

## 2 Timothy Lesson 2 Articles

### Testifying for Christ

‘So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner (2 Tim. 1:8).

In the first place Paul describes himself not as a prisoner of the Roman emperor, but as the Lord’s prisoner. He regarded his spell in a lonely prison cell as part of God’s purpose for him, and was living up to what he had said earlier in his letter to the Romans. ‘And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose’ (Rom. 8:28). Others had deserted him (v. 15) so he pleads with Timothy not to do the same by being ashamed of associating with him as a prisoner for the gospel.

We might think that if we have been truly born of the Holy Spirit that we have no need to be reminded not to be ashamed of testifying for Christ, or ashamed of the gospel of Christ or ashamed of the people of Christ. But it *does* happen. Peter denied Christ and his gospel not once, but three times! Phygelus and Hermogenes and others were ashamed to be associated with God’s apostle and deserted the faith (2 Tim. 1:15). And there was Demas who ‘loved this world’ more than he loved Christ (2 Tim. 4:10).

We can also add to that the words of the Lord Jesus when he said: ‘If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels’ (Mark 8:38). Such a warning would not have been necessary if the temptation to be ashamed of Christ and his gospel were not as real and common as it actually is.

But why should we ever be tempted to be ashamed of the gospel? Or, to put it in another way, why are we not sufficiently proud of it to want to testify to our faith in Christ to others? Is it because of our natural temperament? We are shy or timid like Timothy. But we are told that God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of strength and power (2 Tim. 1:7). We can never allow temperament to prevent us from publicly owning Christ as our Saviour and Lord.

Or perhaps we are ashamed of the gospel because we value too highly the opinion of others; we fear ridicule because they may consider us old-fashioned or naïve. But should that matter? Is what others think of us to be regarded as more important than what God thinks of us?<sup>1</sup>

Vv. 12-14 What an encouragement it is to know that Christ is faithful and able to keep His own! “I know whom I have believed!” was Paul’s confidence—not “I hope” or “I think.” There are two ways of reading v. 12, and perhaps Paul meant both of them. Paul is saying that he knows he can trust Christ to keep him and his soul; but he is also saying that he knows Christ will enable him to keep what He has committed to him. It is possible to translate it, “He is able to keep that which He has committed to me.” Christ had committed the Gospel to Paul (1 Tim. 1:11), and Paul was sure that He would enable him to guard it and keep it safe (1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 4:7). Review 1 Tim. 1:1–11.

“Form” in v. 13 means “outline.” The church had an outline of sound (healthy) doctrine, and to digress from that outline was to sin. Timothy was to hold fast to that basic outline of doctrine through the power of the Spirit (v. 14). Verses 12 and 14 are parallel: Christ in glory is able to keep what we give to Him, and the Spirit on earth helps us to keep what Christ gives to us!<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, P. (2007). *Opening up 2 Timothy* (pp. 26–28). Leominster: Day One Publications.

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament* (pp. 643–644). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.