

# Unashamed

Bono interview?

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOQCigNRoPc&feature=player\\_embedded](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOQCigNRoPc&feature=player_embedded)

What's your testimony? When was the last time you were "unashamed" about Jesus?

- I'm not talking about a political rant where you loosely tie in Christianity and bemoan the state of things in America...
- I am talking about sharing the Gospel with someone. The death, burial, and resurrection.
- About being a Christ follower no matter the flack it might get you in the situation...

So don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of me His prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God.

<sup>9</sup> He 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 given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.

<sup>10</sup> This has now been made evident through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

<sup>11</sup> For this gospel I was appointed a herald, apostle, and teacher, <sup>12</sup> and that is why I suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, because I know the One I have believed in and am persuaded that He is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day. 2 Timothy 1:8-12

Last message... "Use God's Gifts."

**"Therefore** refers to the divinely bestowed gift and resources Paul has just mentioned in the two previous verses. "In light of those immeasurable blessings," the apostle was saying, "you have no reason to **be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of [Paul] His prisoner**. Do not be afraid to name the name of Christ or to be known as my friend and fellow minister."

At the time this letter was written, probably in A.D. 66, being a Christian not only brought almost universal criticism but frequently persecution, imprisonment (As Paul was then experiencing), and even death. To be associated with the **Lord**, or with Paul, **His prisoner**, could be costly in the extreme.

It is interesting and significant that the apostle did not consider himself primarily to be a **prisoner** of Rome but rather of Him, that is, of the **Lord** Jesus Christ, who had sovereign control of his life. He could say, "I bear on my body the brandmarks of Jesus" (Gal. 6:17).

But being a **prisoner** not only resulted *from* his being faithful to Christ but also resulted *in* the promotion of the cause of Christ." (MacArthur)

- Paul didn't just sit in prison and say "woe is me."
- He kept sharing the Gospel, even with his guards!
  - We know from other scriptures that many came to know Christ and that EVERYONE there knew why he was in prison; even if they didn't choose to be a Christ follower.
- So here is Paul writing a letter to his younger minister protégé Timothy.
  - Timothy is weighing all of this. The pain & suffering that Paul is enduring & he has to be thinking... "If Paul is going through this....what about me? What do I do?"

This is where we get to the heart of this text. What is it that Paul is trying to tell Timothy, and us?

**Boldly proclaim Christ.**

Paul wasn't arrested and killed for being a Christian. He was killed for acting like one.

- The **exclusivity** of Christ was dangerous with Paul & it's dangerous with us today.
  - Caesar is Lord – is all Paul had to say to get out of trouble
  - Christ AND/OR \_\_\_\_\_ is all we need to say to be accepted.
- We live in a day and age where Christianity is completely acceptable so long as you keep it to yourself.
  - If it doesn't impact the way you live or the things you say to others, then Christianity is socially acceptable.
- It wasn't any different in Paul's time though either. That's why he told Timothy to.. ""Share in the sufferings for the Gospel." (v. 8)
  - *"For this gospel I was appointed a herald, apostle, and teacher, <sup>12</sup> and that is why I suffer these things"* (v. 11f)
    - His bold proclamation of Christ is what got him in trouble!

Why should we boldly proclaim Christ? Paul reminds us of what God has done. Why He is worthy... (v.9)

*He 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 given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. V. 9*

- Why should we boldly proclaim Christ? Because He saved us!
  - An addict who is no longer controlled by the addiction but is now sober and living a holy life.
    - That is CHRIST!
  - A marriage that was on the rocks because 2 people were living selfishly but are now humbling themselves to each other and growing in their love.
    - That is CHRIST!
  - A man with a temper and the tongue of a sailor but doesn't let his emotions dictate his actions.
    - That is CHRIST!
  - A sinner that was dead in his sins and going to hell but now is alive!
    - That is CHRIST!

That is why we should Boldly proclaim Christ. Because of what Christ has done and wants do in people's lives...

**We need to Boldly proclaim Christ.**

Now what? Maybe your saying...I know I should but how? I haven't ever shared the Gospel before, how can I? Paul gives us a template. Some encouragement...

*This has now been made evident through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a herald, apostle, and teacher, <sup>12</sup> and that is why I suffer these things. But **I am not ashamed**, because I know the One I have believed in and am persuaded that He is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day. V. 10-12*

“Paul was not ashamed! Why? Because he knew that Christ was faithful and would keep him. Salvation is not the result of believing certain doctrines, though doctrines are important. A sinner is saved because he believes in a Person—Jesus Christ the Saviour.” (Wiersbe)

- Your testimony is a powerful tool in telling others about Christ.
  - Tell what God has done.
  - Don't talk about what you believe but WHO you believe in.
- We are going to be doing some Evangecube training next Sunday evening & then going out to the parks the Sunday after that to love our community with the Gospel.

Now what do we do??

My desire is, what Pauls' desire. For Christians to Boldly proclaim Christ.

- It isn't a Republican in the Whitehouse or conservatives on the Supreme Court that is going to save our nation.
  - It's the Gospel
- It is sinners on their knees confessing Christ as Lord.
- It is saints growing in their faith and taking the mission & the message of Christ seriously.
  - *"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*  
Matthew 28:19f

**Boldly proclaim Christ.**

Invitation:

**"Salvation' is a majestic word, denoting that comprehensive purpose of God by which he justifies, sanctifies and glorifies his people:" (Stott)**

## Shameless Suffering (2 Tim. 1:8–12)

“Not ashamed” is a key idea in this chapter: Paul was not ashamed (2 Tim. 1:12); he admonished Timothy not to be ashamed (2 Tim. 1:8); and he reported that Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul’s chain (2 Tim. 1:16).

***Be not ashamed of the Lord’s testimony (vv. 8–10).*** Timothy’s natural timidity might make it easy for him to avoid circumstances that demanded witness and involved suffering. Once again, Paul gave his associate needed encouragement.

*God gives us power (v. 8).* By nature, none of us enjoys suffering. Even our Lord prayed, “Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me” (Luke 22:42); and Paul prayed three times for God to remove his painful thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7–8). But suffering may well be a part of a faithful Christian life. Christians should not suffer because they have done wrong (1 Peter 2:20; 3:17); rather, they sometimes suffer because they have done right and served God. **When we suffer for doing good, then we are sharing Christ’s sufferings (Phil. 3:10) and suffering on behalf of the whole church (Col. 1:24).**

Years ago, I read about a Christian who was in prison because of his faith. He was to be burned at the stake, and he was certain he would never be able to endure the suffering. One night, he experimented with pain by putting his little finger into the candle flame. It hurt, and he immediately withdrew it. “I will disgrace my Lord,” he said to himself. “I cannot bear the pain.” But when the hour came for him to die, he praised God and gave a noble witness for Jesus Christ. God gave him the power *when he needed it*, and not before.

*God has called us by His grace (v. 9).* We are part of a great eternal plan that God determined “before the world began.” **God knows the end from the beginning. He has purposes for His people to accomplish for His glory. Suffering is a part of His plan. Jesus Christ suffered in the will of God here on earth, and all those who trust in Him will also suffer.**

The emphasis in this verse is on *grace*. God saved us; we did not save ourselves (Eph. 2:8–9; Titus 3:5). He called us, not on the basis of our good works, but wholly on the basis of His grace. It is His purposes that we are to fulfill; and if these purposes include suffering, then we can accept it by faith and know that God’s will is best. This is not fatalism. It is confidence in the wise plan of our gracious Heavenly Father.

All of this grace was given to us in Jesus Christ. We could not earn it; we did not merit it. This is the grace of God!

*Christ has defeated death (v. 10).* When we are timid it is because we are afraid. Of what are we afraid? Suffering and possible death? Paul himself was facing death as he dictated this letter. But Jesus Christ has defeated our last enemy, death! By His own death and resurrection, Christ has “abolished death” (made it inoperative, taken out the sting). “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Cor. 15:55)

Christ was not only the Destroyer of death (see Heb. 2:14–15), but He was also the Revealer of life and immortality. In the Old Testament the doctrines of eternal life, death, resurrection,

and the eternal state were in the shadows. Here and there you find glimpses of light; but for the most part, the picture is dark. But then Jesus Christ shone His light on death and the grave. Through the Gospel, He has given us assurance of eternal life, resurrection, and the hope of heaven.

Religious groups that teach “soul sleep” and other strange doctrines usually get their ideas from the Psalms and Ecclesiastes. Instead of allowing the clear light of the New Testament to shine on the Old, they look at the New through the shadows of the Old! If you turn your back on the light of the Gospel, you will only cast another shadow and make the scene darker.

“Immortality” (2 Tim. 1:10, κτν) means “incorruptibility,” and refers to the resurrection body. The present body is corruptible; it dies and decays. But the glorified body we shall have when we see Christ will not be subject to decay or death (1 Cor. 15:49–58; Phil. 3:21). In fact, the heavenly inheritance that we share will be “incorruptible and undefiled, and [one] that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 1:4).

***Be not ashamed of the Lord’s prisoner (vv. 11–12).*** Though a prisoner, Paul was still bearing witness for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Sad to say, the people in Ephesus had deserted Paul in his time of need (2 Tim. 1:15). Many of them could have come to Rome to witness on Paul’s behalf, but they did not. They were even ashamed to be identified with the apostle! It would have made Timothy’s ministry in Ephesus (and in the surrounding cities; see 2 Tim. 4:13) much easier if he had gone along with the crowd; but Paul admonished him to remain true. He gave four reasons why Timothy should not be ashamed of his association with Paul, the prisoner.

*Paul was called by God (v. 11).* Jesus Christ had met Paul on the Damascus road (Acts 9) and had personally called him into the ministry. Paul was a *herald* (“preacher”) of the Gospel. In ancient times, a “herald” was the official messenger of the king or emperor, and his message was treated with great respect. The fact that professed believers in Asia were rejecting Paul did not change his calling or his message.

Paul was not only a herald; he was also *an apostle*, “one sent with a commission.” Not every Christian was an apostle of Jesus Christ, for a person had to meet certain qualifications and be chosen by the Lord personally, or through His Spirit (see Acts 1:15–26; 1 Cor. 9:1; 2 Cor. 12:12). An apostle represented Jesus Christ. To reject an apostle was to reject the Lord.

*Paul was a teacher of the Gentiles.* This meant that he shepherded local churches. It was this word *Gentiles* that put him into prison in Rome the first time (Acts 22:21ff). The Gentile believers in Asia should have shown their appreciation of Paul by rallying to his support, for after all, it was Paul who brought them the Good News of salvation. But instead they were ashamed of him and tried not to get involved.

*Paul was confident in Christ (v. 12).* **Paul was not ashamed! Why? Because he knew that Christ was faithful and would keep him.** Note his emphasis on the person of Christ: “I know *whom* I have believed.” **Salvation is not the result of believing certain doctrines, though doctrines are important. A sinner is saved because he believes in a Person—Jesus Christ the Saviour.** Paul had deposited his soul in the care and keeping of the Saviour, and Paul was sure that Jesus Christ would faithfully guard that deposit. What difference did it make to Paul what happened on any certain day? What really mattered is what will happen on “that day” when Jesus Christ rewards His servants (see 2 Tim. 1:18; 4:8).

**In these difficult days, it is important that we stand true to Christ and be willing to suffer for Him and not be ashamed. We may not be put into prison, as was Paul; but we suffer in other**

ways: the loss of friends, being bypassed for a promotion, loss of customers, being snubbed by people, etc. It is also important that we stand by God's servants who are suffering for righteousness' sake.<sup>1</sup>

Paul now turns from the varied factors which had contributed to the making of Timothy to the truth of the gospel and to Timothy's responsibility in relation to the gospel. Before he defines the gospel, he begs Timothy not to be ashamed of it (8). Suffering rather than shame is to characterize Timothy's ministry. He may be young, frail, timid and weak. He may shrink from the tasks to which he is being called. But God has moulded and gifted him for his ministry. So he must not be ashamed or afraid to exercise it.

This means, to begin with, that Timothy must 'not be ashamed' of Christ, 'of testifying to our Lord'. Every Christian is Christ's witness, and Christian testimony is essentially testimony to or about Christ (cf. Jn. 15:26, 27; Acts 1:8). So every Christian must be ready and willing, if necessary, to be a 'fool for Christ's sake' (1 Cor. 4:10); he need not be prepared to be a fool for anyone else's!

If Timothy must not be ashamed of the Lord, he must not be ashamed of Paul either. For it is possible to be proud of Christ, but ashamed of his people and embarrassed to be associated with them. It seems that when Paul was re-arrested and put in chains, nearly all his former supporters forsook him (15). He now begs Timothy not to follow suit. He may be the emperor's prisoner in the eyes of men; he is the Lord's prisoner in reality, his willing captive, and held in prison by man only by Christ's permission and for Christ's sake.

Timothy must also not be ashamed of the gospel, but rather take his share of suffering for it. Weak as he was in himself, he could be fortified by the power of God to endure it. For endure suffering he must, since the gospel of Christ crucified, folly to some and a stumbling-block to others (1 Cor. 1:23), always arouses opposition. And opposing the message, men naturally oppose its messengers, who thus 'suffer with the suffering gospel'.

These are still the three main ways in which Christian people, like Timothy, are tempted to feel ashamed: now of the *name* of Christ, to whom we are called to witness, now of the *people* of Christ, to whom we also belong if we belong to him, and now of the *gospel* of Christ, which is entrusted to us to spread.

The temptation is strong and insidious. If Timothy had not felt it, Paul would not have exhorted him in these terms. If Paul himself had never felt it, it would have been unnecessary for him some years previously to assert with such vehemence, 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith' (Rom. 1:16). Indeed, if this were not a temptation common to man, the Lord Jesus would not have needed to issue the solemn

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [\*The Bible exposition commentary\*](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 241–243). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.



warning, 'For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels' (Mk. 8:38). We are all more sensitive to public opinion than we like to admit, and tend to bow down too readily before its pressure, like reeds shaken by the wind.

Paul now enlarges on the gospel of which Timothy is not to be ashamed, and for which he must take his share of suffering. He begins by sketching its main features (9, 10) and then summarizes our responsibility in relation to it (11–18). **This then is the double theme of the rest of the chapter: God's gospel and our duty.**

### **3. God's Gospel (verses 9, 10)**

It is striking to hear Paul pass at once from a reference to 'the gospel' to the central affirmation 'God ... saved us'. For it is really impossible to speak of the gospel without going on in the same breath to speak of salvation. The gospel is precisely this, good news of salvation, or good news 'of our Saviour Christ Jesus' (10). Ever since the glad tidings of great joy were first announced on Christmas Day in terms of the birth of 'a Saviour who is Christ the Lord' (Lk. 2:10, 11), the followers of Jesus have recognized its essential content. Paul himself never wavered. In Pisidian Antioch during the first missionary journey he referred to his gospel as 'the message of this salvation'. In Philippi during the second missionary journey he and his companions were described as 'servants of the Most High God, who proclaimed to you the way of salvation'. And writing to the Ephesians from Rome he called the word of truth 'the gospel of your salvation' (Acts 13:26; 16:17; Eph. 1:13).

So here, as Paul writes about the gospel, the terminology which he has made familiar recurs, namely that we are saved in Christ Jesus by God's purpose, grace and call, and not by our own works. For he is expounding the same gospel in his last letter (2 Timothy) as he expounded in his first (Galatians). His gospel has not changed with the passing years. There is only one gospel of salvation. And although both words 'gospel' and 'salvation' need today to be translated into terms meaningful to modern man, we have no liberty to alter the substance of our message. As we come to look more closely at the concise statement of God's gospel which he makes in these verses, we shall see that he indicates its character (what it is), its source (where it comes from) and its ground (on what it rests).

#### *a. The character of salvation*

We need to bring together the three clauses which assert that he 'saved us', he 'called us with a holy calling' and he 'brought life and immortality to light'. For these make it plain that salvation is far more than forgiveness. The God who 'saved' us also and simultaneously 'called us with a holy calling', *i.e.* 'called us to be holy' (JB). **The Christian calling is a holy calling.** When God calls a man to himself, he calls him to holiness also. Paul has laid much emphasis on this in his earlier letters. 'God has not called us for uncleanness, but in holiness.' For all of us are 'called to be saints', called to live as the holy, the separated people of God (1 Thes. 4:7; 1 Cor. 1:2). But if holiness is an integral part of God's plan of salvation, so is the 'immortality' of which he writes in

the following verse (10). Indeed, 'forgiveness', 'holiness' and 'immortality' are all three aspects of God's great 'salvation'.

The term 'salvation' urgently needs to be rescued from the mean and meagre concepts to which we tend to degrade it. 'Salvation' is a majestic word, denoting that comprehensive purpose of God by which he justifies, sanctifies and glorifies his people: first, pardoning our offences and accepting us as righteous in his sight through Christ, then progressively transforming us by his Spirit into the image of his Son, until finally we become like Christ in heaven, with new bodies in a new world. We must not minimize the greatness of 'such a great salvation' (Heb. 2:3).

### *b. The source of salvation*

Where does such a great salvation come from? Paul answers, 'not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ ages ago' (9). If we would trace the river of salvation to its source, we must look right back beyond time to a past eternity. The apostle's actual words are 'before eternal times', an expression variously rendered 'before the world began' (AV), 'before time began' (JBP) and 'from all eternity' (NEB).

In order to put beyond question the truth that God's predestination and election belong to eternity and not to time, Paul uses an aorist participle to indicate that God actually gave us something (*dotheisan*) from all eternity in Christ. What he gave us was 'his own purpose and grace', a hendiadys for 'his own purpose of grace'. His saving purpose was not arbitrary, but gracious. It is plain, therefore, that the source of our salvation is not our own works. For God gave us his own purpose of grace in Christ before we did any good works, before we were born and could do any good works, indeed before history, before time, in eternity.

We have to confess that the doctrine of election is difficult to finite minds. But it is incontrovertibly a biblical doctrine. It emphasizes that salvation is due to God's grace alone, not to man's merit; not to our works performed in time, but to God's purpose conceived in eternity, 'that purpose', as Bishop Ellicott expressed it, 'which was suggested by nothing outward, but arose only from the innermost depths of the divine *eudokia*'. Or, in E. K. Simpson's words, 'the Lord's choices have their unfathomable grounds, but they are not founded on the innate eligibility of the chosen'. Thus understood, God's purpose of election is bound to be mysterious to men, for we cannot aspire to an understanding of the secret thoughts and decisions of the mind of God. However, the doctrine of election is never introduced in Scripture either to arouse or to baffle our carnal curiosity, but always for a practical purpose. On the one hand, it engenders deep humility and gratitude, for it excludes all boasting. On the other, it brings both peace and assurance, for nothing can quieten our fears for our own stability like the knowledge that our safety depends ultimately not on ourselves but on God's own purpose of grace.

### *c. The ground of salvation*

Our salvation rests firmly grounded upon the historical work performed by Jesus Christ at his first appearing. For though God 'gave' us his grace in Christ Jesus 'before eternal times', he 'manifested' it in time, 'now', through the appearing of the same Christ Jesus, our Saviour. Both divine stages were in and through Jesus Christ, but the giving was eternal and secret, while the manifesting was historical and public.

What, then, did Christ do when he appeared and proceeded to manifest God's eternal purpose of grace? To this Paul gives in verse 10 a double answer. First, Jesus Christ 'abolished death'. Secondly, he 'brought life and immortality to light through the gospel'.

First, Christ abolished death.

**'Death' is, in fact, the one word which summarizes our human predicament as a result of sin.**

For death is the 'wage' sin pays, its grim penalty (Rom. 6:23). And this is true of each form which death takes. For Scripture speaks of death in three ways. There is physical death, the separation of the soul from the body. There is spiritual death, the separation of the soul from God. And there is eternal death, the separation of both soul and body from God for ever. All are due to sin; they are sin's terrible though just reward.

But Jesus Christ 'abolished' death. This cannot mean that he eliminated it, as we know from our everyday experience. Sinners are still 'dead through the trespasses and sins' in which they walk (Eph. 2:1, 2) until God makes them alive in Christ. All human beings die physically and will continue to do so, with the exception of the generation who are alive when Christ returns in glory. And some are going to die 'the second death', which is one of the fearful expressions used in the book of Revelation for hell (e.g. Rev. 20:14; 21:8). Indeed, Paul has written previously that the final abolition of death still lies in the future, as the last enemy of God to be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26). Not until the return of Christ and the resurrection of the dead shall we be able to shout with joy 'Death is swallowed up in victory' (1 Cor. 15:54; cf. Rev. 21:4).

What is triumphantly asserted in this verse by Paul is that at his first appearing Christ decisively 'defeated' or 'overthrew' death. The Greek verb *katargeō* is not in itself conclusive, for it can be used with a variety of meanings, which must be determined by the context. Nevertheless, its first and foremost meaning is "make ineffective, powerless, idle' or 'nullify' (AG). So Paul can liken death to a scorpion whose sting has been drawn and to a military commander whose army has been defeated, and can cry out with defiance: 'O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?' (1 Cor. 15:55). For Christ 'has broken the power of death' (AG, NEB).

It is surely significant that this same verb *katargeō* is used in the New Testament with reference to the devil and to our fallen nature as well as to death (Heb. 2:14; Rom. 6:6). Neither the devil, nor our fallen nature, nor death has been annihilated. But by the power of Christ the tyranny of each has been broken, so that if we are in Christ we can be set free.

Consider in particular how Christ has 'abolished' or 'nullified' death.

Physical death is no longer the grim ogre it once seemed to us and still seems to many whom Christ has not yet liberated. "Through fear of death' they are 'subject to lifelong bondage' (Heb. 2:15). But for Christian believers death is simply 'falling asleep' in Christ. It is, in fact, a positive 'gain', because it is the gateway to being 'with Christ' which is 'far better'. It is one of the possessions which become 'ours' when we are Christ's (1 Thes. 4:14, 15; Phil. 1:21, 23; 1 Cor. 3:22, 23). It has been rendered so innocuous that Jesus could even state that the believer, though he dies, 'shall never die' (Jn. 11:25, 26). What is absolutely certain is that death will never be able to separate us from God's love in Christ (Rom. 8:38, 39).

Spiritual death has, for Christian believers, given place to that eternal life which is communion with God begun on earth and perfected in heaven. Further, those who are in Christ will 'not be hurt by the second death', for they have already passed out of death into life (Rev. 2:11; Jn. 5:24; 1 Jn. 3:14).

Secondly, Christ brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

This is the positive counterpart. It is by his death and resurrection that Christ abolished death. It is through the gospel that he now reveals what he has done, and offers men the life and immortality which he has won for them. Whether we should distinguish between the words 'life' and 'immortality' is not clear. They may be synonymous, the second word defining the first. That is, the kind of life Christ has secured for us, and now discloses and offers through the gospel is eternal life, a life that is immortal and incorruptible. Only God possesses immortality in himself. But Christ gives it to men. Even our bodies after the resurrection will share in this immortality (1 Cor. 15:42, 52–54). So will the inheritance which we shall receive (1 Pet. 1:4). On the other hand, as C. K. Barrett writes: 'possibly "life" refers to the new life made available in this world, "immortality" to its prolongation after death'.<sup>1</sup> Whichever way we take the words, both are 'revealed' or 'brought to light' through the gospel. There are many hints in Old Testament Scripture about a life after death, and a few bright flashes of faith, but on the whole the Old Testament revelation was what Bishop Moule called a 'comparative dusk'.<sup>2</sup> Now, however, the gospel has thrown floods of light upon the offer of immortal life through Christ's conquest of death.

In order to appreciate the full force of this Christian affirmation, we need to call to mind who it is who is making it. Who is this who writes so confidently about life and death, about the abolition of death and the revelation of life? It is one who is facing the prospect of imminent death himself. Any day now he expects to receive the death sentence. Already the final summons is ringing in his ears. Already he can see in his imagination the flash of the executioner's sword. And yet, in the very presence of death, he can shout aloud: 'Christ has abolished death'. This is Christian faith triumphant!

How one longs for the contemporary church to recover its lost certainty about the victory of Jesus Christ and to declare this good news to a world for whom death is the great unmentionable. *The Observer* magazine devoted a whole issue to death in October 1968 and commented: 'Far from being prepared for death, modern society has made the very word almost unmentionable ... we have brought all our talents into use to avoid the prospect of dying—and when the time comes we may react with anything from excessive triviality to total despair.'

One of the most searching tests to apply to any religion concerns its attitude to death. And measured by this test much so-called Christianity is found wanting with its black clothes, its mournful chants and its requiem masses. Of course dying can be very unpleasant, and bereavement can bring bitter sorrow. But death itself has been overthrown, and 'blessed are the dead who die in the Lord' (Rev. 14:13). The proper epitaph to write for a Christian believer is not a dismal and uncertain petition, 'R.I.P.' (*requiescat in pace*, 'may he rest in peace'), but a joyful and certain affirmation 'C.A.D.' ('Christ abolished death') or—if you prefer the classical languages—its Greek or Latin equivalent!

Such, then, is the salvation which is offered us in the gospel and which is ours in Christ. Its *character* is man's re-creation and transformation into the holiness of Christ here and hereafter. Its *source* is God's eternal purpose of grace. Its *ground* is Christ's historical appearing and abolition of death.

Putting these great truths together, we seem to detect five stages by which God's saving purpose unfolds. The first is the eternal gift to us in Christ of his grace. The second is the historical appearing of Christ to abolish death by his death and resurrection. The third is the personal call

of God to sinners through the preaching of the gospel. The fourth is the moral sanctification of believers by the Holy Spirit. And the fifth is the final heavenly perfection in which the holy calling is consummated.

The sweep of God's purpose of grace is majestic indeed, as Paul traces it from a past eternity through a historical outworking in Jesus Christ and in the Christian to an ultimate destiny with Christ and like Christ in a future immortality. Is it not truly wonderful that, although Paul's body is confined within the narrow limits of an underground cell, his heart and mind can thus soar into eternity?

#### **4. Our Duty In Relation To God's Gospel (verses 11–18)**

If we were to ask Paul what man's first duty is in relation to the gospel, he would of course say to receive it and live by it. But his concern here is not with the unbeliever's duty, but with the duty of a Christian towards the gospel after he has himself embraced it. In answer to this question Paul gives three answers.

##### *a. Our duty to communicate the gospel (verse 11)*

If the 'life and immortality' which Christ achieved are 'brought ... to light through the gospel', then of course it is imperative that we should proclaim the gospel. So Paul continues: 'For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher.' The same combination of words occurs in 1 Timothy 2:7, and in both Paul uses the emphatic *egō*, no doubt to express his 'sense of personal wonder' that he should have been given this privilege.

Perhaps we can relate the three offices of 'apostle', 'preacher' and 'teacher' by saying that the apostles formulated the gospel, preachers proclaim it like heralds, and teachers instruct people systematically in its doctrines and in its ethical implications.

There are no apostles of Christ today. We have already seen how restricted is the New Testament use of this term. The gospel was formulated by the apostles and has now been bequeathed by them to the church. It is found in its definitive form in the New Testament. This apostolic New Testament faith is regulative for the church of every age and place. The church is 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets' (Eph. 2:20). There is no other gospel. There can be no new gospel.

Although there are no apostles of Christ today, there are certainly preachers and teachers, men and women called by God to devote themselves to the work of preaching and teaching. Notice that what they are called both to preach and to teach is the gospel. It is fashionable in theological circles to distinguish sharply between the *kērygma* (what was preached) and the *didachē* (what was taught), the *kērygma* being essentially the good news of Christ crucified and risen, with the summons to repent and believe, the *didachē* being largely ethical instruction to converts. The distinction is useful, but can be overpressed. It is safe only if we remember how much they overlapped. There was a lot of *didachē* in the *kērygma* and a lot of *kērygma* in the *didachē*. And, moreover, both concerned the gospel, for the *kērygma* was the proclamation of its essence, while the *didachē* included the great doctrines which undergird it as well as the moral behaviour which follows from it.

The reference to ‘witness’ in verse 8, which we have already considered, adds a fourth word to this list. It reminds us that, although there are no apostles today, and although only some are called to the ministry of preaching and teaching, every Christian believer is to be a witness and to testify to Jesus Christ out of his own personal experience.

### *b. Our duty to suffer for the gospel (verse 12a)*

Paul has already summoned Timothy not to be ashamed but to take his share of suffering for the gospel (8), and he will enlarge on this theme in the second chapter of his letter. But now he emphasizes that he is not asking from Timothy something he is not prepared to experience himself: ‘... and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed ...’ What is the reason for this link between suffering and the gospel? What is there about the gospel which men hate and oppose, and on account of which those who preach it have to suffer?

Just this: God saves sinners in virtue of his own purpose and grace, and not in virtue of their good works (9). **It is the undeserved freeness of the gospel which offends.** The ‘natural’ or unregenerate man hates to have to admit the gravity of his sin and guilt, his complete helplessness to save himself, the indispensable necessity of God’s grace and Christ’s sinbearing death to save him, and therefore his inescapable indebtedness to the cross. This is what Paul meant by ‘the stumbling block of the cross’. Many preachers succumb to the temptation to mute it. They preach man and his merit instead of Christ and his cross, and they substitute the one for the other ‘in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ’ (Gal. 6:12; cf. 5:11). **No man can preach Christ crucified with faithfulness and escape opposition, even persecution.**<sup>2</sup>

## ACCEPT YOUR SUFFERING

**Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel (1:8a)**

A third means for guarding against being ashamed of Christ is accepting the consequences of being faithful. Consequently, Paul advised Timothy to prepare himself for misunderstanding, animosity, and rejection.

**Therefore** refers to the divinely bestowed gift and resources Paul has just mentioned in the two previous verses. “In light of those immeasurable blessings,” the apostle was saying, “you have no reason to **be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of [Paul] His prisoner.** Do not be afraid to name the name of Christ or to be known as my friend and fellow minister.”

At the time this letter was written, probably in A.D. 66, being a Christian not only brought almost universal criticism but frequently persecution, imprisonment (As Paul was then experiencing), and even death. To be associated with the **Lord**, or with Paul, **His prisoner**, could be costly in the extreme. It is interesting and significant that the apostle did not consider himself primarily to be a **prisoner** of Rome but rather of Him, that is, of the **Lord Jesus Christ**,

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<sup>2</sup> Stott, J. R. W. (1973). [\*Guard the Gospel the message of 2 Timothy\*](#) (pp. 32–43). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

who had sovereign control of his life. He could say, “I bear on my body the brandmarks of Jesus” (Gal. 6:17).

But being a **prisoner** not only resulted *from* his being faithful to Christ but also resulted *in* the promotion of the cause of Christ. He told the church at Ephesus, “I, Paul, [am] the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles” (Eph. 3:1). To believers at Philippi he said, “Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear” (Phil. 1:12–14).

Paul would not ask Timothy to do what he would not. **Join with me**, he said, **in suffering for the gospel** (cf. 2:3). **Join with... in suffering** translates the single, compound Greek word *sunkakopatheō*, which here is an active imperative. Paul called on Timothy to share his own greatest desire, his supreme purpose in life: to “know [Christ], and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death” (Phil. 3:10).

It is important to note that Paul is speaking about **suffering for the gospel**, not about suffering punishment for our sinfulness. We should give “no cause for offense in anything, in order that the ministry be not discredited” (2 Cor. 6:3). “If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you,” Peter explains. But “by no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler” (1 Peter 4:14–15). Rather, “Let those also who suffer according to the will of God,” Peter went on to say, “entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right” (v. 19).

But when we live a godly, moral life before our family, our fellow students, our fellow workers, or our neighbors, we can expect hostility in some form or another, because their immorality and ungodliness will be more apparent by contrast. When we confront their sin and testify to their need for repentance and salvation, we will be resented.

Later in this letter, Paul echoes Jesus’ promise that “in the world you have tribulation” (John 16:33), assuring Timothy that, “indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:12). **Suffering is the inevitable cost of godly living.**

But **suffering** for Christ is more a privilege than a sacrifice, more a blessing than an ordeal. “Even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith,” he told Philippian believers, “I rejoice and share my joy with you all” (Phil. 2:17). He could say with humble honesty, “In everything [we are] commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left” (2 Cor. 6:4–7).

We should share that selfless attitude with Paul and with the apostles in Jerusalem, who “went on their way from the presence of the [Jewish] Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name” (Acts 5:41).

REMEMBER YOUR CALLING

**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, (1:8b–10)**

A fourth means for guarding against being ashamed of Christ is simply to remember our holy calling from our heavenly Father, who, as Paul has just declared, shares His divine power with His children.

These few verses are a study of soteriology, the doctrine of salvation, in miniature. The apostle was not, of course, teaching Timothy new truths, but simply reminding him of the cardinal, well-known truths of the gospel, truths that should motivate every believer to faithfulness, to courageous witness and living for Jesus Christ.

Remembering these truths and placing our confidence in the God who has given them enables us to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience” (Col. 1:10–11).

Because of **the power of God**, we can say with Paul, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). We can testify with Peter that we “are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5). The all-powerful **God who has saved us** has equally sufficient **power** to keep us. If we were “reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. 5:10).

God’s **power** does not always manifest itself in our lives in obvious ways. When Paul had prayed three times that God would remove a certain affliction, “a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet” him, God answered, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:7–8). Without hesitation or disappointment, Paul replied, “Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong” (vv. 9–10).

Our loving heavenly Father is both willing and “able to keep [us] from stumbling, and to make [us] stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy” (Jude 24). In light of that truth Paul prayed for believers at Ephesus, where he had ministered faithfully for a number of years: “[May God] grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:16–19).

God sovereignly designed salvation, and He sovereignly initiates, sustains, and completes salvation. He has forgiven us, justified us, and delivered us from sin and Satan, from death and hell. In every sense and in every tense—past, present, and future—God is our Savior.



That is a major theme in the pastoral letters. The Almighty is frequently called Savior (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4), as is Jesus (2 Tim. 1:10; Titus 1:4; 2:13; 3:6). Likewise, the saving work of God in Christ is presented together in several places (1 Tim. 2:3–6; 4:10; 2 Tim. 2:8–10; Titus 2:11–14; 3:4–7).

The God who has saved us also has **called us with**, or to, **a holy calling**. Paul is not speaking of God's calling unbelievers to repentance and salvation but of His effectual, saving call of believers, those who have been saved, to holy living and, ultimately, to eternal and perfect holiness (cf. 1 John 3:2).

Just as the Lord did not save us according to our works but by His grace, neither has He called us to live **according to our works, but according to His own purpose** (The plan) **and grace** (The means of operating the plan). Just as that inexplicable truth is the foundation of the saving gospel, so it also is the foundation of God's sustenance of those He has saved. He will keep all the elect until they reach glory. Jesus made clear that the divine purpose, working through divine grace, would reach complete fulfillment. He promised,

All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.... No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:37–40, 44; cf. Phil. 1:6; Jude 24–25)

God “chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him” (Eph. 1:4; cf. 1 Peter 1:2), that is, that we should live **according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity**. Our destiny was determined and sealed before the world began. Because we now belong to Christ, we can praise and thank our heavenly Father that He has loved us, just as He has loved His only Son, “before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24). He has chosen us and loved us “in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:11).

But this divine plan **from all eternity only 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**. Most often in the New Testament (See, e.g., 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13), *epiphaneia* (**appearing**) refers to Christ's second coming. But here it obviously refers to His first coming, when He **abolished death**.

*Katargeō* (**abolish**) literally means to render inoperative. It is not that **death no longer exists** or that believers are promised escape from it, unless they are raptured. But for believers, **death is no longer a threat, no longer an enemy, no longer the end**. Quoting first from Isaiah 25:8 and then from Hosea 13:14, Paul exulted, “When this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’” (1 Cor. 15:54–55). “Since then the children share in flesh and blood,” the writer of Hebrews explains, “He Himself [Christ] likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14).

More than simply abolishing death, at His first appearing Christ **brought life and immortality to light through the gospel**. It was not until the Son of God became incarnate in Jesus Christ that God chose to reveal the full truth about eternal **life and immortality**. Bringing them to light means making them known. That is our area of expertise. We know the immeasurable reality of eternal, immortal existence. That also is our joy and hope in Christ.

## REALIZE YOUR DUTY

**for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. For this reason I also suffer these things, (1:11–12a)**

To illustrate the next two means for guarding against being ashamed of Christ, Paul draws from his own life and ministry. The first of those two means is realizing one's duty, about which Paul had the strongest personal conviction. Using the same words (In the Greek text) as he had in his first letter (1 Tim. 2:7), Paul reminded Timothy, **I was appointed a preacher and an apostle**.

The Greek *egō* (I) is in the emphatic position, strengthening the meaning to "I myself." **Was appointed** refers, of course, to Paul's divine commission, which he dramatically received on the Damascus Road, after which the Lord informed Ananias, a faithful disciple in Damascus, that Paul "is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel" (Acts 9:15). At least twice, Paul publicly testified to that calling, first on the steps of the Roman army barracks before a large crowd in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3–21) and, some years later, before the Roman governor Festus, King Agrippa, and his wife Bernice in Caesarea (Acts 26:2–23).

Saul, as Paul was known before his conversion, did not plan to become a Christian. When he first encountered Christ, he was the chief persecutor of the infant church (See Acts 8:1–9:2). Nor, after his conversion, was it his own plan, or any other human plan, for him to be a special ambassador for Jesus Christ. On the beach near Miletus, he reminded the elders from Ephesus that he had received his ministry solely "from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24; cf. Col. 1:25). In his first letter to the church at Corinth, he stated that truth in even stronger terms. "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of," he said; "for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16).

Paul first mentions his commission as **a preacher**, as a proclaimer, or herald, who officially and publicly announces a message on behalf of a ruler—in Paul's case, the Lord Jesus Christ. He also was commissioned as **an apostle** "of Christ Jesus by the will of God" (2 Tim. 1:1; cf. 1 Tim. 1:1) **and a teacher**. **Preacher** emphasizes his function in ministry, **apostle** emphasizes his authority, and **teacher** emphasizes his interpreting the message he authoritatively proclaimed.

It was **for this reason**, that is, his threefold divine calling, that he **also [had to] suffer these things**, a reference, in general, to his "suffering for the gospel according to the power of God" (v. 8) and, in particular, to his loneliness (1:4) and his "imprisonment as a criminal" (2:7; cf. 1:8). He suffered because he faithfully preached the fullness of the gospel of salvation, because he proclaimed that truth with divine authority, and because he interpreted that Word with divine insight. Very often, **the price of devotion to divine duty is affliction by the world.**

**These things** also applied to the long list of afflictions Paul mentions in his second letter to the church at Corinth, in which, “in foolishness,” he boasted “according to the flesh” (2 Cor. 11:17–18). Speaking sarcastically about certain “false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ, [who] disguise themselves as servants of righteousness” (vv. 14–15), he asked rhetorically,

Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. (vv. 23–27; cf. 6:4–10)

Faithful ministry in the Lord’s service is always bittersweet. It brings suffering and joy, disappointment and gratitude. It is like the little book representing judgment that John took “out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter” (Rev. 10:10).

But for Paul, as it should be for every believer, suffering was a small price to pay, because his joy always outweighed his suffering, and his satisfaction always outweighed his disappointments. “For to me, to live is Christ,” he rejoiced, “and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). “Even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith,” he testified later in that letter, “I rejoice and share my joy with you all” (2:17). He gave similar testimony to believers at Colossae, saying, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (Which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ’s afflictions” (Col. 1:24). The worst suffering we endure is not comparable to our future glory (Rom. 8:18).

Charles Spurgeon gave a vivid illustration of the overriding satisfaction that comes from selfless, godly service.

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 and it 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.

Duty can bring the deepest pain or the highest joy. Spiritual duty unfulfilled brings untold dissatisfaction, regret, and anguish, no matter how easy unfaithfulness may be. On the other hand, spiritual duty fulfilled brings untold satisfaction and happiness, whatever the cost of faithfulness. The Christian who is obedient to his duty under the Lord can say with Peter, “If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God” (1 Peter 4:16).

## TRUST YOUR SECURITY

**but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. (1:12b)**

Summing up his previous testimony, and again using his own experience, Paul gives a sixth means for guarding against being ashamed of Christ: trusting in spiritual security.

Paul was **not ashamed** of his Lord, **for**, he says, **I know whom I have believed**. *Oida* (Know) carries the idea of knowing with certainty. It is used frequently in the New Testament of God's own knowing and of man's knowing by direct revelation from God or by personal experience. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus used that verb in assuring His hearers, "Your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him" (Matt. 6:8). John repeatedly uses it of Jesus' knowledge. He records that "He Himself [Jesus] knew what He was intending to do" (John 6:6), and that "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him" (v. 64; cf. 8:14; 11:42; 13:11).

**Whom** refers either to God the Father (v. 8) or to Jesus Christ (vv. 9–10). In either case, the basic meaning is the same—Paul had firsthand, intimate, saving knowledge of God.

*Pisteuō* (**I have believed**) is in a perfect tense, indicating something that began in the past and has continuing results. As already pointed out, the object of Paul's certain knowledge was not a thing, or even God's truth, as important as that is, but rather God Himself. It was not Paul's divinely revealed theology, but the One who revealed to him that theology, in **whom** he **believed**. He was, in John's words, a spiritual father who had come to know the Eternal One (1 John 2:14).

**I am convinced**, he testifies, that **He [God] is able** [*dunatos*, lit., is powerful enough] **to guard what I have entrusted to Him**. *Phulassō* (To guard) was a military term used of a soldier on watch, who was accountable with his own life to protect that which was entrusted to his care. He was **convinced** not only by divine promises but also by God's constant faithfulness, already exhibited to him in such measure that he could testify from personal encounters and experience. He asked rhetorically,

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:35–39)

Paul trusted his absolute security in God. He had been through years of relentless temptations, trials and testings, opportunities and hardships. He had seen the power of God at work again and again, both in him and around him. He had seen the Lord save and heal and protect and guide and encourage (cf. 2 Tim. 4:14–18). He had encountered Christ personally on the Damascus Road and had been "caught up into Paradise, and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.... And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself!" (2 Cor. 12:4, 7).

His confidence did not come from a creed or a theological system or a denomination or an ordination. It came solely from a close, unbroken relationship with God, to whom he unreservedly gave his life, going about his divine mission with no concern for his own welfare, safety, or life. Without the least reservation, all of those things were **entrusted to Him until that day**. His only “ambition, whether at home or absent, [was] to be pleasing to Him” (2 Cor. 5:9).

Later in the letter Paul identifies **that day**, saying, “In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8). It is the day when believers will stand before the *bēma*, “the judgment seat of God” (Rom. 14:10), where “each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work” (1 Cor. 3:13), in order “that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

Like Peter, Paul knew with perfect certainty that he was “protected by the power of God through faith for a [completed] salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5). He had utter confidence in Jesus’ promise regarding His sheep: “I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand” (John 10:28–29). When our life belongs to Jesus Christ, nothing in this world, not even all the demons in hell or Satan himself, can touch us!<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). [2 Timothy](#) (pp. 18–28). Chicago: Moody Press.