

# Be Not Ashamed

2 Timothy 1:8

In 2 Timothy 1:8 Paul instructed Timothy saying, *“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord...”* This command holds ever true for us today, for it is a known fact that those who strive to uphold truth and righteousness are often looked down upon and by men in the world. In 1 John 3:1 we learn that this principle is especially true for the children of God. *“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God. Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”* All Christians must understand the enmity that is between the world and God due to sin. The world hates God; those who choose to remain in it have no desire to obey Him. *“Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God”* (James 4:4). For this reason they also hate those who belong to God – His children.

We must be aware of the persecution that awaits us in the world, especially if we are going to do our part to teach the gospel. We must prepare our hearts so that we will not be ashamed of Christ when He is preached among the nations. Therefore Jesus commanded those who desired to follow Him saying, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me”* (Matthew 16:24). When He said *“let him take up his cross,”* Jesus was referring to our willingness to suffer shame for His name; to bear the burden of persecution while upholding God’s righteousness. He was showing us the type of attitude we must have in order to serve Him in the world.

Let us consider God’s instruction for how we can live godly lives while fulfilling the command to “Be not ashamed.”

## Reason for Not Being Ashamed

**The Glory That Awaits Us:** Every person understands the principles of cost and reward, to some extent. When we labor in our jobs we expect payment for our service. When a child is well behaved they find favor in the sight of their parents. The reward that God offers to us for obeying Him even in the midst of persecution is greater than anything men can imagine. It is a reward that we cannot earn for ourselves, yet God says that He will give it to us if we are faithful to Him. Therefore Jesus comforts us in Matthew 5:10-12 saying, *“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

We can look to the prophets of old, how they were chased out of their homes, hunted down, ridiculed, and murdered, and we can see the compassion with which God looks upon them. We can see their reward for their faithfulness, such as when Elijah was taken up on a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:11) We can know that a great reward also awaits us if we hold fast. We can consider the promises of God and know that whatever we suffer in this life is worth the reward that awaits

us, as Paul also says in Romans 8:18. *“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”*

Therefore, when we interact with those in the world, let us not be ashamed of the message of Christ. Neither let us be ashamed of the humility with which God’s people are to live, or the simplicity that is in Christ. For the world delights in hypocritical pomp, circumstance, and materialistic grandeur. But the reward of God is given to those who seek humility and associate with the humble (Romans 12:16). For some may see our small group, our simple worship, our small and inelegant building, and simple gospel and say that we are quite unspiritual. But when all is revealed and God’s saints are delivered up to Him, the true glory of their faith will be revealed as well as the true value of their heavenly home. Only those who have humbled themselves in order to peer into the treasure that is God’s word can appreciate the value of what Jesus has given us on this earth. Let us therefore not be deterred by the ranting of men, but put our confidence in the wisdom and power of God.

**The Superior Wisdom of God:** When we consider the glory and wisdom of God and compare that to the foolishness that is in the world we can have confidence that whatever mockery comes from the mouths of unbelievers is nothing more than the ranting of ignorant children. For it is written in 1 Corinthians 3:19-20, *“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, ‘He catches the wise in their own craftiness’; and again, ‘The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.’”* When we preach the gospel and men scoff at us saying that the message of the cross is foolishness we can remember the passage that says, *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent’”* (1 Corinthians 1:18-19). We must understand that it was by the “wisdom of man” that we entered into sin in the first place, and that it was by the “foolishness of God” (I speak as a fool), that we are given salvation in Christ Jesus. Therefore we are told, *“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hear”* (Ephesians 17-18). When men deliver us to shame let us remember that those who do such things are ignorant of God’s power, of His righteousness, and of His eternal glory. But we, because God has granted unto us an understanding beyond what can be attained in the flesh, have obeyed the truth and are striving to take that truth to all men so that all may be made free (John 8:32).

### **Consequences of Being Ashamed**

One of the other things that can help us to not be is the horrible consequences. We must decide for ourselves what is worse, the wrath of men or the wrath of God, for Jesus has said, *“Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows”* (Matthew 10:27-31).

Mark 8:38: *“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.”*

John 12:42-43: *“Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”*

### **Arming Ourselves for Battle**

Consider the armor that God offers to His saints in Ephesians 6:14-17. With these tools God gives us the ability to resist all manner of evils, including the persecution that is in the world. Shame is one of the darts that Satan is casting our way. It is the dart that hit Peter when He denied the Lord three times. It is the dart that hindered the priests from confessing Jesus in John 12:42-43. But we can resist these darts when we arm ourselves for the battle and use the tools that God has given us. We can gain wisdom to overcome when we pray to God according to James 1:3-5. We can gain wisdom unto salvation by knowing the scriptures according to 2 Timothy 3:15. And when we trust in those things and in the grace of Christ we will be able to use our shield of faith to *“quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one”* (Ephesians 6:15).

### **Conclusion**

Shame is for those who have no faith. Therefore put on faith. Trust in the Lord with all of your heart (Proverbs 3:5). There is much God has to offer to those who hold fast and endure the trials that are in the world. Therefore let us go on to perfection and do the work that God has given us to do, saying within our hearts, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes...”* (Romans 1:16).