

2 Timothy 1:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

Analysis

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. Paul commands Timothy not to be "ashamed" (epaischynthēs, ἐπαισχυνθῆς) of Christ's testimony or Paul's imprisonment. In honor-shame culture, association with a convicted criminal brought shame and social stigma. The gospel's "scandal of the cross" (1 Corinthians 1:23)—proclaiming a crucified Messiah—was foolishness to Greeks and stumbling block to Jews. Cultural pressure to distance oneself from disreputable associations was intense.

"The testimony of our Lord" (to martyrion tou kyriou, τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ κυρίου) is the gospel message about Jesus—His deity, incarnation, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, exclusive claim as only way to God. This testimony inevitably provokes opposition from a world that hates Christ (John 15:18-20). The term martyrion connects to "martyr"—faithful witnesses often suffered death for testimony.

Paul calls Timothy to "be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel" (sygkakopathēson, συγκακοπαθήσον)—"suffer hardship together with the gospel." Christian ministry isn't career advancement but costly identification with Christ's sufferings (Philippians 3:10). However, this suffering isn't in human strength but "according to the power of God" (kata dynamin theou, κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ).

Historical Context

Shame was a powerful social force in the ancient world. Honor and reputation determined social standing, business opportunities, and family status. Association with criminals or executed persons brought profound shame affecting one's entire household. Paul's imprisonment wasn't house arrest but harsh confinement as condemned criminal awaiting execution. Roman citizens convicted of capital crimes were typically beheaded. The gospel's shame came from multiple directions. Jews considered executed criminals cursed by God (Deuteronomy 21:23). Romans viewed crucifixion as shameful slave punishment. Sophisticated Greeks considered resurrection absurd (Acts 17:32).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. In what situations are you tempted to downplay your Christian identity or soften gospel truth to avoid shame or rejection?
2. How does viewing Christian ministry as partnership in Christ's sufferings rather than career success change your expectations?
3. What would it look like to rely on "the power of God" rather than human wisdom when facing hostility to the gospel?

Interlinear Text

μὴ οὖν ἐπαισχυνθῆς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ κυρίου
not therefore Be of the testimony Lord
G3361 G3767 G1870 G3588 G3142 G3588 G2962

ἡμῶν μηδὲ ἐμὲ τὸν δέσμιον αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ
of our nor of me prisoner his but
G2257 G3366 G1691 G3588 G1198 G846 G235

συγκακοπάθησον τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ κατὰ δύναμιν
be thou partaker of the afflictions G3588 of the gospel according to the power
G4777 G2098 G2596 G1411

θεοῦ
of God
G2316

Additional Cross-References

Romans 1:16 (References God): For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Mark 8:38 (Parallel theme): Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Revelation 12:11 (Witness): And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

2 Timothy 4:5 (Parallel theme): But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

2 Timothy 2:9 (References God): Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

2 Timothy 1:12 (Parallel theme): For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am

persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Ephesians 3:1 (Parallel theme): For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

Luke 9:26 (Parallel theme): For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

Ephesians 4:1 (References Lord): I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 Timothy 1:16 (References Lord): The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:

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