

2 Tim 1:8-14

Read 2Tim 1:1-14.

Make not of one this text says about Paul.

How does the same thing or the same principle apply to Timothy?

What does the passage say about how this principle applies?

How should we live out this principle?

2Tim 1:8 - Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord - this Lord that Paul said in v2 was the source of grace, mercy and peace. When you are kind to someone and sacrifice much for them, you do not expect them to speak ill of you in public, or pretend they don't know you and try not to be seen with you. We must not be ashamed (ἐπαισχυνθῆς, cf. Rom 1:16, Mk 8:38) of our Lord. But Paul says specifically that it is the *testimony of our Lord* that we are not to be ashamed of. "Testimony of our Lord" is better understood "Testimony about our Lord" (genitive of content or objective genitive) than "Testimony belonging to our Lord" (possessive genitive) - Paul is saying that Timothy should not be ashamed to boldly talk about Christ. This testimony about Jesus is later identified as the gospel.

Nor of me, His prisoner - because if Timothy was not ashamed of His Lord, neither should he be ashamed of the Lord's faithful servants (that is, Timothy's fellow servants). Especially since Paul was Timothy's "true father" (1:1). It is interesting that Paul saw himself as a prisoner of God - he was not simply God's servant who happened to be in prison - he was God's prisoner (cf. Eph 3:1, 4:1, Phm 1). Paul was in prison because of the testimony of Christ, as a witness of Christ, and because God in His sovereignty had put him there - he was God's prisoner in these (and probably more) ways. Timothy was not to pretend that he didn't love Paul as a father, even though Paul was publically shamed. Though identifying with Paul might get Timothy and his church into a lot of trouble, Paul bade him not be ashamed. This does not, of course, mean that Timothy was to be foolhardy and create trouble for himself - but that he should not be afraid of the trouble that came from not following in Peter's footsteps as he repeatedly denied His Lord.

But share with me in the sufferings of the gospel - The opposite of being ashamed of the testimony of the Lord and of Paul is to share with Paul in the sufferings of the gospel. The word might also be translated "suffer together with me". This idea of suffering with someone is used also in Rom 8:17, of suffering with Christ. It's not about physical togetherness, but suffering for the same reason, with the same mindset - as two friends who both have cancer-related pain might be said to "suffer together" even though there is great distance between them. Cf. also 1Cor 12:26, Heb 11:25, 1Pet 4:13, Phil 3:10, 2:5 [1:7], Heb 13:3. The reason Paul is in prison, we see, is the gospel. Thus the gospel is also what Paul means when he says "testimony of our Lord" - the Lord's testimony, or the testimony about Him, is the gospel, the good news. This is not the "bare bones" gospel that we often hear in two-minute presentations, but rather the full counsel of God, for everything about Jesus is indeed good news.

According to the power of God - that is, the gospel is according to God's power. This is why the news of the gospel is good - because God is powerful to make it effective. And because the gospel is according to God's power, it is worth living by, suffering for,

and as in Paul's case, dying for. "All authority has been given to Me", Jesus says - "go *therefore* out [spreading the gospel]." Paul will now go on to explain this gospel.

2Tim 1:9 - Who saved us and called us with a holy calling. God saved us - that is, he saved us from the punishment we deserve for our sin. Though Paul does not go into specifics here, he is writing to a person who already knows. For a fuller exposition of what we are saved from can be found in Rom 1-5. God's **calling** is a prominent theme in the Bible. The word "call" means the same thing as in English - to name someone or call them by a name (Mt 1:21), or to summon/invite someone (Mt 2:7). Generally speaking, there are two "callings" to men to be saved. 1) God's calling to all men to repent (Mk 2:17, Mt 22:9), and 2) God's specific calling of those who are predestined to salvation (Rom 8:30). In a sense we were called before we even were born (Gal 1:15), but in another sense we were called the moment we were saved (1Cor 7:17-24). This is not simply a calling to have faith and be justified and to wait for heaven (Eph 4:4, 1Tim 6:12), but a calling to a holy lifestyle in this life (Eph 4:1, Col 3:15, 1Th 2:12, 4:7, Phil 3:14, 2Thess 1:11). This word "calling" used of the specific calling of Christians is used mostly by Paul (except in Heb 3:1 and 2Pet 1:10), but the same truths are found in the rest of the New Testament, expressing the same idea with different words.

Not according to our works - That is, God did not call us because we are good people or have done good things. Rather, he called us **according to His own purpose and grace which were given to us in Christ Jesus before time eternal**. We are saved because God chose to save us - as simple as that. The fact that we are not saved by works but by grace (cf. Rom 11:6) would be a great encouragement to Timothy, for now that it is by grace it is truly by God's power alone (cf. 1:8) and not by any human endeavor. And if by God's power and not our endeavor, the gospel is powerful, and it is not something to be ashamed of. Moreover, it was given to us in Jesus before time eternal - before time even existed (forgive the oxymoron). This means that it cannot in any way have been based on human endeavor - for the gift was given to us while we didn't exist and could do nothing to merit it.

Paul says here that the effectual calling of each individual Christian for salvation is according to the gift that was given to us - not the gift that was given to each individual who was saved, but rather the gift of God to humanity as a whole. This gift of Jesus Christ to men was revealed to us (v12) - and this was revealed to the whole world, not just to Christians (e.g. Jn 14:31). The gift is that Jesus has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (v12) - which he again has done as an objective reality concerning the whole world. We know, though, that only Christians reap the great benefits of this blessing.

It should be a great encouragement to us that God's gift to us through Jesus (that is, the gospel), was given to us before time began - that is, even before creation. God decided to give us the gift of salvation in Christ even before Adam fell - for God knew he would fall. God was not surprised when man sinned - He was prepared with a salvation greater than creation itself - the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of men. This was God's purpose, and a great testament to His grace.

2Tim 1:10 - But has now been revealed through the appearing of our savior Christ Jesus - God's covenant with Christ to atone for the sins of men existed when God made man upright. Yet the true nature of how God can forgive sins was not revealed to men until 2000 years ago, when Jesus became man and died on the cross to save us from our sins. Only then was the tension between "a just judge cannot justify the wicked" and "God is good to forgive sins" resolved. Jesus the Messiah has thus saved us from the righteous punishment our sins deserve.

Having abolished death and revealed life and immortality through the gospel - Paul now gets back to his original point - the gospel of which Timothy should not be ashamed. This gospel did away with death - or freed us from death by taking away its power over us as in Rom 7:2 (using the same Greek word). One might wonder whether Paul is talking about literal death (in contrast with "immortality") or spiritual death (which was what was primarily dealt with by the gospel) - though it seems spiritual death seems more probable. Not only does the gospel reveal our life with God (in contrast with the death we deserve), but this life is eternal. Note that the revealing of the gospel didn't create eternal life - eternal life has been offered to those before and after the death of Christ (cf. Ps 23). But the gospel, the good news revealed through Christ, explains our eternal life and brings it to light so that we understand it. Though the saving work of Christ was effective even before Christ died, the reason why we can enjoy life with God is only understood by knowing Christ's sacrifice for us.

2Tim 1:11 - To which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher. Many early and late manuscripts add, "of Gentiles", though the NA28 does not include this phrase (basing itself on Aleph, A, I, and 1176). It's difficult to decide whether or not to include this phrase, but it is ultimately irrelevant. Paul was a preacher, apostle, and teacher of Gentiles (1Tim 2:7, a verse very closely paralleling this one). So whether or not he makes a point of it here matters little - it is hardly an important point in the context.

Because Paul was appointed by God as a preacher, apostle, and teacher of the gospel, he can rightly say that being ashamed of him is being ashamed of the gospel - thus he has already encouraged Timothy to be shamed of neither the gospel nor Paul.

"Preacher" denotes one who proclaims a message. "Apostle" is someone who is sent as a messenger or delegate. "Teacher" is someone whose primary task it is to impart knowledge/wisdom. Though there is great overlap between these three words, together they communicate a greater task than any one of them alone. Further, and more importantly, they together communicate a great emphasis on the task at hand. In a similar manner, Jesus proclaims about a perverted teacher, "I will kill her children with death" (Rev 2:23) - such repetition for emphasis is often used in the Bible and elsewhere.

2Tim 1:12 - For this reason I also suffer this - "this" can also be translated "these [things]". Paul again emphasizes that his suffering is due to his mission to spread the gospel.

But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep my deposit until that day. Paul is not ashamed, just as he encouraged Timothy not to be ashamed. And Paul's reason is the same as Timothy's reason - because the gospel does not depend on the good works of men, but on the power of God - it is God who can keep what Paul has committed to Him. "That day" is certainly the day of Christ's return, the day when Paul shall be raised from the dead - Paul's hope in death is on the God who has "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (1:10); Paul writes "according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus" (1:1).

It isn't enough that the gospel is worth standing firm on - we also have to know that the gospel is a firm foundation in order not to be ashamed. We must know it not only intellectually, but also practically, with the truth of the gospel worked out in our lives. If we live by the gospel as Paul did, if we can say that we truly "know" who we have believed both intellectually and experientially, we will not be ashamed - rather we will trust him as Paul did. It was Jesus whom Paul had believed - Jesus in whom is the

promise of life (1:1), in whom the gift of the grace was given (1:9), and who is our savior and has abolished death (1:10).

Because of this, and because he had lived a life attesting to these truths, being a "prisoner of Christ" as he wrote, Paul could now say with full persuasion that Jesus could keep what Paul had committed to him until He returned. This word "until" does not imply that Jesus cannot keep it after he returns - just as "I am with you always, even until the end of the age" does not imply that Jesus will leave us at the second coming.

What Paul had committed to Jesus is found in the context. The same word is used in 2:2, of Timothy committing his teaching to faithful men. And just as Timothy was to teach what he knew to others, so Paul had been a teacher, an apostle, and a preacher of the gospel to Timothy and many others. Thus Paul's "deposit" which he had committed to God is the people whom God had blessed through him - the outworking of his ministry of the gospel. A similar word is used in 1:14, where Timothy is told to guard what was committed to him - that is, what Paul had taught him. Paul had committed people to Jesus, and trusted that Jesus would keep them until He returned (cf. Jn 10:28). Paul is not only thinking of their salvation, but also their ministry in using what they had learned to bless others. Therefore, because Paul was sure that God would keep Timothy and others whom Paul in his service for God's gospel had trained, Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. Paul continues expounding what he has committed to God:

2Tim 1:13: Hold the standard of sound words which you have heard from me in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus - This "standard" or "pattern" of sound words is something by which Timothy could judge other words. If they conformed to the "standard", they were "sound", just as Paul's words to Timothy were sound. And the sound words Paul had taught to Timothy, he was to preserve by teaching them to others who might teach others - only by such a propagation of the sound words would they be adequately guarded (2:2). Paul's concern was not only for Timothy, but that Timothy would be like Paul to others. Yet Paul didn't want Timothy to simply give academic lectures - the words were to be held "in faith and love", with the right attitude, expressed in the right way. This faith and love is found only in Christ Jesus, who is the founder and finisher of the gospel Timothy was given to proclaim.

2Tim 1:14: The good that was committed to you, keep through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. The good thing is the pattern of sound words, which is Paul's teaching to Timothy, also called "the good thing which you heard from me in the presence of many witnesses" (2:2). Again, Paul does not ask Timothy to rely on his own power, as if any human had any real power. Rather, it is through the Holy Spirit in Timothy that he was to "keep" the sound words. It is through the Holy Spirit, then, that Jesus keeps what Paul committed to him. Timothy was therefore to rely fully on the Spirit - not that he let himself be guided by emotions as if that were the Spirit's leading, or that he sat back and did nothing in order to "let the Spirit take over". If that were the case, Paul's exhortations in this and the next chapter would be pointless. Rather, Timothy were to realize in everything he did that he was fully dependent on the Spirit. And therefore, if he did anything contrary to the Spirit's expressed will in the Word, even if it made sense on a human level, he would not have success from the Spirit. This is also why it is important to teach "with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" - because we ought not to disobey the Spirit in order to "keep" the message committed to us. Rather, if we forsake faith and love while trying to guard the gospel, and thereby also grieve the Spirit, we are trying to keep what's entrusted to us in our own power. That is, we usurp God's role by pretending we can do what only He can.

