

Last week we looked at Paul's exhortation that Timothy *kindle afresh the gift of God*, the gift of the Spirit, that he had received by the laying on of hands. Paul reminded him this gift of God was not *a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline*. 2 Tim 1:7 Therefore, since this is true, Paul encouraged Timothy to not be, *ashamed of the testimony of our Lord (the Gospel)*. He states *life and immortality are brought to light (into existence) through the gospel*. So, even though Paul had been imprisoned for his faith, he was convinced his faith rested secure in Christ. *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*. Paul understood that the events of his earthly life, suffering and imprisonment, were producing for him, an eternal weight of glory, eternal rewards.

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 2 Cor 4:17

For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! 2 Cor 4:17 TLB

Paul, who is imprisoned in Roman at the time of his writing 2 Timothy, wanted Timothy told hold fast to the Truth. Timothy realized standing for Christ might result in a similar fate for himself, persecution, imprisonment or death. Jesus words were, *Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matt 5:10* Paul writes don't be ashamed of the Gospel but *join with me in suffering for the gospel*. We read from 2 Timothy,

8Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, 9who 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, 10but 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, 11for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. 12For this reason I also suffer these things, 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. 13Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 14Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you. 2 Tim 1:8-14

This passage is similar to what Peter wrote in 1 Peter, *After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you*. Suffering, for the Christian, must be seen as part of God's process of our sanctification.

6Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. 8Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. 10After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. 11To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:6-11

Peter lets us know the source of our persecution, *Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* As Christians we find ourselves in the cross hairs of the evil one, especially as we struggle to push back the darkness. While all flesh faces adversity in this world because of sin, *the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth* Rom 8:22, Christians are fighting the devil armies to establish the Kingdom of God.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Eph 6:12

8Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, 9who 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, 10but 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, 11for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. 2 Tim 1:8-11

Paul communicates the security, the believer has in Christ, to his disciple Timothy. He doesn't want Timothy to be ashamed, timid in his stand for Christ, *Be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord (ashamed of the gospel) or of me His prisoner.* Paul has encouraged Timothy to be filled with the Spirit's *power and love and discipline.* Since Timothy has this Spiritual power (laying on of hands) and understanding of the reality of God's kingdom, Paul encourages him to stand his ground. Paul makes a similar statement in the book of Romans, *I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Rom 1:16* The gospel is the power of God for salvation, the provision for sin. *God presented Him (Christ) as the atoning sacrifice through faith in His blood* Romans 3:25 Paul can have great confidence here because he has placed his faith in God's Gospel, there is no salvation found in any of the world's other religions. Peter proclaims in Acts 4:12, *there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."*

Paul encouraged Timothy to *not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God. 2 Tim 1:8* Don't be ashamed of the Lord, *the testimony of our Lord* or of Paul, *His prisoner,* Paul was in prison at this time but he writes *join me, join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God.* Don't pull back but jump in, the water is fine. Paul believed, suffering for the gospel is in line, in harmony with, the power of God. When Paul prayed for a healing as mentioned in 2 Corinthians, the Lord didn't heal him but told Paul, *My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:9* Suffering makes us weak and dependent on the power of God.

Paul stated the gospel was a manifestation of the power of God (*the gospel according to the power of God*) It was a proclamation of the Lord's grace, *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, 2 Tim 1:9* from all eternity God's eternal plan has been to save a holy people for Himself. Paul wrote in Ephesians 1,

3All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.

4Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. Eph 1:3-5

God's desire was to save people from their Adamic sin natures, *has saved us* call, to invite a people, and *called us with a holy calling*. God designed that His people to be set apart for Him, that they would have a holy calling. Peter 1:16 declares, *Be holy, for I am holy*. Peter quoted this from the OT book of Leviticus (11:44,45, 19:2, 20:7) Paul stated the Lord's salvation was *not according to our works*. God's salvation was not the result of man's righteous behavior, but by God's own merciful provision, *not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. Eph 2:9* Salvation by grace alone was God's own plan, *according to His own purpose and grace*, something God set forth, as the show-bread (in the Temple), *which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity*, the believer has this salvation in Christ, before time (pro chronōn - before time) eternal (without beginning or end, that which always has been and always will be) (2 Tim 1:9)

Paul assured Timothy that there was no need to be ashamed of the gospel because it was the plan of eternal God, from before the existence of time, God Himself provided the lamb for the sacrifice. This plan has been revealed, *the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people, Titus 2:13,14*

10but 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, 11for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. 2 Tim 1:10,11

11For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. Titus 2:11-14

As Americans we celebrate our independence from the rule of Britain but as Christians we celebrate what Paul declared, freedom from sin, eternal separation from God, because of the purifying work of *our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus. He died to make men holy*. The Battle Hymn of the Republic states this great truth, *Christ died to make men holy*.

*In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free
While God is marching on
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Our God is marching on*