

I am not ASHAMED

Sermon Outline

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-14

This sermon outline can be used at a Suffering Church service or meeting. It can be read out as it stands, though you may want to add some illustrations of your own or take some from the information on pages 8-11. You might also find helpful material in the small group Bible study on page 14 or the eight day devotional booklet. Alternatively, the outline can be used as a framework for your own ideas and applications.

INTRODUCTION

Paul's second letter to Timothy was written during Paul's second imprisonment in Rome (according to tradition), within the appalling Mamertine Prison. It has been said that the Mamertine could have been called the "House of Darkness". Worse still, he was being held in its underground dungeon, which had been described earlier by the Roman historian Sallust as "foul from neglect, darkness and stench, it is an altogether terrifying sight."

Prisons in the ancient world were rarely used for punishment as such, although people were routinely stripped naked and flogged before being imprisoned, and then held in painful leg irons. Their normal purpose was as holding cells for those on remand awaiting trial or those convicted and awaiting execution. Nevertheless, it has been estimated that Paul may have spent as much as 25% of his ministry time in prisons of various kinds.

By the time he was writing his second letter to Timothy, Paul had apparently already had a preliminary hearing and was now awaiting his final trial. His future was very uncertain. It seems that he expected to be found guilty and executed (2 Timothy 4:6-7,16). Despite all this, he could say boldly, "I am not ashamed." (2 Timothy 1:12)

1 HE WAS NOT ASHAMED OF HIS CALLING (v.1,11)

Paul begins his letter by describing himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus (v.1) and expands on this in verse 11.

- a. **He was an apostle**, literally, "one who is sent out," such as an envoy or an ambassador. Elsewhere Paul had described himself as, "an ambassador in chains" (Ephesians 6:20). An ambassador was a position of high honour, as he carried the authority of the country or king he represented.
- b. **He was a herald**. The Greek word *kerux* is translated as "preacher" in some versions of the Bible, but "herald" is a better translation, carrying with it the idea of someone who brings an announcement from the king. A *kerux* was also the official who, in a battle situation, crossed from one army to the opposing army, bringing a message requesting a truce or peace. The same word was used for a person employed by a merchant or auctioneer to cry out to the crowds what goods were on offer. So a *kerux* brings a message from the King, enables people to make peace with God, and calls out to others about the wonderful treasure which God is offering to them.
- c. **He was a teacher**. While an evangelist (ambassador or herald) brings individuals to the point of committing their life to Christ, many new believers will drift away or even fall away unless there is someone who teaches them how to live as a Christian, who disciples them, and enables them to grow in their faith.

Paul was not ashamed of his three-fold calling to be a herald, an apostle and a teacher. For him it was the highest honour given to him by Christ.

2 HE WAS NOT ASHAMED OF HIS SUFFERINGS (v.8)

In chapter 2 verses 8-9, Paul explains that it is the Gospel for which he is suffering and wearing fetters like a criminal. So he counsels Timothy not to be ashamed:

- a. **Not to be ashamed to be a witness for Christ.** He must not have a spirit of timidity, but recognise that God has given us a spirit of power and love and self-control (v.7).
- b. **Not to be ashamed of Paul who was suffering for Christ.** He must be willing to identify with those who are suffering for Christ, even if they themselves are shamed by the world. For Timothy, this meant identifying with Paul, a prisoner in chains.
- c. **Not to be ashamed of sharing in suffering for the Gospel.** He must not only identify with persecuted Christians, but also share their suffering and join them in it. A single Greek word – *synkakatheo* – is used for the concept of suffering hardship in company with someone else. He is called to suffer *with*, and not just to minister *to*.

Likewise, we must not be ashamed to be witnesses for Christ, to be one with those who suffer for Him and to be willing to embrace suffering with them.

3 HE WAS NOT ASHAMED TO FACE THE COMING JUDGMENT DAY (v.12)

The “Day” was an eschatological term, referring to the coming judgment. Paul could face this Day without shame because of:

- a. **His confidence in the Person of Christ.** “I know whom I have believed,” he affirms, as he recalls his Saviour’s appearing or *epiphaneia* (v.10). This wonderful word had great resonance for both Romans and Jews. The coming of a new emperor to the throne was called his *epiphaneia*; it was a time of renewed hope, fresh beginnings, and new blessings. Jews used the word *epiphaneia* to refer to the saving manifestations of God when enemies were trying to exterminate Israel, the times when God intervened dramatically to rescue His people in their hour of greatest need. Jesus was God’s greatest *epiphaneia* (epiphany), intervening to rescue sinners and manifesting God in the world. Paul does not speak of “what” he believes – theology – but “whom” he believes – a Person.

- b. **His confidence in the power of Christ to protect.** Paul affirms that Christ will guard what Paul has entrusted to him – his work, his life, his soul and his very salvation. Remember that he wrote this in the expectation that he would shortly be executed, cutting short both his ministry and his earthly life, and bringing him before the Judgment throne.
- c. **His confidence in the *paratheke*.** This word is usually translated as “what I have entrusted (or committed) to him.” The word *paratheke* was used of something valuable deposited for safekeeping with someone trustworthy who would return it later when it was reclaimed. Paul knew that Christ had given to him a sacred trust, which he could never betray. He also knew that the Person in whom he had trusted would never betray him. Perhaps there seemed little to show for His work – the early Church was already riven with conflict and riddled with error – but, as for all of us, Paul knew that, having done his task to the best of his ability, he could leave the result to the Lord. His life was safely hidden with Christ in God and that neither death nor life, nor anything else in all creation, could separate him from the love of Christ (Colossians 3:3; Romans 8:38-39).

CONCLUSION

Timothy was a faithful disciple, and for Paul a beloved younger brother and valuable, dependable ministry colleague. But in this letter we learn about another of Paul’s fellow-workers, one who did not stay the course – Demas. Demas betrayed Paul. Demas had started well, but fell in love with the world and deserted his friend and co-worker at his time of greatest need (Philemon 1:24; 2 Timothy 4:10). What happened to Demas’ earlier commitment that caused him to fall out of love with the Lord and in love with the world? Was he embarrassed by the “foolishness” of the Gospel, making him ashamed to be a witness for Christ? Or could he not bear the shame of being associated with someone who was suffering for Christ in the Mamertine dungeon? Or was he fearful of consequences for himself, unwilling and ashamed to join Paul in his suffering for the Gospel? We shall never know exactly, but Paul’s use of the word *agape* to describe the love which Demas had for the world shows that Demas made a deliberate choice to forsake his ministry, Paul and indeed Christ Himself.