

Title: Not All are Unashamed

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:15-18

Series: The Pastoral Epistles

1. Introduction:

- a. When we walk in faithfulness to the Lord, we can expect that we will suffer persecution for His sake. This has been one of Paul's underlying themes to Timothy in this epistle, and it is one of the underlying themes of all of Scripture.
 - i. Following Christ, we have noted before, comes at a price.
 1. Jesus cautions his disciples about this truth in **Matthew 10:22** and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.
 2. That this world is hostile toward Christ and His people is also recorded for us in **John 15:18** "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.
 - ii. All mature Christian understands this truth. All mature Christian expects to suffer pain at the hands of the unrepentant world.
- b. However, what we have before us today is a more profound and more abiding pain than the pain inflicted by the world. What we have before us is the pain inflicted when we are betrayed by those that profess the name of Christ.
 - i. We have studied the danger of self-preservation. We know that we are not to be ashamed of the

Gospel of Jesus Christ because it is the power of God unto salvation.

ii. Nevertheless, we note that Christian history is filled with so-called professing Christians that have betrayed the Lord's cause and the Lord's people. They have most often done so for self-promotion or to gain their lives in this present world.

1. Paul encountered such people. Beloved, we will encounter such people as well.

c. Contrasted with these traitors to the faith, Paul also encountered those who would faithfully suffer alongside Him. In other words, he experienced the genuine love of brothers that were committed to the cause of Christ.

i. Christ is faithful to those that are true. He will never leave them nor forsake them. And because he loves His true ministers, he will often send support in the form of other faithful Christians.

d. This is what is before us today: we will look into Paul's disappointment in those that betray the cause of Christ and Paul's thankfulness for those that stand firm for that very cause.

2. Verse 15: Those that are Ashamed: You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

a. The first group Paul mentions is identified as "**all who are in Asia**." The use of the word **all** here means a great majority of the professing believers in the area and not necessarily everyone. We must consider this

to be true because both Timothy and Onesiphorus are from Asia minor, and yet they are faithful men.

i. That being said, **all (a majority)** of professing Christians in Asia minor, when they had the opportunity to stand with Paul in his distress, chose to abandon Him. They must have concluded that standing with Paul was risky and could carry a death sentence.

1. We remember that Christianity had been declared illegal, and its adherents were declared criminals. This is why Paul is languishing in a Roman jail. To be identified with Paul, by going to him in Rome, would incur recrimination.

ii. In abandoning the Apostle when he needed them most, the actions of this group spoke of cowardly self-preservation.

1. Jesus warned against this very attitude in **Matthew 10:32-33** So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, (33) but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

b. Beloved, I want you to notice Paul's use of the word **turned away**. It is the Greek word *ἀποστρέφω* (*apostrephō*) – which means to desert, too cowardly turn tale and run.

i. To abandon a man of God for self-promotion or self-preservation is a cowardly act that denies one's confession.

1. The word apostrephō is closely related to the word *apostasia* (*ap-os-tas-ee'-ah*), which means (apostasy).
- c. Notice that all had turned away from **me** (Paul).
- i. To turn away from God's faithful minister is to turn away (apostrephō) from God Himself.
 1. We see this truth played out in the history of Israel. In turning their back to Moses, the Israelites were found guilty of abandoning the one true God.
 - a. In turning their backs to God's prophets, the people turned their backs to God.
 2. We are called to stand with those that are being faithful as part of our own witness to Christ.
 - a. **Matthew 25:41-46** "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (42) For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, (43) I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' (44) Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' (45) Then he will

answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' (46) And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

- d. So great was the defectors' cowardliness that Paul mentions two of their prominent leaders by name. **Phygelus and Hermogenes** had shocked Paul in their unwillingness to be identified with his suffering. He expected more from these men. Yet we find that they were ashamed of Paul and therefore ashamed of God's gospel.
- i. It is always shocking to see such evil come from men who were trusted, loved, and had a reputation. This becomes a source of great pain for the Apostle.
 - ii. Pastor John MacArthur speaks about this pain in the following way:
 1. To be rejected by the world is not pleasant, but to be deserted by fellow workers in the service of Christ is particularly painful. To have those you have spent your life spiritually nurturing turn away from you and sometimes even turn against you is heartbreaking in the extreme.
 2. These men would have been the last ones to be suspected of cowardice, ingratitude, and of being ashamed of Christ or His minister.
 - a. When the time came, they demonstrated self-love over self-denial.

These were not the type of men that would defy a king to remain pure like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did. These were the type of men that would bow to the king's idol to preserve their own lives. Men that are afraid of the fire and, therefore, willing to compromise.

- iii. It is a sad thing when the only record made of a man – the only evidence which we have that he ever lived at all – is, that he turned away from a friend or forsook the gospel.
- e. What reward can await such men? What expectation of being found in Christ can such men have?
 - i. **Luke 9:26** For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.
 - 1. Beloved, we cannot have this be our legacy. We must be remembered as men and women who stood for God's gospel.
- f. The call of Scripture for every confessing believer is for unashamed association with Christ and His people.
 - i. **1 Corinthians 15:58** Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.
 - 1. Ours is a noble war. We do not desert God's people amid the battle.

g. In our pilgrimage on earth we will encounter such people but it is also true that we will encounter God's faithful servants.

3. Verse 16: Those that Stand Firm: May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains,

a. An exception to all that had turned away in Asia minor was Onesiphorus. He had shown mercy to Paul in his prison cell in Rome. Therefore, Paul prays that our Lord would grant mercy to him.

i. This prayer follows the rule laid down in **Matthew 5:7** "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

b. We have previously read that Timothy was to imitate Lois and Eunice. He was also to copy the example of Paul. There is one more pattern he must follow! He must be like Onesiphorus.

i. Onesiphorus was faithful to the meaning of his name. He was, indeed, a "profit-bringer," a messenger of courage and cheer.

c. Paul states that Onesiphorus had **refreshed** him. He had caused Paul to breathe more easily.

i. And Onesiphorus had done this not only once but **often**.

d. The fact that Onesiphorus had not been ashamed of **Paul's chains** filled Paul with gratitude.

i. Onesiphorus was not ashamed of the gospel. He would readily and wholeheartedly identify himself with Paul and his sufferings. He saw no dishonor in suffering for Christ's gospel, and

therefore, he saw no humiliation in suffering with Christ's minister.

4. Verse 17: Going to Rome: but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me—
 - a. As soon as Onesiphorus had arrived in Rome, he started the search for Paul. He wanted to find out where Paul had been imprisoned. To do so, he would have to:
 - i. Travel to Rome. This was a dangerous journey.
 - ii. Make inquiries and therefore be identified with Paul and Paul's God.
 - iii. Bring aid to the Apostle after he found him, therefore, incurring a great expense.
 - iv. Please note, brethren, that Onesiphorus did this with an **earnest** spirit.

5. Verse 18: Paul's Prayer for Onesiphorus: may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day!—and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.
 - a. The Apostle prays that the Lord would be a God of mercy to such a man as Onesiphorus on the great day of judgment.
 - i. Onesiphorus could expect a rich reward for his diligent service to the cause of Christ:
 1. **2 Timothy 4:8** Henceforth 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.

- a. We can conclude from Paul's testimony that Onesiphorus was a man who was awaiting the return of Christ faithfully.
- ii. So, what does this teach us? Every Christian that faithfully serves is promised God's reward. We read in **Matthew 10:40-42** "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. (41) The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. (42) And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."
- iii. Brothers and Sisters, we must keep in mind that we too will one day stand before the Lord on **that day**. What will our work say of us? Will we be found to have loved God, His Son, and His people? Will we be found to have lived lives unashamed of Christ and His gospel?
 - 1. **1 Corinthians 3:13** each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.
- b. Finally, we must note that Onesiphorus had a testimony of faithfulness long before Paul's incarceration. Onesiphorus had rendered valuable services for the cause of the gospel to Paul in Ephesus.

This labor of love had been performed under the very eyes of Timothy. Hence, Paul says **you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.**

- i. Unlike Phylegus and Hermogenes, Onesiphorus is forever remembered as a godly man that stood back-to-back with God's minister. What an incredible biblical legacy he left for us to follow.
 1. Timothy must show similar steadfastness, loyalty, and courage, and so should we!
 2. When we compare Phylegus, and Hermogenes to Onesiphorus, we find the truth recorded for us in **John 13:35** By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

6. Benediction:

- a. **Philippians 3:10-11** that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (11) that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Public Reading of Scripture
Philippians 3:1-11