love Me? Do you love Me?" And of course the three questions related to the three denials. You denied Me three times, will you affirm you love Me three times?

In other words, Peter ashamed of Christ was useless. Absolutely no function in Christian ministry could be given to him, he was useless if he was going to be ashamed of Christ. How can you proclaim what you're ashamed of? But the Lord had to restore him. And He did and said, "Do you love Me? Do you love Me? Do you love Me?" And when Peter responded, "I love You, I love You, I love You, Jesus three times said, Feed My sheep, Feed My lambs, Feed My sheep."

Now you're fit for service. If you love Me, if you love Me enough to...what? Well then Jesus said to him, "Some day somebody's going to tie you up and take you where you don't want to go." And John said Jesus said that referring to the death by which Peter would glorify God.

In other words, "Peter, do you love Me? Will you serve Me even though it means your death?" And Peter said yes, obviously.

Because in the text of John 21 he followed Jesus. And you see him on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 standing up with boldness and courage and conviction in an unflinching spirit and he denounces the whole populace of Jerusalem for crucifying the Lord of glory. And he preaches Christ and Him crucified and he preaches the resurrection and he preaches the judgment of God so that the people cry out and say, "What shall we do?" And he calls for repentance and three thousand of them are converted to Christ in that moment. And he went from being ashamed of Christ to being a bold proclaimer of the very Christ who was once an embarrassment to him and a cause of fear.

It's only when you get pass that shame, that fear, that embarrassment, whatever it is, that you become useful to God. Where there is boldness and courage and an unflinching conviction and commitment to proclaim Christ no matter what it costs, you have a useful servant of God.

Could it be that Timothy was a little weak also like Peter? That Timothy tended to be a bit fearful? That Timothy was being hit from so many sides with so many threats and so much opposition that he was really falling a little bit?

I don't think Timothy had grown totally cold in his spiritual life. I don't think he had abandoned anything. But I think he was kind of cooling off. I think the fire was waning a little bit. I think the battle had taken a toll on him because this epistle of 2 Timothy has very little commendation of Timothy, the rest of it is exhortation after exhortation after exhortation and I think that tells us that it was given to a man who needed that.

Peter was ashamed of Christ but when he got his life straightened out, he was very useful. And not only did he preach with power on the day of Pentecost, but he preached with power throughout Jerusalem and filled the city with his doctrine. He preached with boldness and power clear through the book of Acts until he disappears from the scene. And even when he was dragged into the Sanhedrin and they told him that he was to stop doing that, he said, "***You judge whether we ought to obey God or men.***" He it was who boldly thanked God for the privilege of suffering in the proclamation of Jesus Christ. He was a different person. He yielded to the power of the Spirit of God and he was useful to God and bold and courageous. So there is recovery even for a waning believer.

**Being ashamed – It’s serious!**

To understand how serious it is to be ashamed of Christ though, let's go beyond Peter. And I want to take you to some words that Jesus spoke Himself. In Matthew chapter 10 would be a good place to start and we're just going to kind of introduce the concept this morning and maybe get into the first point. But in Matthew chapter 10 we have a very interesting section of Scripture.

I want you to pick it up as Jesus teaches here regarding the cost of discipleship at verse 32 ***"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.***

***Matt 10:32-33 (NKJV)***

In other words, Jesus says everyone who openly, unashamedly, unabashedly with conviction speaks My name before men, I'll speak their name before My Father. In other words, if you'll claim Me, I'll claim you. If you don't claim Me, I won't claim you.

Verse 33, " ***But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.***"

Now we're dealing with a very serious issue here, friends. This is a matter of salvation. If you are continuously and constantly ashamed to confess Christ, then He will be ashamed to confess you before His Father. You don't belong to Him if He doesn't belong to you. If you won't acknowledge Him, He won't acknowledge you. And the implication here is that there's a price to pay for that. Notice verse 34, "***Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth, I didn't come to bring peace but a sword.***" Jesus is saying I know there's a cost here. "***For I came to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law and a man's enemies will be the members of his household***."

In other words, I know that if you confess Me in that Jewish environment, you're going to pay a price for it right in your own family. But if you're not willing to do that, then I'm not willing to confess you. And verse 37 He follows it up, here's the real issue, it's who you love most. "***He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. He who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. He who doesn't take his cross...that means be willing to die...and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. And he who has found his life shall lose it. And he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it."***

In other words, if you're willing to confess Me, if you're willing to take what rejection comes, if you're willing to give your life over to Me even to death, then I'll confess you before My Father.

But if you're ashamed of Me, and if you're constantly ashamed of Me and continually ashamed of Me, then I don't have any relationship to you at all and I will not claim you before God.

In Mark chapter 8 verse 36-38, you remember this text, don't you? ***For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? 37 Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."***

***Mark 8:36-38 (NKJV)***

What a statement. That's repeated, by the way, in Luke 9 verse 26.

Now those passages tell us a very disturbing thing that there is a damning sin among unredeemed people and that is the sin of being ashamed of Christ.

Those people who as a life pattern want nothing to do with Christ and are not willing to confess Him before men and take whatever opposition and take whatever hostility and take whatever rejection may come will find some day when Jesus comes that He will not consider them to belong to Him at all.

At His return He will reject them and be ashamed of them. He would be embarrassed to have any association with those who were embarrassed to have any association with Him. He would be ashamed to allow into His heaven anyone who was ashamed of Him. And they will be consigned to eternal hell for He will not allow in His presence one who does not desire to confess His name.

Now what am I saying? I am saying it is characteristic of unredeemed people to be ashamed of Christ.

And if a believer is ashamed of Christ, then he is behaving as if he were unredeemed because it is our very nature as believers, it is the very definition of who we are that we live to name the name of Christ.

We are even called Christians...Christians. The kind of shame that marks an unbelieving soul should never mark a Christian, and yet sometimes it does.

I suppose that shouldn't shock us since every other sin that unbelievers commit from time to time and place to place, believers may indulge in...except the ones of rejecting God and Christ.

We do commit sin and sometimes we even are ashamed to be identified with Jesus Christ. But that should not be as a true Christian. If we as true Christians were to do that, then we would be acting as if we were unredeemed.

How can one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, how can one who receives the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord be ashamed of Him?

And yet in such subtle ways we are.

Oh, we would never say that we're ashamed of Him. Maybe we wouldn't even go as far as Peter in a hostile environment and deny the Lord if our life was on the line.

Maybe we wouldn't go that far, but there are times and places when the shame comes out.

And so the seriousness of this is pointed out not only by Peter's shame and the need to restore him to make him useful, but by the fact that this is characteristic of the unredeemed, not the redeemed. And we're acting like them if we show shame for the one who loved us.

But there's even another thought. Look at Hebrews, that wonderful epistle. In chapter 2 , one of the most, I think, motivating striking statements of our Lord.

Hebrews 2 :10, ***"It was fitting for Him***...that is Christ...***for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies***...that's Christ...***and those who are sanctified***...that's us...***are all of one*** ...that's God...and if Christ is from God and we're from God, ***for which reason Christ is not ashamed to call them***...what?...***brethren*** or ***brothers***." And then he quotes out of Psalm 22, "***I will proclaim Your name to My brethren***."

Listen to this. Jesus Christ in that Messianic Psalm 22 was not ashamed to call us His brothers. May I suggest to you, does it even need to be suggested, that He has every reason to be ashamed of us?

Do you think there is anything positive that comes to Christ by His association with us? Does He profit by that? Or does that tend to drag His name down?

Well the answer is yes on both counts.

There are times when we live and speak and act to bring honour to His name. There are times when we live and speak and act to bring shame to His name, right? But the thing that overwhelms me is in spite of our sin and failure, He is not ashamed to call us brothers. How in the world could we ever be ashamed to call Him brother who is without sin?

Scandal after scandal after scandal through the history of the church, dragging the name of God incessantly into the mud and yet God in His sweet mercy and grace is not ashamed to be called the God of those that bear His name. And if God is not ashamed to be called our God and if Christ is not ashamed to call us brother, then how can we possibly be ashamed to name the name of God and name the name of Jesus Christ?

*Conclusion*

And so, it is a serious thing to be ashamed. It renders you useless in service, as it did in Peter's case. It makes you behave like an unregenerate person.

Furthermore, it perverts to the extent that the one who is not ashamed of you though you are shameful, you're ashamed of though He is without flaw. No place for being ashamed. And that's why it's so important for Timothy because underlying all effective service is this courage, this boldness. If there's shame there, you're not going to be effective. And that's why verses 6 to 18 deal with the subject. Now let's go back and look at them.

PART 2

*Introduction*

I was reading of John Huss. John Huss the great pastor at Prague, called the morning star of the Reformation because it sort of started with him. Was arrested, condemned and sentenced to be burned at the stake by the church, that's how corrupt the church was in 1415. And when he was tied to the stake, set to be burned to ashes, he prayed from Psalm 25 and verse 2, ***"In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust, never let me be ashamed."*** And he went to death unashamed of his identification with Jesus Christ.

But how do you do that? How do you live a life that's not ashamed? Well he gives us here, I think, eight aspects...eight features that are implied down through verse 18. All we're going to do today is look at the first one because I wanted to spend the time introducing the idea. But let's look at the first one. How do you get the focus of your life right so that you can live a bold courageous confrontive unashamed life?

**The first thing he says to Timothy is to refresh or renew your gift...refresh or renew your gift.** What does he mean by that? Now listen carefully to what I say right now. It means, get a grip on what you're supposed to do. That will help. That will help. In other words, if I know that I am here for the purpose of proclaiming the name of Christ, then being ashamed of that violates my very reason for existence. That's how basic it is. That's how it strikes at the very root of my being because, you see, as a spiritual entity I have been given a gift from God for ministry. If I don't use that in the exaltation and proclamation in the name of Christ, then I have literally ceased to function at the very basis of my spiritual purpose. Notice that in verse 6, "And for this reason," he says, "I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

In other words, he says, "Timothy, renew your commitment. Refresh your commitment to use the gift of God that's in you." You have been designed by God for a certain function, for a proclamation and an instruction and a leadership within the body of Christ. You must do that or you cease to function at the very point of your being spiritually. You're in this world given a gift from God to do a ministry. If you don't do that then you're here for no reason. You have ceased to mean anything. You might as well leave. That's the idea. Renew your commitment.

Now look at the specifics of verse 6, "For this reason I remind you," what reason? The reason of verse 5, "That I know your sincere faith and I know you have great spiritual roots from Lois and Eunice and I know that in you dwells that which is genuine spiritual life." That's what verse 5 is really intending to say. In other words, because I know you're a true believer, because I know your spiritual roots and heritage, because I know you're genuine, I therefore know you have a gift of God and you need to use it. And that can be said of every believer. Every believer in Jesus Christ has received a spiritual gift. He divides to every man severally as He will, [1 Corinthians 12:11](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Corinthians%2012.11) says. Every believer possesses a gift. [Romans 12:3](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Romans%2012.3) says, "Each man has received a gift in line with the measure of faith and the amount of grace that God wants to dispense." And whatever your gift is, get on with using it. Be about using it. That's what you're for.

Notice that verb "kindle afresh." I remind you to kindle afresh. Why is he reminding Timothy? Well I think Timothy was on the cooling side. I think he was waning a little bit. I think he was sort of on the back side, down hill slope, if you will. And Paul uses here a present infinitive indicating continuous action but nonetheless it is a call to continually kindle afresh. It's like Paul's own words in 1 Corinthians 15, I think it's verse 31, "I die daily. Every day of my life I get up and bury Paul and let Christ live. I don't worry about Paul, I just let Christ live and then everything's okay. I don't try to protect myself. I don't try to comfort myself. I bury myself and I let Christ live." And that's what he's asking Timothy to do. He's saying, "Timothy, I'm reminding you to get that fire going again and keep it alive, keep it blazing." It's the positive side of the negative statement in [1 Thessalonians 5:19](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thessalonians%205.19) which says, "Quench not the Spirit." Don't put the fire out, fan it...fan it. And as I say, I believe that Timothy needed to do this. Something wasn't just right in his life.

Now notice the little phrase "the gift of God," charisma, grace gift, charisis grace, charismais the grace gift. You don't earn it. You can't gain it. You can't seek it. There's no way you can get it on your own. There's nothing you can do to deserve the gift. God gives every believer the gift that the Holy Spirit sovereignly wants to give. That's what it says, 1 Corinthians 12, I just quoted it, He divides to every man severally as He wills. You cannot seek a gift of any kind. Now there were given gifts, according to Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, gifts for the functioning of believers in the body of Christ for the building of that body. Romans 12 lists some of the categories of giftedness. Romans...1 Corinthians 12 lists some categories of giftedness, they're not quite the same which leads me to believe that there's a little latitude there, they're sort of general ideas of areas in which the Spirit gifts people...in preaching and teaching and helping and administrating and believing or faith, and which I think is tantamount to giving in many cases. Gifts that can...categories of gifts that can come in all kinds of shapes and sizes and forms. And what you have is general categories of gifts in which the Spirit enables believers to function. You have a category of teaching. You could have thousand teachers, they would all teach distinct from each other. You have preaching and there are myriad of preachers and each of them approaches their preaching a little bit different than others. You have people in leadership and styles vary and ministries vary as much as the people vary.

So, you have there some categories of gifts. It's very much, I believe, like a pallet and God has basic colors and those are those categories of gifts. And I'm not talking about the sign gifts which I believe passed away at the apostolic era, tongues, interpretation, healing and miracles or casting out of demons. But the remaining gifts that are for the edification of the ongoing church, they're like colors on a pallet and God takes His brush and takes a little of this and a little of that and a little of this and paints you just the color He wants you to be. You're a combination of the categories of giftedness to make you unique. That's why Peter can say, "As each man has received the gift." Everybody receives the gift for them. It isn't gifts, it's the gift. But that gift for you is a combination of categories blended together to make you unique.

In fact, let me go a step further. I think your gift frankly is inseparable from your function or your ministry. The only way your gift can be known is in the context of the ministry to which God calls you. If we read 1 Corinthians 12 properly when we receive the Holy Spirit at salvation, when we are baptized with the Spirit, placed into the body of Christ, it is at that time that the Spirit gives us the gifts. So all of us from salvation on possess divine enablement to serve the Lord. In Timothy's case, preaching, teaching, leading, doing the work of an evangelist, all combined to be his gift. Now if Timothy received his gift as normal, according to 1 Corinthians 12, he would have received it at his conversion. The Spirit of God would have planted in him the enabling to do that. But it never came to full fruition, it was always latent until he stepped into his ministry, until he stepped into his calling. And so notice verse 6, "Kindle afresh the gift of God, it came from God which is...where?...where is it?...it's in you." It's an internal grace operation. It's something that is energized by the power of God like nothing else you do, okay? Marvelous thought.

When I use my gift I am more enabled by the power of God to do that than anything else I do. In fact the other things I do may not be enabled by the Spirit of God in a particular way at all. And so he says you have the gift from God in you.

Then he adds this phrase, "Through the laying on of my hands." Does that mean that God gave him the gift through those laying on of the Apostle's hands? It may well be. It may well have been that in a sense Timothy was extraordinary. He was still in the apostolic transition area and maybe he hadn't received his gift at salvation. On the other hand, maybe he had received that gift and it was latent until officially the hands of the Apostle were laid on him, until the hands of the Presbytery in his own church were laid on him, as [1 Timothy 4:14](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Timothy%204.14) says, until word came from God directly through a prophet as [1 Timothy 1:18](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Timothy%201.18) says and in that extraordinary event his gift may have been given or it may have been latent there and it just burst into full flower at that moment. We really don't know which is the case. But the point here is to kindle it afresh.

The reason he mentions the laying on of hands is to affirm that Paul knows he has the gift. Just as in mentioning in chapter 4 verse 14 of the first letter to Timothy, the Presbytery to affirm that he was part of a larger group and accountable to that group for fulfilling the commission that the laying on of hands implied. Just as in chapter 1:18 of 1 Timothy saying the word came from God was an accountability which Timothy had to live up to knowing that this gift came from God Himself.

So here he was, receiving a gift from God verbalized through a prophecy, having the church lay hands on him confirming his commission, and becoming an apostolic delegate linked to the Apostle Paul himself by the laying on of his hands and that's a tremendous responsibility to fulfill. You're obligated to God, you're obligated to your church, you're obligated to me to use that gift, that's what he's saying. And in that sense perhaps Timothy's giftedness was extraordinary. But anyone's spiritual gift puts upon them the demand to use it. Boy, this is so basic...so basic. And if you don't do what you've been gifted to do, then you don't do what you're here to do, you might as well not be around. You're denying the very essence of your spiritual function. And yet the churches are full of people who just don't see that. They think Christianity is a spectator sport and they've done their duty if they show up and listen, sing a few songs. Paul is saying to Timothy, "Look, I put my hands on you as the affirmation of your giftedness and call to the ministry. I put my hands on you and launched you as an apostolic legate, as it were, an emissary, an ambassador of Christ and you've got to do it."

Now that's where your boldness starts. It starts with a recognition that you're here to do a ministry. That's where it starts. If you're going to be encouraged and enthusiastic and courageous and bold, it starts when you know that you're here to name the name of Christ, to exalt Christ, to use your gift to serve His name. And so you never are ashamed of Christ, your very reason to be is to serve Christ, whatever your gift. You may say, "I only have the gift of helps, I don't have the gift of preaching." Fine, then the world ought to know you're here to help the cause of Christ. You say, "Well, I just have the gift of giving." Well the world ought to know you're here to give to the cause of Christ. In other words, whatever it is that you are doing, whatever enablement the Spirit of God has placed within you, you are doing it for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ and the glory of His name and the building of His church. And if you're not, then you're denying your very reason to be.

I know some of you are going to say, "Well I don't even know what my gift is." And let me tell you this, I'm not sure I can define mine very well. I know what I do, that's all. So if you ask me what I do, I'll tell you what I do. And I know that my gift is a combination of things that come out in what I do in my ministry but it can't be divorced from my ministry. That's why Timothy's gift even though it was by God given to him through the Spirit, placed within him, never really could be seen and never began to function until he was commissioned and sent to minister. So what you want to do, my dear friend, is minister, go at it. And it doesn't matter that you've got some airtight box in which you can define your gift. All that matters is that you're ministering in the energy of the Spirit of God, seeing what He does with you when you offer your life on the line in service to Him.

You say, "Well how do you know you're even going to get in the right ministry?" I think He'll lead you by your desires. I think commensurate with your gift is your desire...your desire.

I remember when somebody said to me early in my ministry, I counseled them on...I had two appointments in counseling and at the end of the second appointment this man said to me, "I want to tell you something that may help you in your future ministry." I said, "What's that?" He says, "You don't have the gift of counseling." I said, "You just helped me a lot." And you want to know something I said to him? I said, "I'll tell you something else I don't have and that's the desire to counsel." I have absolutely no desire to do that so I'm sure glad I'm not stuck with a gift that I don't want to use. But you want to know something? I want to preach. You wind me up in the morning and I preach. That's the way I function. That's me, that's the truest thing there is about me in terms of spiritual dimension. That's my gift. And so when I want...rather than sitting around in a corner trying to figure out what my gift is, I just say, "O God, fulfill my heart's desire," and that's the thing that moves me in the right direction. Now if you're walking with the Spirit and your life is the way it ought to be, what do you want to do? Now some of you are saying, "I want to be where you are, I want to preach." You have to find your own place. I'm not going to deny your gift, just don't crowd me.

But you need to check your desires and check your heart and find out what your impulses are and what direction the Spirit of God is prompting you and then get busy using that gift. You see, that's where your boldness comes from. Your boldness comes from the fact that this is what God made you to do, this is what God designed you to do. You've got to be doing this. This is your reason for existence. Boy, what a tremendous thing that is to know and to know that God has me here to do this so I can't be ashamed to do it because I don't have any other reason to be. I'm not trying to protect myself in another area because there is no other area. If I don't do this, then I don't do anything that could be even close to this in importance.

So, Paul says, "Look, Timothy, I know it's not easy and I know you're cooling off a little and I know you've got a lot of problems and I know it isn't easy to anticipate persecution that could result in the end of your life, but know this, the first safeguard against being ashamed of Christ is to renew your gift. It's the discipline of ministry." That's what it is, it is the discipline of ministry, doing what the Spirit of God called and gifted you to do. Don't let the fire go low, never ever ever lose the focus that you are here to do what God designed you to do. Nothing more and nothing less. So courage rises out of a sense of giftedness.

I don't have any fear because I'm equipped to do this. I'm not ashamed because this is what I'm designed to do, this is what the Spirit has enabled me to do.

And just to introduce his second point, we won't go into it, he first of all says renew your gift and secondly, look in verse 7, he says, **"Consider your resources...consider the resources you have to do it." God didn't give a spirit of timidity.** If you're timid, God didn't give you that. What God gives, here are His resources, power, love and discipline. If you need discipline, He'll give it. If you need love in which every ministry must operate, He'll give it. If you need power, He'll give it. You have the resources. So, first of all, if you want to avoid being ashamed of Christ then take a good look at your gift and renew it and secondly, take a good look at your resources and use them.

And there's so much to say about that but we'll save it for next time. Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, we do thank You for your love to us, a love which redeemed us, a love which drew us into the family, a love which gifted us for service here. Father, I pray that there will be no one in this place who is not using the gift You've given them. How thankless we would be to receive a gift and never use it. We wouldn't even do that to a friend. Our love for the friend who gave us the gift would cause us to use whatever they gave. And now we know that You have given us a gift for ministry, just like You did Timothy. And that part of not being ashamed, part of being bold and courageous is to know we're functioning with the gift that You gave us by grace, enabled by the Holy Spirit. What is there to fear in that? For we cannot but be successful as that gift operates in the Spirit. But, Lord, help us to realize, too, that the gift is not automatic. It has to be used. We have to be alert to its use. It has to be revitalized. Save us, Lord, from wasting our life and help us to use what You've given us for Your glory in Jesus' name. Amen.

PART 2

We continue our study this morning in the first chapter of 2 Timothy, Paul's last will and testament, the final of his 13 epistles that he wrote, writing this one from a dungeon in Rome about to lose his life and his ministry is well nigh coming to an end. And as he writes, he writes to his son in the faith, Timothy, because he wants Timothy to carry on the work. Timothy doesn't have the strength of character and boldness and courage that Paul, his mentor, had. And it is necessary in this epistle to endeavor to infuse him with some strength that will hold him true to the task as he faces the opposition and the hostility of an unbelieving world.

So Paul writes this letter to Timothy. It is a very personal epistle. Although its truths, no doubt, would have filtered down to the Ephesian church in which Timothy was ministering, it was not written to them, it was written to him. It is personal. It is written from a man of God to another man of God. It is written from a generation to the next generation. It is a passing of the mantle, prophetically, a passing of the baton or the torch to one who will carry on the gospel. Paul, the Apostle, is a victim of persecution, persecution which he knows Timothy will also face and so wants to be sure that Timothy is strong in the face of that persecution.

The epistle, in a sense, can be seen in three different aspects. The first five verses of chapter 1 have to do primarily with motivation. And Paul articulates through implications the motivation that Timothy must have in his heart if he's going to be faithful to the ministry. Secondly, verses 6 to 18 in which we are now studying deals with attitude. There is an underlying and pervasive attitude that is necessary to one who does what God wants him to do. And then finally, beginning in chapter 2, he launches off into specific exhortations related to his ministry. So first the motivation, then laying down the proper and underlying attitude. And then finally the exhortations come as we approach chapter 2.

Now what then is the attitude which Paul has in mind in verses 6 to 18? What is the underlying driving force that keeps us moving ahead in the extension of the gospel? It is the attitude of not being ashamed of Christ. It is an attitude of courage, or an attitude of boldness. It is an attitude that does not equivocate. It is the attitude of no compromise. It is the attitude of confrontation in the face of hostility. It is the attitude of saying what ought to be said no matter who you're saying it to or what the reprocussions might be. In a word, courage...the courage of one's convictions. And, of course, obviously, it's hard to have the courage of conviction if you don't have any convictions to start with. So we assume that Timothy had the proper theology and the convictions and Paul is calling on him for the courage of those convictions.

He mentions in verse 8 not being ashamed. He mentions it again in verse 12 and mentions it with reference to Onesiphorus in verse 16. Three times references made to not being ashamed. And I believe that that is the indicator as to what the major message of the text is to Timothy. Timothy is not to be ashamed, not to allow himself to be pressured into vaccilating, not to lose heart, lose courage, not to be afraid to speak for Christ because it might cost him his life. He is to be courageous.

In fact, this is nothing new. Paul so lived and did the Apostles as well who followed Christ. And did Christ Himself. All of them who have proclaimed the truth of God have faced hostility. We can go all the way back to the Psalms, as I was reading in the Psalms I came across some interesting statements this week. One in Psalm 40 verses 9 and 10. It says, "I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness in the great congregation, behold I will not restrain my lips, O Lord, You know."

In other words, the psalmist is saying, "Lord, You know I am bold. You know I will not hold back anything that ought to be said."

Further in Psalm 71 and verses 15 and 16, similarly the psalmist says, "My mouth shall tell of Thy righteousness and of Thy salvation all day long, for I do not know the sum of them. I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord God. I will make mention of Thy righteousness, Thine alone." In other words, nothing can withstand my commitment to speak of salvation and righteousness.

And then beautifully stated and concisely in Psalm 119 and verse 46, these words, "For I also will speak of Thy testimonies before kings and shall not be ashamed." So really Timothy is in a long line of the men of God who have not been ashamed to speak His truth. There were men before Timothy and women. During the time of Timothy's life and now even long after, those who are unashamed to speak of Christ.

And, of course, that is the underlying attitude that makes anyone effective. No matter how gifted you are, no matter how prepared you are, how well trained you are, how biblically literate you are, how astute you are, no matter how much opportunity you are granted and how open spiritual privilege is to you, if you do not have courage you will not speak. And so basic to all effective ministry is a certain spiritual courage that says I will live the way God wants me to live and I will speak the way He wants me to speak, no matter what the consequences might be.

So that is that to which Paul calls Timothy...that attitude of courage and boldness that is not ashamed to be identified with Christ, even in a hostile persecuting and deadly environment. But how to do that? How to do that? In chapter 2 and verse 1 he says to him, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," but there's more to it than just saying "be strong," there has to be a way to comprehend the reason and the rationale for being bold. And that's what we have in verses 6 to 18. At first reading admittedly, even in my own case, I couldn't quite see how it all was hanging together. But I have found in my own Bible study, I don't know if you find this true, that the more you read a passage and I mean read it and read it and read it and read it and reread it hour after hour, day after day, the more it begins to speak in terms of its content. And I don't mean the specifics, I mean you begin to feel what it's saying. You begin to sense the impact of the whole message. And that indeed in this particular section has to do with Timothy's courage. Therefore all the several parts from verses 6 to 18 relate to that.

Now last week we mentioned number one, Timothy, if you're going to have courage, you have to renew your gift. Verse 6, let's look at it again, "For this reason...that is the reason of your true salvation mentioned in verse 5...for this reason that I know you're genuinely saved and genuinely have a strong faith, I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you, of course confirmed through the laying on of the hands of the Apostle Paul as well as the elders of the church and the confirmation of the prophetic Word of God," those last two being told to us in the first epistle. So he says I want you to renew your gift, that's the idea. Timothy, remember the Word from God in prophecy, remember the elders laying hands, remember my own apostolic hands being placed on you, remember that all of that focused on the fact that God had unusually gifted you for ministry. Now that obviously has fallen into a bit of disuse and you need to renew your gift. That's the first place to start in terms of being courageous, kindle afresh your gift.

Courage, folks, rises out of a sense of giftedness. If I know what I'm equipped to do, then I'm going to be bold to do it. If I know God has said, "you are to do this and I gift you to do that," then I'm going to do that. In fact, I have nothing else to do. There is nothing for me to preserve because the only reason I'm here is to do that. So I'm not going to say to myself, if I preach Christ I'm liable to die. I'm going to say to myself, if I don't preach Christ I might as well die. You understand? In other words, I'm not going to say, I don't want to minister my gift, the cost is too high. I'm going to say, If I don't minister my gift my life has no value. Because the only reason I am here is to do what I'm gifted to do. And that's where the sense of courage and the sense of boldness begins, in understanding who I am. That is the proper kind of self-image, not a psychological one but a charismatic one in the true use of the term charismawhich is the word here for "gift." I am who I am by virtue of my gift. Take my gift away and you have basically just me left in my humanness. So courage rises out of a sense of giftedness.

**Secondly, he says consider your resources**. Not only renew your gift but if you are to be bold in the cause of Christ consider the resources you have at your disposal. Somebody might say, "Well, if I launch out, how do I know I'm not going to get out there and get cut off from the cords of power? How do I know how long my extension cord is?" to put it simply. "How far can I go, how aggressive can I be in my ministry without sort of pulling the plug at the other end?"

Well, verse 7 says very directly, "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but...implied...God has given us a spirit of power and love and discipline." And I want you to listen to this very carefully. Timothy, God did not give you gifts and then equip you with cowardice. You understand that? That's what the word "timidity" means, deilia, it's the only time it's ever used in the New Testament, it basically means cowardice, fearfulness, embarrassment, shame, weakness, frailty. He is saying God did not give you a gift to be used in the advance of His Kingdom and then give you an accommodating cowardice which would literally negate the gift. But rather He gave you power, love and discipline in order that it might operate that gift. This is a tremendous statement. Any weakness on your part, Timothy, is strictly just not cashing your check because the resources are in your spiritual bank, you're just not drawing on them. Vacillation and denial and a lack of boldness and being ashamed to speak for the Lord or live for the Lord or serve the Lord simply indicates that you're not using your spiritual resources. God didn't give you cowardice, God gave you courage.

And notice these three things, and we could spend a tremendous amount of time on each of them, but wanting to maintain the flow of Paul's thought we'll resist that urge. Verse 7 says God has given us, past tense, already in the bank, ***power, love and discipline***. When you became a believer God gave you power. Why? Because when you became a believer you received the Holy Spirit and Jesus said in [Acts 1:8](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.8) you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you. When you became a believer you received divine capacity to love because it says in [Romans 5:5](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Romans%205.5) that due to the sufficient justifying work of Christ the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. And when you were saved you received a Holy Spirit who brings with Him His fruit and the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and the last one is self- control...or discipline.

In other words, this is something you possess. And if you are timid in your ministry, if you are ineffective, weak and failing to be bold and courageous and aggressive in advancing the Kingdom, it is not God who has given you that, you can assume it is sin because God has given you the resources to do just the opposite.

Now look at the word "power" for a moment, dunamis. That word basically means just what it says, might, dynamic energy. It's among those words in the root word group from the root of which we get the word dynamite, or dynamic. It has to do with dynamic energy producing results. God has given you a dynamic to produce results. It doesn't matter what the opposition is, it doesn't matter how powerful the adversary is, the power of God is there to produce. And, first of all, you have to know you have that power. That's why in Ephesians 1 verse 18 Paul prays for the Ephesians this prayer, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us." He says I pray that you will understand His power that is working within you, "the strength of His might" he calls it in the same verse. And then in verse 20, the same power with which He brought Christ from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in heavenly places. Resurrection power, ascension power, that is to say supernatural power, power over death, power over natural forces, that's the power that is given to us. Power that is the power of God.

It's a great Old Testament principle, not by might nor by power but by My Spirit, says the Lord. That is not by human might and human power but the power of the Spirit of God. We possess the indwelling Holy Spirit and in Him there is power. That's a tremendous thing to realize. And that does not operate, mark this, in any area of your life other than the spiritual dimension and service to God. You will be as impotent as anyone else, stuck with nothing but your own natural abilities when you're operating outside the spiritual dimension. But when you begin to operate in the spiritual dimension, you begin to operate on supernatural power to effect results that could never be effected apart from that power, tremendous promise. In fact, that power is even beyond our ability to understand. Paul in Ephesians 1 prays that we would understand it. And in Ephesians 3 says, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all you can ask or think, according to the power that works in us." It's a marvelous thing to live your life in service to Christ and see that power, to see the power of God operate to change lives and move the Kingdom and exalt the Lord. And you have that power. There is no Christian on the face of the earth walking around who doesn't have that power. You may not be appropriating it because it comes to the one who is controlled by the Spirit of God, the one who has set sin aside and is submitting to the leading of God's Holy Spirit, that's where the power operates.

Secondly, talks about love. And love also is concomitant with the receiving of the Holy Spirit. Love which is shed abroad in our hearts is shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes in, deposits the love of God which permeates us and we know that love of which Paul also spoke to the Ephesians, that love which is so surpassing, that love he says which can hardly be comprehended as to its breadth and length and height and depth and it is the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge. Now we have not only power but love and shouldn't power operate with love so that it doesn't run amuck, so that it isn't abrasive or abusive or injurious? So that it is compassionate and sensitive, we have that love. That means love toward God and love toward others. That means love that is directed toward whomever we direct our ministry. Tremendous thought. And it is the kind of love, agape, it is the kind of love that is volitional love. It's not emotional love like philosor a sensual love like eros, it is that love of choice, that highest supreme love where in character volitionally says I will to love you, that's the highest love. It's not a love that is based only on emotion because emotion changes. It's not a love based only on passion because passion ebbs and flows. It is a love based on volition, will, the mind, the highest love...that love which says I choose to love you. And how is it defined? It is a self- denying grace that says I give myself away on your behalf. Directed toward God it means I'll give my life away to serve you. Directed toward others, I give my life away to serve you. It's the same thing. It's that love, Jesus said, that is the greatest love which is willing to lay down its life for the one it loves, [John 15:13](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.13). It is the love that covers a multitude of evils, Peter says. It is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, tremendous thought.

And may I add? It is the love that John said was perfect love that casts out fear, [1 John 4:18](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.18). Perfect love casts out fear. Let me give you an illustration of that. When I love something supremely I..I lose all fear of self-preservation. In what sense? One of my children were to fall into the sea and begin to drown, my love for my child would cause me to dive in to rescue my child with no thought of myself because I love my child to the degree that I would have no thought, that is the perfect love that casts out fear. If I loved God supremely I'll put my life on the line in serving God and have no thought of self- preservation because I love Him more than I love myself. The bottom line is very simple--what I love controls my action. And if I love God perfectly then I have no fear in serving Him because if I lose my life in serving Him I have lost my life for the one I love. And if I lose my life in serving men and bringing them the gospel, then I have lost my life in serving the one I love and if they and God are more precious to me than I am to me then that's no loss at all. Do you understand that? So that kind of love casts out fear.

If on the other hand I love myself and I will do everything to preserve myself and my own life and my own comfort and my own success and my own reputation and I live to satisfy me, then I will not sacrifice for God and I will not sacrifice for you or anyone else. I will sacrifice you for me. And I will sacrifice what God wants for what I want. My life can be measured by whom I love. But if I love the Lord God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength and my neighbor as myself then I fearlessly serve the God I love and the neighbor I love.

You say, "How can you do that?" The love is there, it's a matter of you walking in the Spirit so the love manifests itself. You must walk in the Spirit and these things are the fruit of that walk.

Look at the third one in verse 7. He calls it discipline. It's the word sophronismos, it's a word used only here in the whole New Testament. It's not a word that we have a lot of illustrations of to determine its meaning. But nonetheless its meaning becomes relatively clear in this usage and in what we know about related words to this word. And the basic idea is, it means the control of one's self in face of praise or pain. In other words, it is ultimate self-control. It is the ability to control every element of your life, whether they're positive or negative ones, whether you're being praised or inflicted with pain. It is that wisdom, that sound judgment, that self-control that takes every feature of life and makes it positive for the advance of the Kingdom of God. It's a rich term. It's more than wisdom, James says, "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God who gives to all men liberally and holds back none," it's more than wisdom, it's the application even of that wisdom to every circumstance. In [Proverbs 2:7](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Proverbs%202.7) it says, "He stores up wisdom for the upright." But it's again more than just that. It is that totally ordered life in which wisdom is applied to every situation. It is the ability to prioritize. I can put it, I think, in those terms to give it a best understanding. It means I know my priorities. It means whether my circumstances are positive or negative, I master those circumstances to advance the work of Christ. It is the kind of discipline that says I have no wasted motion in my life. I don't spend my life with trivia. I don't spend my life beating the air, to borrow Paul's expression in 1 Corinthians 9. I don't spend my life shadow boxing. I don't waste my motion. I take all that comes into my life and I use that in a prioritization for the advance of the Kingdom.

Now everyone of us is probably sitting here saying, "I'd like to be that kind of person." And that kind of person you are if you cash in on your resources because the Spirit of God is the divine organizer in your life. And I have thought to myself in thinking this thought that if all of the people who are walking around with an organizer in their hand were totally yielded to the organizer in their heart they might get a lot more done for the advancement of the Kingdom. The issue is not how you keep your schedule written down, the issue is how you walk in the Spirit. And I don't want to belie or make irresponsible...those people who are responsible for schedules, I just want you to understand that you do not learn self-discipline in this regard. You do not learn it. It can't be taught to you by any human source. You don't go to college to learn it. You don't go to seminary to learn it. Nobody disciples you into it. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is a divine resource, the ordered life, that belongs to those who walk in the Spirit, who are filled with the Spirit, who are led by the Spirit, in whom the Word of Christ dwells richly. But it is that incredible ability to order your life so that everything fits into the priorities and enables you to do God's work, no wasted motion.

And what a triumvirate these three things are. And every one of us who love Christ would say, "Oh if I had power...oh if I had that supreme sacrificial love...oh if I only had that order to disciplined and self-controlled life that knew only priorities and followed them through." And the word of testimony of Scripture to you is you have it if you want to cash in on it. If you want to yield to the Spirit. These resources belong to us already. Power to do the task, love to fix our eyes on the persons for whom that task is done, both God and man. Discipline to bring every factor in our life into line to accomplish that task, to order every diverse feature of life and put it somewhere in the mix to accomplish the goal. A tremendous approach to life. And again I say they're not natural endowments.

They're not even talking about that in this text, both Paul and the Holy Spirit. They're not talking about the kind of power that some people have in their personality. There are people who have powerful personality, right? That's not what we're talking about, aggressive people, dynamic people. That's not it. It's not love that belongs to some person who just is basically humanly compassionate, tender, generous, kind, thoughtful, sensitive, whatever. And it's not the discipline of someone who would make a good sergeant in the Marines or the discipline of a soldier or whatever. We're talking here about something that's not human at all. We're talking about a divine endowment...not the result of heritage, not the result of environment or instruction but a gift of God. And Paul says, "Look, Timothy, if you'll just consider your resources you can get on with this. You have the power. God has given you the love of God and man that will make you sacrifice your life. God has by His Spirit given you self-control and a discipline to order your life, to stay on the track of priorities no matter what happens. Now if you'll just renew your gift and consider your resources, you can get on with it."

**Then there's a third point in verse 8 and that's accept your sufferings**. You have to be programmed for rejection. Are you ready for that? You have to be programmed for rejection. People ask me from time to time, "Does it bother you that people disagree with you?" Well I guess in a sense it bothers me if they disagree with the truth because I like to think people will accept the truth. But my computer is programmed for rejection, you have to know that. We did a radio talk show on Friday and it was interesting. I gave my opinion on the current PTL scandal, some of you may have heard that. I don't know, did any of you hear that on Friday on KKLA, a few of you do...it was a two-hour thing and they asked me my opinion and then people called in to give their opinion of my opinion. And many people agreed but there were a few who violently disagreed. But I'm programmed for that. I'm programmed for rejection. I'm programmed for animosity. I'm even programmed for hostility. I'm programmed for that. I'm programmed for threats from people who have said that if we don't change our message or stop saying something they're going to sue us, or whatever it is. I mean, we're all...we all in service to the Lord need to be programmed for that because if you're programmed for that it doesn't come as a surprise. You understand?

But if you've decided that you're going to live a life that is completely comfortable and you're going to do everything you can to evade that hostility, you're not going to be able to do it and when it comes it's going to cause you to be collapsed. That's the problem.

Look at verse 8. "Therefore because of your gift and resources, Timothy, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me as prisoner." No reason to be of either of us. "But join with me in suffering for the gospel." Stop at that point. That's the idea. Timothy, don't be ashamed, suffer. Join with me, get in the group, Timothy, we're all in it together. "Therefore because of your gift and resources do not be ashamed." In other words, don't be reluctant to preach Christ. Don't be reluctant to name the name of Christ. Don't be reluctantly...or reluctant to do the work of an evangelist, that is to go out on the streets and proclaim Jesus Christ all over the city and take what comes. Don't be reluctant to do that. Don't be ashamed...notice the phrase...of the testimony of our Lord, marturion, the Christian message as a whole, the witness of Christ, the gospel. Don't be ashamed to take a public stand for the gospel, is what he's saying. Don't be ashamed to name the name of Jesus Christ and to proclaim in a herald's voice publicly His death and resurrection. Don't be ashamed to call men sinners, damned and on their way to a godless hell. Don't be ashamed to call them to glorious heaven.

Now Paul is not saying stop being ashamed in the sense that Timothy was showing a lot of shame. It hadn't come to that point but surely he had drifted some. And the tendency was to be a bit ashamed in all circumstances to name the name of Christ. There was, after all, a serious and potentially deadly stigma in being identified with Christ, specially for Timothy in his society where Christians were being thrown in jail and killed. And the society saw Jesus as nothing more than a crucified criminal and Christians were nothing more than rebellious insurrectionists who had burned Rome. It could not only be humiliating to be identified with Christ, it could be frankly fatal. After all, the cross to the Jew was a stumbling block and an offense and to the Gentile was stupidity. At best they would think you an absolute fool. At worse they would take your life.

And so, in verse 8 he says, "Do not be ashamed of the testimony...I love this...of our Lord." Personal possession, yours and mine, Timothy, and he links himself in with Timothy. Our Lord. And then he adds, "Or of me as prisoner." The only thing that could be even close to begin associated with Christ in terms of a dangerous thing would be to be associated with Paul. Since Paul was the leading spokesman for Christ, anyone who identified with Paul was in the same danger Paul was in. And to be linked up with Paul could be fatal, too. For after all he was in a dungeon because he preached Christ. And anyone who preached Christ the way he did could wind up in the same place.

So he says, "Look, Timothy, don't be ashamed to be identified with Christ, don't be ashamed to be identified with others who preach Christ like myself, learn to accept your suffering," literally, join with me in suffering. That's one word in the Greek...one large compound verb, almost too long to translate. Join with me in suffering. Literally to suffer evil together, or to take one's share of evil treatment along with others. It just...it's a big word with a lot of English words to say what it says. But it means...expect it, get in the group. Anybody who names the name of Christ is going to experience it. Chapter 3 verse 12, he says it again, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

So you expect it, you program for it. You program if you're a student and you're at campus and you name the name of Jesus Christ, somebody's going to alienate you. You program your mind for the fact that if you're trying out for a team in school and you have a bold and forthright testimony for Jesus Christ, the coach might put you on the bench because he doesn't like what you stand for. Program yourself.for the fact that if you're on the job and you speak of Jesus Christ and live for Christ and call into question a lack of integrity in your business that you're going to get a hostile reaction. That is to be expected, join the group, suffer along with everybody else who ever named the name of Christ in an ungodly environment. Figure that in your family when you alone exalt Jesus Christ and you are a constant rebuke to the consciences of the people there that they're going to react negatively. Program that if you're on a professional athletic team traveling on the road and you live for Christ while everybody else lives to the hilt for the devil, that they're going to resent everything about you. And it's going to be hard for you to be considered a part of the team and they might even cut you. It's happening all the time.

I mean, it's just that way in a hostile world. Now you say, "Well I know a lot of Christians and they never have any persecution." Right, and they never confront the society they're in. If you speak to people the true gospel, not the sort of Pablum approach that we have today, if you tell people they are Christ-rejecting godless sinners on their way to an eternal hell, that's not a popular message. If you confront their sin and demand of them that they repent and bow the knee to Jesus Christ or be damned, that's not a popular message. But if you talk about, "Wouldn't it be nice to have all your problems solved and have a happy life and go to heaven," and don't talk about sin, that will be popular, you might even get a television program to say that. But that's not the gospel.

If you are willing to be bold then you're going to be willing to suffer. So you program yourself for that, Timothy, Paul says, you expect it, that goes with the territory and you're not alone, it's so wonderful. Join with everybody else in suffering for the gospel because we're all in it together. It's a common partnership.

It's curious to me, by the way, that in that verse he calls himself "His prisoner." His--referring to Christ. He was never the prisoner of Rome and he was never the prisoner of the Jews when he was in jail in Jerusalem, he was only the prisoner of Christ who sovereignly controlled his life. And if Christ wanted him in prison, that's where he'd be because there was a ministry to be had in that place. So he says program yourself for suffering. Like that early church, you remember [Acts 5:41](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%205.41), they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ. Program yourself for that. Expect it, don't be shocked by it. It just goes with the territory.

Notice also he says "suffering for the gospel." That's the issue. Not suffering for sin. If you suffer for sin that's your problem. It's suffering for the gospel. Peter talks about that very thing in 1 Peter 4, I think it's in verse 14, "If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you're blessed because the Spirit of glory in God rests on you. By no means let any one of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evil doer or a troublesome meddler, but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed but in that name let him glorify God." Don't be ashamed of Christ because you suffer, be honored because you suffer. You're counted worthy to suffer for His sake. Paul says, "I bear in my body the marks of Christ," Galatians 6, what a happy privilege...what a happy privilege...to take whiplashes and to be beaten with rods and have manacles on my hands and feet that leave their scars for the sake of Christ. Paul accepted suffering as an inherent element in his ministry. In [Ephesians 3:1](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ephesians%203.1) he calls himself a prisoner of Christ Jesus. And wherever Christ took him, that was okay with him.

So if we're in his service we expect it. And we anticipate that. We program ourselves for suffering and we aren't at all surprised when it comes. In fact it's almost a welcome friend because it assures us we're saying something right.

I remember the first time open hostility broke out against me in the ministry here at Grace Church some years ago. My first reaction was, "I must have done something wrong," that passed in about five minutes and I began to realize that we were doing something right...countering an ungodly society.

**And then a fourth, and with this one we'll close our lesson today. A fourth element in being courageous and not being ashamed of Christ is to remember your God, verses 8 to 10.** Picking it up at the end of verse 8 and going through verse 10, "According to the power of God 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 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."

Now let me say this, beloved, those statements that I just read to you at the end of verse 8 down through verse 10 give to us what amounts to one of the single greatest statements in all the pages of Scripture of the doctrine of salvation. In fact, we have here a mini-soteriology for you theological students. We have here a mini-doctrine of salvation that is utterly comprehensive. And naturally the urge in me is to take this thing and turn it into a study of the doctrine of salvation and develop a whole theology out of this which would be about a three-month project. But wanting to do due service to Paul who had not intended to do that in this letter, I will resist that urge very reluctantly. And we will touch it but somewhat lightly this morning, nonetheless grasping the tremendous truth it carries.

He says then, "Remember your God, the God who saved you." And the idea here is that when you're out there using your gift, energized and empowered by the very force of the Spirit of God in an environment of love and discipline you will suffer but don't forget the God who holds you up. Remember your God. Boy, what a tremendous thought. And what God is our God? "The God who saved us, the God who called us with a holy calling, the God who did so according to His own purpose and His own grace, the God who granted us that salvation in Christ Jesus from before eternal times, the God who revealed it in the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," that's the God...the God of salvation in summary. The God who can save you is the God who can hold you. Do you understand that? If God can save me, He can preserve me.

Now let's take those specifically. Verse 8, "According to the power of God." That's...that's what keys the section. In other words, you suffer according to the power of God. What does that mean? With a full understanding of the God who supports you, knowing the power that is available, that God is powerful, God is almighty, God can save us, God can cause us to endure, God can overwhelm our enemies, God can preserve us in the midst of anything. We can face persecution in God's power, millions of people have done it. And even in their deaths the Kingdom has been advanced. Any suffering we ever suffer at the hands of evil men we suffer under the power of God who allows it, who can overpower it at any time. God has amassed His power in our behalf. Jesus said, "All power is given unto Me," and then He said, "I commit it to you in the Holy Spirit." We have power to do all things through Christ who strengthens us, Paul said to the Philippians. He has the power, Jude says in that just incredible little verse, to keep us from stumbling and make us stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy. He has the power to hold us...the power to preserve us...the power to give us victory. Marvelous.

And the substance of our confidence is based on the fact that He had the power to save us. And if He had the power to save us, then He has the power to keep us. See, Romans 5 says that. In Romans 5 the Apostle writes in verse 10 that if we were saved by His death we are being kept alive by His life. In other words, if the death of Christ could save us then the life of Christ can keep us, [Romans 5:10](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Romans%205.10), a great verse. If He is so powerful in death that He can save us, how much more powerful is He in life to keep us? That's why all that are saved will enter into glory. That's why Jesus said, "I have lost none of them but shall raise them all up at the last day." That's why in John 10 it says that they'll never ever ever become not My sheep, no man is able to pluck them out of My hand...He says. Because the one who can save us is the one who preserves us. And there's nothing else to live for than to put ourselves in His power.

Now look what it says about Him. The power of God then is seen in the fact, verse 9, first of all, that He has saved us. He has saved us. It is all of God. If anybody questions the source of salvation, that ought to end that question. He saved us. He designed salvation. He initiated salvation. And He effected salvation in our behalf. He delivered us from sin. He delivered us from our fallenness. He delivered us from death. He delivered us from Satan. He delivered us from hell. That is a powerful work. He overturned the curse. He overturned sin, death, Satan and hell. Incredible reality. The power of God unleashed in salvation that He came in Christ to save sinners was the fulfillment of the plan before the world began that God would save those He chose. A tremendous thing.

God then is Savior. God is Savior. It's used, by the way, the term "Savior" six times of God in the pastoral epistles. His powerful work is that of delivering men from sin and death and Satan and hell. And certainly the one who has the sovereign grace and the sovereign power to do that can keep us, sustain us, preserve us.

Furthermore look at this. He not only saved us, that's negative. To save someone is to rescue them from danger or from evil. But He also called us with or to a holy calling. I like to read it, called us to a holy calling. He not only saved us from sin but called us to a holy calling. The word "called" here has to do with the effectual call, the saving call, not an invitation. It doesn't mean He called like calling sinners to repentance. It is an effectual call, an actual saving call. So when He saved us from sin, He saved us to holiness. That's the idea. He called us to a holy calling. That's how powerful He is. He made the unregenerate regenerate. He made the dead to live. He made the unholy holy. He made the sinner a saint. He called us from sin to God, from dark to light. And so there's a total transformation...the power of God, the invincible power of God. The epistles, by the way, never use the term "calling" to refer to anything but the effectual call to salvation. It is never so used in any of the epistles of the New Testament. It always means an effectual call, a saving call.

Now notice, He saved us, that is rescuing us, from the consequence of our sin and the very plight of our sinfulness and then He called us into a holiness which we never ever experienced which literally demanded the creation of a new nature. So He recreated us as holy in Christ. And then it says, "Not according to our works." That's so important. There's no work at all that you do in salvation. There's no work that you do to deserve salvation. It is a work of God, not according to our works, by the deeds of the flesh shall...by the deeds of the law, rather, [Romans 3:20](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Romans%203.20), shall no flesh be justified for you are saved by grace through faith that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God not of works lest any should boast, [Ephesians 2:8](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ephesians%202.8) and [9](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ephesians%202.9) says. And Titus sums it up beautifully in chapter 3 and verse 5, "He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness but according to His mercy." What a great statement.

So, not according to our works. Now listen carefully, this is the key to the whole point here. If He saved us from our deadness, our sinfulness, and if He by His power not only saved us but made us holy and He did all of that without our help, then, beloved, we do not have to scheme and connive and contrive to preserve ourselves in the process of ministering in His behalf for the one who saved us without our help is also able to keep us without our help. So there's a sense in which I can abandon myself to my cause and leave my flanks unguarded, if you will. I don't have to go through life trying to avoid saying anything that might cause a problem. I refuse to do that. I want to go through life saying the truth and let God take care of the problems. If He can deliver me from sin to holiness, He can deliver me out of anything else because the greatest deliverance has already occurred. The total miracle has already happened.

And then not being able to leave the grandiose truth alone at that point, Paul adds, "And He did it according to His own purpose," stop at that point. What a thought. Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, elect before the world was ever made, names written in the Lamb's book of life from before the foundation of the world. Tremendous statements that the purpose of God was set in concrete, as it were, before the world was ever begun. You were written down in His book because He chose you to believe in Him. And then He effected your salvation, but first He purposed it.

Notice it is according to His own purpose and grace. And He had to put grace in that verse somewhere because there's no other way to be saved. Undeserved forgiveness was required. It is absolutely essential.

So, back to verse 9 and let me sum it up. He saved us by His power. He translated us into a holiness by His power. He didn't use us in any way to do any of that. But it was all according to His own eternal plan and eternal grace which was granted to us in Christ Jesus..get this..from all eternity. Literally from before eternal times. When is that? I don't know. When is before eternal times? That expresses the idea of a remote period that's so remote it's beyond my conception. I don't know when before eternal times was. But that's the time God planned me into His redemptive work. John MacArthur by name was to be redeemed in Christ Jesus and God set that in motion before eternal times. Incredible thought. And see, God had such a plan for my life, such a plan for my life, my destiny was all sealed from before the world began. By the way, this presupposes Christ's eternal preexistence as God as well because it was granted us in Christ Jesus from before eternal times. So Christ Jesus must have been there before eternal times.

What grandiose magnificent thoughts of God's eternal sovereign gracious plan. But it wasn't just a plan that was frustrated. No, look at verse 10, "But now has been revealed," the plan came to pass and now we're in history. We went from eternity to history. It was revealed. It's revealed in history. Notice verse 10, "By the appearing of our Savior," and by the way, Savior most often in this set of epistles refers to God, but the Savior is God and here He appears as Christ Jesus, of course. "It has been revealed by the appearing, the epiphaneiaof our Savior, God, Christ Jesus who abolished death and brought life and immorality to light through the gospel."

Now how did He abolish death? Through His what? How did Christ abolish death? Through His resurrection. So that's what the appearing here means. The word epiphaneiais used several times in the New Testament. In fact it's used I think four times in the pastoral epistles, [1 Timothy 6:14](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Timothy%206.14), [2 Timothy 4:1](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Timothy%204.1) and [8](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Timothy%204.8) and [Titus 2:13](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus%202.13). And all four of those refer to His Second Coming. So sometimes epiphaneiarefers to the Second Coming, the appearing of Christ in glory. Here it refers to His appearing in resurrection. Very clearly that is the intent of the context. The appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus who abolished death and brought life and immorality to light through the gospel. The gospel is Jesus died and rose again. And in that resurrection was the appearing of Christ as the one who had abolished death. Tremendous.

Now listen to this. All of this is to recite for us the power of God. How powerful is God? God is so powerful He saved us. God is so powerful He made us holy. God is so powerful He did it without our help. God is so powerful that He purposed to do it and be gracious to us and set it in place before eternal times in Christ Jesus. God is so powerful that He took the plan He had made and brought it to reality by bringing Jesus through the grave and out the other side. That's how powerful God is. And in so doing, God is so powerful that He abolished death and He brought to light...the Greek verb photizo, He revealed the picture of life and immorality through the gospel. That's how powerful God is. And you've just been swept through the whole history of redemption.

What does it mean to abolish death, katargeo? It means to render inoperative. It doesn't mean there is no more death, it means death has no more sting. It doesn't mean death is non- existent, it means death is impotent. It means for the believer we don't fear death, death becomes a welcome friend and Paul can say, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is...what?...is gain." Far better to depart and be with Christ. We long for the day when this mortal shall put on immorality, this corruptible shall put on incorruption and life becomes life as God intended it, death is swallowed up in life. We long for the time when we shall be clothed, he says in 2 Corinthians 5, with our house which is from above. Death, where is your sting? Death, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin. The strength of sin is the law. But thanks be unto Christ whose given us the victory.

So, death is impotent. It exists but it is abolished as to its power. And so in the resurrection of Christ God abolished death. [Hebrews 2:14](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hebrews%202.14) puts it so magnificently when it says that Jesus Christ suffered death in order that He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil. And He brought life and immorality to light. What does that mean? Eternal life, immortal life, life forever in the presence of God and it all came through the gospel, it says at the end of verse 10. The gospel, what is that? The good news that Jesus died and rose again. The person, the work of Christ, that Jesus died, was buried, came out of the grave, that's the gospel. And we who believe in that are saved.

Do you understand the God that we are talking about, folks? Whenever the Bible wants to celebrate the power of God in the New Testament it always goes back to the resurrection of Christ. And as we go out to use our gift and take our resources and accept our suffering, we do so in great confidence because of our God. And how powerful is our God? Our God is so powerful that He saved us from sin and death and hell. So powerful that He transformed us into holy beings in Christ. So powerful that He did it all without our help. So powerful that He laid down before eternal times a plan and a purpose in grace in Christ to redeem us and in history He worked it out, brought Christ through the grave, out the other side, abolished the power of death and brought to us eternal life. That's the power of our God. And if we understand the power of our God, then we understand the power of the resources at our disposal, right? So when we go out boldly to proclaim Christ, what do we fear? What do we fear? Are men stronger than God? Is the system bigger than God? Are the persecutors potent and God impotent?

So he says to Timothy, remember your God, Timothy. Remember your God. And the power of God and the very God who can bring about the plan of redemption can certain sustain the people He has redeemed. What cause to be cowardly? What cause to be fearful? What cause to be timid or ashamed? None, only cause to be bold and courageous because of the God of power who is working out His eternal purpose in our behalf. What a glorious confidence should be ours in Him. Let's pray together.

We rejoice, our Lord, in having the joy of learning another portion of Your holy Word. What a rich passage. We never understood it like we understand it now. We regret the years that have gone by without our understanding. But thankful are we that we know have a grip on this. Help us to live it out. Help us to be bold and courageous in using our gift, considering our resources, accepting the suffering that may come because we know the power of our God. Help us to keep our eyes on You, not on men. Give us that perfect love that casts out fear. Grant to us in the Spirit that discipline and self-control that orders every element of life to the priorities of the expansion of the Kingdom. Rekindle in us afresh the gift You've given us that it might be used in the energy with which You have empowered it that we might live life here that has eternal meaning and not waste our time. And we pray, Lord, that none of us would ever be ashamed of the one who was not ashamed to call us brother, never ashamed of the God who is not ashamed to call Himself our God. May we never be ashamed of Christ, or ever to be associated with those who proclaim His name but may it be our highest joy and greatest privilege to name the name of Christ and be named among those who preach His name. We bless You for such a privilege in Christ's name. Amen.

PART 3

This morning, let's open our Bibles to our study of 2 Timothy verses 6 through 8 in chapter 1...the very first chapter of 2 Timothy. We're really just getting started in completing this first chapter which is in many ways introductory. I would remind you that at the writing of this, the Apostle Paul is facing death. He is looking, as it were, down the barrel of the gun that will take his life, or rather at the blade of the axe that will sever his head. He realizes it is only a brief time. In chapter 4 he said, "I am ready to be offered and the time of my departure has arrived." He is at the very end. He is in a dungeon in Rome. The ministry that God had given to him has been completed. He has finished the course. He has kept the faith. He awaits his reward.

But before he exits this world, having fulfilled faithfully that which God commissioned him to do, he writes this letter to his beloved son in the faith to encourage Timothy to carry on. Timothy, as we have been learning, was a bit on the timid or meek side, tended to be easily intimidated by those who were opposing him, whether in the church or outside the church and perhaps was in a time at the very writing of this epistle when he desperately needed to be strengthened and called to courage. So it is important for Paul as he is ready to give his life for Christ to call on Timothy to carry on the work. The strength of Timothy's testimony could be that which impacted so many many many other people, positively or negatively.

Now as we have learned as Paul writes this epistle, its intention is to strengthen him. That's...that's kind of the key and it is in chapter 2 verse 1 that Paul says that, "Be strong in the Lord," which may be the focal point of all that he says. But here in chapter 1 before he gets into specific exhortations as to how Timothy is to carry on the work, he calls for Timothy to have the right attitude, underlying what he does is the way he feels and how he thinks. And the attitude that Paul knows Timothy must have is an attitude of great courage. And so here in verses 6 to 18 three times there is mention the idea of not being ashamed of Christ...once in verse 8, once in verse 12, and once in verse 16. And that's the theme here. Timothy, you cannot be ashamed of Christ. If you're going to be effective you have to be bold, you have to be courageous, you have to take your stand and then you will influence others and then you will advance the Kingdom.

I was reading this week about the Boxer(?) rebellion years ago in China and the rebels captured one of the mission stations and they sealed off every exit to the mission station except one gate which they left open. They took a cross and they put the cross down in the dirt in the center of that gate and they said to all of the missionaries and all of the students that were there, for it was some kind of a mission school, that they were to walk out that gate and if they would trample the cross under their feet they would go free. And the record states that the first seven students trampled the cross under their feet and were allowed to go free. The eighth student was a young girl who came to the cross, knelt down, prayed for strength, stood up, walked around the cross right into the firing squad. Ninety two of the remaining students which was all that were left did the same thing and walked to their death rather than deny Christ and trample His cross. The strength infused into the ninety two from the strength of the one girl. What a tremendous lesson that is in the possibility of the impact of a courageous life. And as you and I live courageously for the cause of Christ, as we live unashamedly for the cause of Christ, we have a tremendous impact. And that's what Paul wants Timothy to have.

But how? How is it that you can be impactful for Christ? Well you have to be a fanatic of sorts. I was reading a book this week by Lloyd Billingsly in which he said, "This is the age of fanaticism." He said, "If you don't think this is the age of fanaticism, then ask yourself how much a fanatic a person has to be to murder the baby in their womb, that's fanatical behavior." The fact that a mother would murder her own infant in the protected place of the womb means that that woman for some philosophical or personal reason is an incredible fanatic. That they would do that kind of bizarre behavior and not be ashamed but rather flaunt it is a commentary on the fanaticism of that kind of behavior, that kind of attitude. And yet when we come to Christianity, how few fanatics there are. And those who are fanatics seem so to be looked down on not only by the world but often by the church.

Paul is calling for some fanaticism here. He's calling for a level of commitment that says, "I really don't care what the world has to say, I know what I'm mandated to be and do and that's what I'll be and that's what I'll do. I will boldly stand for Christ."

It wasn't easy for Timothy because there was internal pressure in the church at Ephesus where Timothy was laboring. The church had gone corrupt. It had bad leaders and it was full of sin. Not only that there was persecution coming on the outside because Nero had blamed the Christians for burning Rome and that persecution had ended up in Paul being incarcerated and Timothy knew because of his association to Paul that he was also vulnerable. And so Paul writes to strengthen this young man in his mid thirties and strengthen him in the faith so that he can carry on the work.

Now we've already learned that their first...the first four elements that Paul talks about to strengthen him are very very important. The first thing he says in verse 6 is to renew your gift. "And for this reason I remind you...the reason being because of your true faith, that you're a genuine believer...I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

Every true Christian has a gift. Paul says, "Timothy, you have a spiritual gift. You have a capacity energized by the Holy Spirit to preach, teach, lead, evangelize. You can't let that fall into disuse. Fan the flame. Don't let it die. Kindle it afresh, renew your gift." And I've been saying to you that courage initially in ministry rises out of a sense of giftedness. I can be bold and unashamed and courageous when I know that I'm doing what God has gifted me to do. Now if I was trying to do something that I had no aptitude or skill to do, I might well be embarrassed to do it. But why would I be embarrassed to do that which God has designed, gifted me to do? Courage then rises initially out of a sense of giftedness, that I have been enabled by the Holy Spirit, infused with a spiritual gift for the purpose of ministry in the name of Christ and for the advancement of His Kingdom. And if I know that I am divinely prepared and enabled to serve Christ and to proclaim His name and to represent Him and to build His body, then I have to do what I was designed to do. And frankly, if I don't do that I have violated the very reason for my existence. Not to use my spiritual gift is to place myself in a mode where I might as well be dead as far as usefulness to the church or the Kingdom. If I am not doing what God designed me to do, if I'm trying to preserve my life so I say I don't want to do that, I might lose my life, and then I do with my life something that God never designed for me to do, I might as well lose my life. Better that you should do what you're designed to do and lose your life then save your life by not doing what you were designed to do. What gain is there in that?

So the sense of giftedness is where he starts with Timothy. You've been given a gift. That gift has been affirmed to you by prophecy, by the laying on of my hands, by the laying on of the hands of the elders of your own church. You know what it is. You know what you're to do, now get on with it and do it with great courage because God has designed you to be able to do it.

Secondly, consider your resources. If you're timid, he says in verse 7, God has not given us a spirit of timidity, if you are unashamed...if you are rather ashamed or if you are weak or if you are a bit intimidated, if you are cowardly, you didn't get it from God. What God has given you, already you have it, is power, love and discipline. Power because Jesus said you will receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, [Acts 1:8](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.8), every believer has the Spirit, every believer has power. Not only that, [Romans 5:5](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Romans%205.5) says the love of God is shed abroad in your hearts. You have that love. Furthermore, the fruit of the Spirit is self-control or discipline, [Galatians 5:23](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Galatians%205.23). You have power, you have love, you have discipline. You have the power to minister effectively. You have the love of God and the love of men that draws you into ministry. And you have the ability in the Holy Spirit to construct your life, order your life, prioritize your life to get the maximum effect. Those are your divine resources.

So, Timothy, renew your gift, that is take a good hard look at what you've designed...been designed to do and consider the resources God has given you in which to do that. Thirdly, and this is very important, accept your suffering, verse 8, "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me as prisoner but join with me in suffering for the gospel." Anticipate it. Expect it. If you buy into the health, wealth, prosperity lie, if you buy into what really is a Satanic message that Jesus wants you only happy, only content, only fully well healed, prosperous, healthy, no problems, cashing in on every possible goodie that you could ever imagine, if you buy into that theology then you start to suffer, something's going to go wrong at the very core of your life because it will be totally contrary to what you expected from God. But you need to anticipate suffering. You need to anticipate opposition. You need to anticipate that the truth of God thrown into the midst of an ungodly world is going to get a negative reaction. Opposition is inevitable, it goes with ministry. Loyalty to the gospel means conflict with Christ-rejectors. Learn to expect it.

In fact, I've learned to expect it as a confirmation that I'm doing the right thing. That's part of it.

Fourthly, we saw, remember your God. Verse 8, he speaks of the power of God and then defines that power of God as demonstrated in its greatness in salvation, the saving work. "Who has saved us," took great power to do that, save us from hell and death and sin and Satan, "and has called us into a holy calling," that has not only saved us but made us holy who were unholy. And He did it all, and this is the thing you want to underline, "Not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity."

Now let me give you the perspective. Way back literally from before eternal times, the Greek says, God purposed in His own mind by grace to save us in Christ and make us holy and He did the whole thing beginning to end not according to our...what?...works. Now get the picture. He did it all without us. That's the idea. He did it all without us. And then He revealed it in verse 10, He now has revealed it by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, that is His appearing in resurrection, who abolished death and brought life and immorality (immortality) to light through the gospel. He did the whole saving work by His own plan through His own Son. He saved us. He made us holy. He gave us life. And He planned it all and did it all without us. And what Paul is saying is remember your God, the God who saved you without your help will also be able to preserve you without your help, so you don't have to orchestrate your life for its own protection. Do you understand that? Boy, that's a tremendous truth.

I don't have to spend my time trying to design a comfortable life because I'm responsible to protect myself. Remember your God, he says. And you remember in [1 Peter 4:19](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Peter%204.19), "Therefore let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful creator." Give yourself to God. You remember in the fiery furnace the friends of Daniel said, "You can throw us in the fiery furnace but our God will deliver us," [Daniel 3:15](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Daniel%203.15) to 17? The Apostle Paul writing to the Philippians said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Remember your God.

If you approach ministry that way, you approach it in a way that's going to give you courage. You renew your gift, you consider your resources, you accept suffering as inevitable. And you remember the God who from eternity past planned the plan of redemption, brought it to appearing in Jesus Christ, saved you, made you holy, gave you life. That same God is your God. So remember the power of God.

**Now let's look at the last four. Number five in our list, realize your duty...realize your duty.** Paul then transitions in verse 11 in this rather personal section here to a look at his own life and ministry. "For which...referring back to the gospel, the gospel...for which I was appointed a preacher and an Apostle and a teacher; for this reason I also suffer these things." Now we'll stop at that point.

Paul says because of the gospel, I...that's in the emphatic position in the Greek...I myself was appointed by God, epithan(?), literally given a divine commission. Paul on the Damascus Road was commissioned by God, he was chosen as a vessel unto God. Ananias got the word from the Lord and passed it on to Paul in Acts 9. He was chosen as a vessel by God to serve in preaching the gospel. He says in Acts 20, "I do not consider my life dear to myself. I only want to finish the work the Lord has given me, namely preaching the gospel." I'm not in to self- preservation, I'm in to duty...I'm in to duty. I have been called and commissioned. Just like the Apostles, Jesus had said to them, "Go into all the world and make disciples," so to Paul Jesus on the Damascus Road said you're a chosen vessel, go and preach My name. "And this He spoke concerning the things that Paul would suffer in that preaching." In [Colossians 1:23](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Colossians%201.23) he said, "I was made a minister." I didn't choose it, I was made a minister.

In 1 Corinthians 9 he said, "Don't commend me, I didn't choose to do this. If I do it I do it because God compelled me. Woe is unto me if I don't do it, so don't honor me, pray for me, I didn't choose to do it and I'm in great trouble if I don't do it right." I have this tremendous fear, he says in [1 Corinthians 9:27](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Corinthians%209.27), that I might be a castaway, useless to God because of some sin. I'm in duty to serve Him with my whole heart.

So, Paul had a great sense of duty. Now what specifically was his duty? Well he was appointed a preacher, that talks about function. That means a proclaimer, a herald, one who announces publicly a message. Secondly, an Apostle, that speaks of his authority. As an Apostle he was chosen directly by Jesus Christ and he had a divine commission. So I am a divinely commissioned and sent preacher. Thirdly, a teacher speaks of his content. Preacher is function, Apostle is authority and teacher is content...to teach, that is to disseminate the truth of God. That's how he sees himself. You ask Paul to identify himself, he says 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, Paul? For doing my duty. I suffer because I preach. I suffer because I preach truth. I suffer because I claim to be the representative of God who preaches truth, that's why I suffer. I bear in my body, Galatians 6, the marks of Christ. In other words, they're whipping me because I'm so identified with Christ. They would rather whip Christ but He's not around so they whip me instead. I suffer all these things, he says, for the sake of the gospel. That's the reason I suffer. Imprisonment...that's the reason I have been shipwrecked, that's the reason I have been stoned, that's the reason I have been beaten with whips and beaten with rods and all that chronicle of things he gives in 2 Corinthians chapter 11. That's the reason I'm in jail right now, I'm in a dungeon, a stinking smelly hole in the ground. I'm here. I'm suffering because of my duty...my commission. And he loved it though it brought him great pain.

It's a bittersweet thing. John had the same experience in Revelation when he ate the little book and it was sweet in his mouth and bitter in his belly. There's a bittersweet thing in ministry. Spurgeon really put his finger on it beautifully when he wrote, "A man shall carry a bucket of water on his head and be very tired with the burden. But that same man when he dives into the sea shall have a thousand buckets on his head without perceiving their weight because he is in the element entirely surrounds him. The duties of holiness are very irksome to men who are not in the element of holiness. But when once those men are cast into the element of grace then they bear ten times more and feel no weight but are refreshed thereby with joy unspeakable." That's a beautiful thought. Ministry and duty can be a tremendous burden if you're not in the element of holiness. But once you get in the very element of ministry and duty and holiness and grace and you begin to function as a way of life, then no single duty is a burden at all, it is a joy unspeakable.

Someone said to me yesterday, "How do you do it? How do you keep sustaining sermon after sermon, two sermons a week and writing and how do you do that week after week, year after year? That seems to me to be an overwhelming duty." I didn't know how to answer that because to me it is not a burden. I don't sense it as a burden. People say, "Well, that's like writing two major term papers every week and then having them scrutinized by six thousand people on Sunday morning and another two or three thousand Sunday night and thousands all over the world on tape. How do you do that? Isn't that a burden?" That has never been a burden to me, that is a joy to me because I am in the element of doing what God has designed for me to do and it bears no weight upon me. What is the burden to me is my sin and my weakness, not in my duty.

You know, duty can be the greatest joy or the deepest pain. And I'll tell you how. You do it and it provides the greatest joy. You don't do it and it provides the deepest pain. Duty undone is a killer. There are men whose lives are a shattered pot, as it were, or a vase simply because of duty undone. They've disintegrated. They've come to pieces. There is no evil that can bring such great retribution to the mind of man as the evil of a duty undone. There is no joy that is greater than a duty fulfilled. And I pray that God will give us the grace to do our duty. Paul says, "Look, I suffer these things because I was appointed to do this," very much like the gift point in verse 6. We have a duty. We are bound to do this. There is not a decision to be made. We are compelled to do it. So that's a very important thing, understand your duty.

**Number six, and we get into a beautiful truth here, trust your security, verse 12...trust your security**. Look at this, "But I am not ashamed even though I suffer...why?...for I know, I know..." Now stop there for a minute. "I know" is oidaalong with ginosko, it has the idea of knowing something because you have perceived it with your senses and come to the conclusion that it's true. And he's kind of summing up his testimony here. Others may be ashamed, I'm not ashamed. Others may want to deny Christ, I won't. Others may want to be cowards, I won't. Others may defect, I won't. Why? "For I know," in other words, I personally have come to grasp something...what is it? "Whom I have believed." And whom had he believed? The Lord. He says, "I know first hand and personally the Lord. I can't bail out. Too much intimacy. My faith is a fully settled faith in the one I have personally experienced." Literally, "in whom I have believed" is a perfect-tense verb which means in the past he did it with continuing results. I continue to believe in the one I have already believed in. My faith is in the Lord. This could refer to God, revealed in Christ, and can refer to the Savior Christ Jesus mentioned in verse 10. I really think it's just general for specific reasons it refers to both. The Lord, the Lord God and the Lord Christ...literally I know by personal experience and observation the one whom I have trusted.

Please notice it's not in what I have believed, it's in whom I have believed. The thing that sustained him in suffering was not his theology, it was his God. Do you understand the difference? The thing that sustained him in trials was not doctrine, but fellowship...basic. So he says I know whom I have believed. And because I know Him, follow the verse, "I am convinced." Beautiful word, wonderful thought, I am persuaded, I am utterly confident, "That He is able...dunatos...powerful enough, powerful enough to guard...that's a military term, it literally means to guard...to guard what I have entrusted...that's one word, paratheke, the deposit, the deposit.

Now let me give you the big picture. Paul says I minister unashamedly, I suffer unashamedly because I trust my security. Nothing can take me out of the hand of God. Nothing can pull me out of the love of Christ. I know that. I know by personal experience. You remember, this is the end of his life. I have been through years and years of trials and years and years of tests and years and years of struggles. I have seen the power of God again and again and again. I have seen Him heal. I have seen Him save. I have seen Him do providentially things that had no other explanation than the evasion of God. I have seen it all. I have walked with Him. I have seen the living Christ three times, in personal experience he had. He had ascended to the third heaven, seen things too wonderful to speak. He knew God. He knew Him intimately, personally by experience and observation. And knowing Him in that way, "I am absolutely convinced that He will guard my deposit." And what was the deposit? His life...his life, his soul, his ministry, his time, his eternity, everything he was. I don't have any fear because I trust my security. Boy, what a way to live. I just give my life to God and go on about my business. That's the confidence that you have to have. I made a deposit with God. What did you deposit? Paul, I deposited Paul. I said, "Here, God, here's Paul. Have him. I no longer count him dear to my life or to myself, I'm not interested in preservation, I'm interested in duty. He's yours, take care of him. When You want him to go, he goes."

So, his confidence didn't come from a creed, it didn't come from a theology, it didn't come from an association, it didn't come from a denomination, didn't come from an ordination, it didn't come from anything other than a personal intimate first- hand relationship with the living God whom he so implicitly trusted that he simply gave him his life and went on about his business. In fact, I personally believe that he wished the Lord would hurry up his death timetable. I think he kind of felt in his heart that he was sort of overstaying in this world. He was ready to be offered. He says that in chapter 4.

So he says I trust my security. He'll be able to keep me. Now notice this, marvelous truth, the end of verse 12, "Until that day." What day? What day is "that day?" Look at verse 18, "The Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day." What day is that day? Chapter 4 verse 8, "In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on...what?...that day and not to me but also to all who have loved His appearing." All believers. All believers are going to have a day when they receive the crown of righteousness. On that day. What day is that? That's the day when the Lord comes to reward His church. That day, the day of rewards, the day of the judgment seat of Christ. [Romans 14:10](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Romans%2014.10) talks about the judgment seat of Christ, [2 Corinthians 5:9](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Corinthians%205.9) and [10](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Corinthians%205.10) talks about the judgment seat of Christ. There's coming a day when Jesus will come to reward us. [Revelation 22:12](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Revelation%2022.12), "Behold I come quickly and My reward is with Me to give to every man according as his work shall be." So the Lord Jesus, I believe, takes the church up in the Rapture and right after that we come to what's called the Bemaand we receive rewards. That's what Paul is saying. I know that the Lord is able to hold on to my life until I stand that day to receive my eternal reward. That's confidence, isn't it? I trust my security. I don't need to preserve my life. I believe in Him who is able to keep me from falling and present me blameless before His throne, [Jude 24](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%2024) says. I believe in the God out of whose hands I can never be plucked, John 10. I believe in the words of Jesus that all that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me and I have lost none of them but will raise him up at the last day. Paul is saying I'm going to go and give my life and abandon my life to the cause of Christ because I trust my security. And my security is the Lord Himself.

So what is there to preserve? Does He need me to do that? Does He need me to make sure everything works out right? No, we have supreme assurance. Oh what a marvelous thing. Just imagine if that one doctrine wasn't true. Just imagine if everything in the gospel was true except the fact that the Lord kept you saved. How would you like that? What a horrible horrible fearful omission that would be. But you can trust your life to the Lord and not all the demons in hell can touch you. Great truth. So you want to be courageous, renew your gift, consider your resources, accept your suffering, remember your God, realize your duty and trust your security.

**Number seven, affirm your doctrine...affirm your doctrine**. Boy, this is so important. He says to Timothy, "Look, now, retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us the treasure which has been entrusted to you." He just talked about...Paul just talked about his life being entrusted to God, now he talks about God entrusting the treasure to Timothy. It goes both ways.

What's he talking about? He's talking about doctrine. Go back to verse 13, "Retain" means to hold tightly or firmly, to grasp, hold tightly to the standard, hupotuposis, it means the structure, the outline, the model, the pattern of sound words, healthy wholesome life-giving words...true doctrine, truth. That term is used in 1 Timothy, the strength of calling this young man to hold to truth and sound doctrine, so much at the heart of everything that Paul instructed him. In fact, you remember that we said at the close of the first epistle, you look at it there, chapter 6 verse 20 when we were studying this, "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you." And what was entrusted to him? The truth, sound doctrine...sound doctrine.

Let me put it to you very simply, folks. The reason most people don't have the courage of their convictions is because they don't have convictions. Before you can put your life on the line for what you believe, you have to believe it. And I was on a radio talk show this last week and I said, "Do you know what I believe is plaguing America..." they were asking about what I thought was tragic about the PTL scandal and I said, "what is tragic in my mind is abysmal mistreatment of the Word of God but the fact that the church and so many people who call themselves Christians weren't particularly concerned about this until it finally exploded." In other words, people are all in the name of love wanting to accept any kind of theology that allows for anything. And the reason we don't have the courage of our convictions is because we don't have the convictions to start with. So he is saying guard the truth, verse 14, retain the standard of sound wholesome life-giving words, be committed to the proper theological structure, the proper interpretation of Scripture, the proper outline of the truth that produces spiritual growth, spiritual maturity. Have a theology. We live in a time in the Christian church when the church is atheological. In fact, if you hold firmly strong doctrine people think you're unloving and antagonistic. And sermonettes for Christianettes and pious platitudes and atheological kind of sort of Pablum stuff that's being passed off as Bible teaching is woefully lacking in building backbone into Christian people because it has no sense of conviction. People want to hear fair speeches and words that tickle their ears and make them feel good about themselves. So he says hold to the truth.

And, beloved, I'm just telling you this, part of courage in ministry comes because you have such strong convictions. People with strong convictions tend to be bold. But notice the balance of it in verse 13. While you're retaining this structure and pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, that's the apostolic doctrine that Paul had passed to Timothy under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, he says the things that you have heard that you're holding on to, retain in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. What does he mean by that? He means you hold them first with a right attitude toward God, that is trustingly in faith. Don't hold your theology with doubt, hold your theology with faith. Don't have a theology that is a theology of doubt...well, I think I know what I believe, but I'm not sure, I was surer a few weeks ago before I read this, now I don't know if I know anymore...don't hold your theology in doubt, hold it in faith and hold it in love. Speak the truth in love, it says in Ephesians 5..4:15. Speak the truth in love. So you hold it in faith, not wavering, as James says, "If anybody wavers he's like a man who's tossed and driven by the sea," unstable soul. Don't be like that. Don't have doubt. Be assured that what you believe is true. Don't have a doubting orthodoxy, and don't have a dead orthodoxy, a loveless cold insensitive orthodoxy.

So, retain it but hold it with faith toward God and love toward man. In that way you'll be doing it in the Spirit of Christ Jesus who provides that faith and provides that love. And then verse 14 he says the same thing another way. "Guard..." keep safe, it means, preserve from corruption or destruction. He sees Timothy as a defender of the faith. "Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us." [Romans 8:9](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Romans%208.9) says that every Christian has the Holy Spirit, "If any man have not the Holy Spirit, he's none of His." So everyone has the Holy Spirit who knows Christ. And he says the Spirit is in us. Then through His power guard...what?...the treasure...that's that paratheke...which has been entrusted to you. And what is the treasure? Truth, the Word of God. I said this when we studied [1 Timothy 6:20](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Timothy%206.20) and [21](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Timothy%206.21), we are as a church the guardians of the truth. That's our primary function. We are to guard the truth. We are to secure the truth. We are to hold to the truth. I said yesterday at a meeting we had at the college to some people who were visiting, the primary role of this institution is the same as it is the church, that is to guard the truth, to raise up a generation of young men and women who will hold to the truth, who will retain the truth, who will pass the truth on. That's the issue. What a challenge.

Now the deposit of my life with God is secure, how secure is the deposit of God's Word with me? Boy, I tell you, those people who defect, those colleges and seminaries and churches and so forth that deviate from the Word of God will indeed have a day of accounting to face because they have done the one thing that God warned not to do and that is they have failed to retain the truth. They have failed to guard the truth...the treasure, the deposit that was entrusted to you. God has entrusted His Word to me. This is the most solemn responsibility that I have in my life. And I have a solemn responsibility for the trust of my wonderful wife. I have a solemn responsibility for the trust of my dear children. But they combined do not come to the level of the trust that I have to maintain the integrity of the Word of God. That's the most sacred trust I have. I am more than anything guardian of the truth and so are you, all of us are.

So, he says, "Look, Timothy, hold on to your sound doctrine. If you're going to have courage you have to have convictions to have courage about." And you ought to thank God if you have a solid conviction in your heart about the truths of God's Word. You're rare, you know that? You're a rare person. In fact, when your other Christian relatives come to visit you may even have arguments because you believe some things so strongly that they don't believe. And they vaccilate but you don't. Thank God that you have a strong understanding of Scripture and stand for your convictions. And hold your doctrine in faith toward God no doubting and in love toward men not abusing.

So, how do you avoid being ashamed of Christ? Renew your gift, consider your resources, accept your suffering, remember your God, realize your duty, trust your Savior, affirm your doctrine, and **lastly, choose your associates**. Boy, this is so important. I couldn't figure out how this last section fit in and I was going over it and over it and over it in my little study and I just didn't see how it all fit in. And all of a sudden it just hit me like a bolt...I know how this fits in, he's throwing in this little deal at the end here to crystallize into groups those that are ashamed and those that aren't. You say, "I read that once and that was obvious to me." Well I'm a little thick. It took me about a whole afternoon to land on that one. And that's what he's saying, choose your associates. Paul said in [1 Corinthians 15:33](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Corinthians%2015.33), "Bad company corrupts good morals." Who you run around with is very important. You get around courageous people and guess what? You start feeling courageous. You get around weak spineless people and you'll begin to feel like they feel. One's boldness and one's courage has a lot to do with one's associates. And so he gives two options.

Group 1, verse 15, "You are aware of the fact that all...boy, what a word...all who are in Asia...Asia Minor where Ephesus was a leading city...turned away from me among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." You are aware. Why was Timothy aware? Because these people were in Asia where Timothy had been for several years, ministering in Ephesus. You're aware that when I was taken prisoner and the persecution came against the Christians that all those people who are in that area of Asia Minor turned away from me. They didn't want anything to do with me, they were ashamed of me because once I became a prisoner they didn't want to be identified with me at all because they feared that they too would be imprisoned. That's what he means when he says don't be ashamed of the Lord or of me, His prisoner. You see, being identified with Paul was a dead giveaway about what you believed. And if they had put Paul in prison, there was every reason to put you in prison if you were associated with Paul. And so what happened in Asia Minor was many of the teachers and those who had gone along with Paul, as soon as Paul was incarcerated, clammed up, wanted nothing to do with Paul and wanted no one to know they had anything to do with Paul. They were very much like Peter standing by the fireside at the trial of Christ saying, "I never knew the man," and cursing with an oath. They were ashamed. They were cowardly, trying to protect themselves. And he says all who were in Asia repudiated, or literally deserted me, that's the Greek word in its literal sense. Deserted me.

I'll tell you, the pain of ministry, disloyal people who when the going gets difficult disappear very fast and get critical and start picking at you. The people that you have spent your life feeding and nurturing and that's a heart breaker and it's a heart breaker for Paul and for anyone. They weren't even willing to identify with Paul at all, though they had gained everything he had to give. They had literally taken his life. He had spent himself to get them the message of Christ to save them. He had given himself to teach them. He had carried the burden of their defections and their spiritual failures and longed as a woman bringing birth to a child that Christ would be formed in them. And here they are denying they even know the man. Sad, no wonder he was lonely as verse 4 of chapter 1 indicates, sitting in that dungeon. And so he says to Timothy, you're aware of the fact, not speculation but the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me. And then he names two, Phygellus and Hermogenes. We don't know anything about them but Paul certainly didn't sweep this under the rug. I mean, he tells the whole wide world for every generation yet to come that these two guys were well-known defectors. Maybe they were leaders, pastors, elders in one of the churches in Asia Minor, maybe even in Ephesus. Maybe they went around saying how much they were enchanted with the proclamation of the gospel. Maybe they sought to do that. But once the persecution started they were not interested in being identified with Paul at all.

Paul doesn't let them off the hook. He doesn't in the name of quote/unquote "love," slide it under the carpet and deny it. He articulates their names for the whole wide world to hear because they are defectors. He doesn't have some loving obligation to hide that. In fact, in his own teaching in 1 Timothy he says the elders that sin rebuke before...what?...all that others may fear. It may well be that these were two elders. Let the church know who they are. Let the church know of their spiritual defection and cowardice. I want to label that group, that ashamed group, that cowardly group, the defector group. So, Timothy, if that's your group, then go on over to that group of the Phygellus/Hermogenes association. That's the Hall of Shame, not the Hall of Fame. That's for people who deny Christ. Choose your group, Timothy, choose your group.

Do you ever think about that? The way you live your Christian life identifies with a whole wide group of people who choose to live that way. I don't know what group you want to be in. I'd some...I'd sort of like to identify with the Hebrews 11 group if I had my choice. Or with the group that Paul was in. I'd like to be in that group. Or the group that the great missionaries and faithful saints of God through the centuries are in, that's the group I'd like to be identified with. So choose your group.

Then in verse 16, "The Lord...here's the second group...the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus; for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains: but when he was in Rome he eagerly searched for me and found me. The Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day...that's that day of rewards, that day when we see the Lord Jesus...and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus."

Now he identifies another guy that Timothy knows. Timothy knew Phygellus and Hermogenes, otherwise Paul would have explained who they were. Likely they were elders in the church. He also knew Onesiphorus and his whole household were godly people. The gospel had come to that household and the whole family had embraced Christ and no doubt deserve commendation because of their love. In fact in chapter 4 verse 19 he encourages Timothy to greet the household of Onesiphorus. So they lived in Ephesus. They weren't ashamed of Paul. And he says in that day when they face Jesus Christ, I pray that He'll give them mercy, that He'll give them reward, in other words. Because they were never ashamed of me. It says in verse 16, "He often refreshed me." Often..often, eager to come alongside the inspired Apostle, eager to provide some encouraging personal ministry, not fearing the identification or association at all. He was not even ashamed of his chains, literally that means handcuffs or manacles, but it broadens to mean his imprisonment in general. This didn't deter the man, in fact when he came to Rome he searched eagerly for me until he found me. He searched all over the city trying to find where he was and found him in that dungeon. He had lived in Ephesus and come to Rome maybe on business or maybe specifically to minister to Paul. He pursued the location of Paul and he was a man who was unashamed.

And so he says, also, in the end of verse 18, you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus. You know his ministry there. He probably was very well could be an elder or pastor also. And you know the kind of service he did there. You know the kind of man he is. And the implication of these two groups, and he never does say to Timothy, "What group do you want to be in?" he doesn't need to, he just divides so clearly. And you say to yourself, "Boy, I want to be like Onesiphorus, I don't want to be like Phygellus and Hermogenes." Choose your associates, folks. You want to be among the courageous who name the name of Christ and pay the price? Or do you want to be among the cowards who deny Him? It's your choice. You want to be with those who are loyal, courageous, steadfast, faithful, bold, unashamed? Those who renew their spiritual gift in usefulness? Those who understand their spiritual resources for any situation? Those who accept and anticipate the possibility and reality of suffering? Those who remember the power of their God and His great grace? Those who recognize their duty? Those who totally trust their life into the hands of their Savior and are secure? Those who live to defend the truth? If you do, then choose your group. Your group is the household of Onesiphorus, that's your group.

You see, courage is demanded of any servant of God...moral courage and sometimes even physical courage. Martin Luther, and I'll bring our message to a conclusion with this account, Martin Luther the great instrument of God in the Reformation in the 1500s possessed this tremendous quality of courage. He stood against the whole Roman Catholic system, in fact the whole political system which was embraced in Catholicism. It has been asserted that he was perhaps as fearless a man as ever has lived. When he set out on his momentous journey to the city of Worms he said, "You can expect from me everything except fear or recantation. You can expect from me everything except fear or recantation." Then he said, "I shall not flee much less recant." They wanted him to deny salvation by grace through faith. His friends warning him, writes the biographer, of the grave dangers he faced sought to dissuade him. But Luther would not be dissuaded, "Not go to Worms," he said, "I shall go to Worms though there were as many devils as tiles on the roofs." And when Luther appeared before the emperor he was called on to recant. They insisted that he should say in a word whether he would recant or no. "Unless convinced by the Holy Scripture or by clear reasons from other sources, I cannot recant," he declared. "To councils or Pope, I cannot defer for they have often erred. My conscience as a prisoner to God's Word."

When again given an opportunity to recant, he folded his hands, "Here I stand. I can do no other. God, help me." Recalling that incident, Luther described his feelings, "I was afraid of nothing. God can make one so desperately bold." Wonderful testimony.

How is it that we can be desperately bold? Listen to this testimony. Second Chronicles chapter 32, the people of Judah face the enemy of Assyria. Listen to this. Here comes the exhortation. It's wonderful. This is it from Hezekiah the king, "Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria, nor because of all the multitude which is with him." Then this, "For the one with us is greater than the one with them. With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles." Tremendous confidence, tremendous courage when we understand who He is who has equipped us and is with us. Let's bow in prayer.

Gracious Father, how thankful we are for the exhilarating power of this passage that comes and breaks on our hearts, flooding us with a new sense of devotion, a new encouragement to be bold for the sake of Christ. Oh help us, Lord, not to preserve our own lives but to give ourselves away under proper motivation and with a pervasive attitude of courage, may we go forth in the name of Christ confident...confident that what we have committed in to Your care is safe until the day we see Jesus. That day, to receive the reward for our service done. Father, I pray that every one of us will renew that commitment in our hearts for the Savior's glory. Amen.