

2 Timothy 1.8-12 The Glory of the Gospel

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[0:00] On the book of 2nd Timothy, the setting in which we find ourselves, in which this letter was written, is that the apostle Paul is imprisoned, he's in chains, his second Roman imprisonment, and in AD 64, it was the great fire of Rome, and following that there was severe persecution against Christians, state sanctioned persecution by Nero, and Christians were being put to death.

Paul was in prison, and he knew that the time of his departure was at hand, that his death was soon, and that it was on account of the gospel. So his being in chains, his imprisonment, his suffering, his affliction, and awaiting his execution was on account of the gospel.

And he writes in chapter 1, verse 7, where we left off in verse 7, it says, For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

And then in verse 8, it starts off with, therefore. So Paul here further develops this, and then he gets to the heart of whose approval the church should be living for.

So we'll read in chapter 1, verses 7 to 12. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

[1:22] Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel 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 given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

For this reason, I also suffer these things. Nevertheless, I am not ashamed, but I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him until that day.

Lord, we thank you again for your word. Thank you for the ministry of the word and the means of grace, and that where there is a true church, there is the presence of Christ. And we pray, Lord, that you would indeed speak to us by your spirit through your word today.

I pray that you would use even me in the preaching of the word, that you would bless the preaching of the word, and that you would bless the hearing of the word, that you would help us to know what your word says, to understand that which is spiritually discerned, that you would illuminate your word to us, and that you would be renewing our minds and at work in us today.

I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, our focus today will be verses 8 to 12. And in verses 8 to 12, we see that the church is to suffer the disapproval of the world for the glory of the gospel with God's approval.

[3:19] The church is to suffer the disapproval of the world for the glory of the gospel with God's approval. So we will look at the sharing in suffering, the glory of the gospel, and the reason to suffer.

So first of all, the sharing in suffering. First of all, the world's disapproval. So the church is to share in suffering the world's disapproval.

Starts by saying, do not be ashamed. The thing about being ashamed is shame. What's significant about shame?

Let's say you were to do something embarrassing in your house. Perhaps nobody's around. It's just you. Perhaps you're going up the stairs and maybe you're going up the stairs with a little too much enthusiasm and you catch your toe when you fall on your face.

You're not hurt. You're okay. But it's not embarrassing. There's no shame because there's nobody around that you would be disgraced by your action. Now, what if that same thing were to occur in front of hundreds of people who are looking at you?

[4:27] It would be a different situation. You would feel differently than you did when you were at home. And I can say this from firsthand experience knowing that that is the case. At my grade 8 graduation, by the way, I detest graduation now.

At my grade 8 graduation, I was a very shy person. And at the graduation, I was singled out and called up to the front. And in my haste to get to the front, my toe caught the stairs and I bounced my face off of the stairs and split my lip open.

And hundreds of people in perfect union gasped at this event. And it was humiliating because there was hundreds of people watching.

And there's something about the humiliation of other people's disapproval. Now, in this case, it doesn't really carry through because there wasn't much shame.

It turns out that one of my classmates had a video camera rolling. And afterwards, we took the VHS and popped it in the player and watched it over and over and over again. So it wasn't a matter of shame.

[5:34] It became a matter of humor. But what I'm getting at is that one event can feel very different to us whether it occurs in private or whether it occurs in front of a watching world because there is shame in the suffering, the humiliation, or the disapproval of others.

And when it says, do not be ashamed or share in suffering, it's speaking about the world's disapproval. So what is shame? Shame is the feeling of disgrace or dishonor or humiliation on account of the disapproval of others.

So what makes suffering reproach sting the way that it does? The sting of suffering reproach is shame. The sting is the disapproval of others.

Now, sometimes the sting of shame is right. It's appropriate. An example would be excommunication where there is an individual who is unrepentant in their sin and in the process, the due process and their excommunication, it is so that their shame will bring them to repentance of their sins and to be restored, to restoration.

In which case, the sting of shame is appropriate. Sometimes the sting of shame can be wrong or inappropriate. For example, fearing man or fearing the world's disapproval.

[7:03] But here, Paul says to Timothy, share with me in the sufferings for the gospel. He's to share in the sufferings for the gospel. In other words, don't be ashamed.

And he says that. Do not be ashamed. In other words, don't fear the world's disapproval. So further developing, God has not given us the spirit of fear.

He's saying, don't fear the world's disapproval. The shame. Don't be ashamed. And to do this requires to reorientate our perspective of suffering for the gospel.

And here's what I mean by that. Luke 6, 26 says, Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

So in other words, our perspective, our orientation or of our perspective of suffering for the sake of the gospel is that we should rejoice when heaven approves and we should lament when the world approves.

[8:09] If the world approves of our presentation of the gospel, that's something to be concerned about because the gospel is offensive to the world.

Which means also sharing and suffering on account of the foolishness of the cross. Sharing and suffering the world's disapproval on account of the foolishness of the cross.

So to the natural mind, when I say the natural mind, I mean the unregenerate person or by the light of nature. To the natural mind who does not see the glory and the cross, and that's a theme we're going to come back to, is seeing the glory and the cross, then the one of the natural mind becomes ashamed of it.

Ashamed of crucifixion, public shame, death, imprisonment, affliction, and change. So to the natural mind, to the unregenerate person, according to the light of nature, to the natural mind and to the unbelieving world, these things, the cross and of the faith, are a matter not, are a matter of shame and reproach.

Until, by faith, by the light of faith, until by faith we gaze on the cause. So whatever the cause is, we'll get there, we don't know what it is yet.

[9:27] Whatever that cause is, the natural mind sees the crucifixion and imprisonment and suffering as a matter of reproach until instead of by the light of nature, but by the light of faith, we gaze upon the cause of the crucifixion, the cause of the open public shame, the cause of death,

imprisonment, afflictions, and chains.

And that cause is a matter not of shame, but is a matter of glory. And that's something that I want to really stress this morning, is that the cause is not a matter of shame, but a matter of glory.

And that our perspective needs to be reoriented on suffering for the gospel. So what is that cause? That cause is this.

The death that destroyed the power of Satan, sin, and death, and opened the way of salvation for a perishing world, and is offered to the world through the testifying and word and an affliction.

Now with public execution, there's another dimension of it. There's the punishment inflicted on the criminal, but when it's public, there's another dimension to public execution, and that's to send a message.

[10 : 46] It's to send a message to all the followers that they might be ashamed to associate and to deter the continuation of such a following. But Paul here says, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God.

So the church is not only to endure suffering for the gospel, but to glory in it. So second of all, from our text, the church, we see the glory of the gospel.

Now John Chrysostom, who's a 4th century, 5th century prominent figure in Christianity, he wrote, for there is not so great a sign of the love of God for mankind, not heaven, nor sea, nor earth, nor the creation of all things that have nothing, nor all else beside as the cross.

In other words, the cross is the greatest sign of the love of God. That is not something that is a matter of shame, but a matter of glory. And what follows in verses 9 and 10 is a summary of the glory of the gospel.

A summary of the gospel. And we see in this text in regards to salvation, to redemption, the author, the application, the basis, the origin, the mediator, the foundation, the execution, and the accomplishment within the gospel.

[12 : 18] So let's look at verse 9 and 10. Keep your finger there because we're going to work through it and I'm going to ask you questions for you to be thinking about. But with the gospel, with salvation, the glory of the gospel, first question is who is the author?

Now I said verses 9 and 10, but for this question we're going to have to reach back into question 9 because that carries over. Sorry, verse 8 because that follows over. Verse 8 it says, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God and God is carried over in verse 9, who?

Who is the author of salvation? God. Next we see the application. What is the application? In other words, how is the work of redemption applied to the redeemed?

It says, God who has saved us and called us with a holy calling. It is God who saves lost sinners and calls them.

Now what is the call? This can be distinguished between a general call and an effectual call or an external call and an internal call and both are very important to understand. The general call is the proclamation of the gospel.

[13 : 29] The word of God being proclaimed so that sinners can hear the word of God, that they can hear the gospel. That's the general call or the external call.

And the internal or the effectual call is the work of God's spirit taking that gospel that's been proclaimed and making it work or illuminating it and enlightening the person who hears it.

So the effectual call, that's the work of God, it's the work of God's spirit convincing us of our sin and misery and enlightening our minds and the knowledge of Christ and renewing our wills, persuading and enabling us to embrace Jesus Christ as freely offered in the gospel.

The gospel goes out in the general call and the effectual call is the spirit of God making, at work in the one who hears it. So that's the application of it and then we see the basis, the basis of the gospel, the basis of salvation says, saved us and called us not according to our works.

I debated between asking the merit or the basis but I stuck with the basis not according to our works.

[14 : 49] Our salvation, God saving us, God calling us is not according to our works in any way.

There's two options that a person has, two options, two decisions that a person has to make, one or the other.

The first one is that God who is holy and righteous and just and who will by no means clear the guilty, either we come before God and bring to him our personal, exact, entire, and perpetual obedience.

In other words, we bring our perfect, spotless, without blemish righteousness before God and in so doing renounce Christ because there is no need for Christ if we have a perfect righteousness. righteousness. But the other option, the only other option, is to renounce ourselves, to renounce our own righteousness and to come before God with the righteousness of Christ.

There's only two options. And the law, if our perfect obedience to the law, which nobody has, nobody has that to bring before God, but obedience to the law, that's not why the law is there.

[16:01] The law is not the grounds for your merit of salvation, but the law exposes your sin and shows your need of salvation.

So the basis of salvation, we also see the origin of salvation or the origin of redemption. Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace.

grace. The origin of salvation of mankind is according to God's purpose, according to grace. Grace means unmerited favor. Not merited in any way.

Nothing that we have done merits it. God does not see that we deserve his salvation and gives us his favor. It is completely unmerited. In other words, we the sinner are not God's counselor.

It's according according to his own purpose and his own grace. The triune God does not have to seek counsel from the sinner whether or not God will save.

[17:08] It is God who saves. And also the concept of God looking into the future to see if the sinner deserves it or will meet him halfway is not the God of Scripture.

That's to predicate creaturely limitations on God because while God has foreknowledge, it's not that God is in the past and must look to where he isn't, God is eternal, God is immense, God is infinite, God fills all space and time.

So where before the foundation of the world, God decrees, predestines, chooses the elect, the names, specific names written in the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the world, it's God's decreeing, God's speaking is the same thing of God's acting.

God doesn't speak something and then have to wait for the time to come and then act according to God because God's eternal. God fills all space and time, not in past, present, and future, but as one perpetual moment, one now.

But on this side of creation, it's unfolded in time. So God, God's willing, God's speaking is his doing according to his own purpose and grace, apart from the counsel of the sinner.

[18:20] And then we see the mediator. Who is the mediator of redemption? He says, according to his own purpose and grace in Christ Jesus. And we know that this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Christ the mediator, being the son of God, sharing in the essence and, not sharing, sharing in the glory of God, being the same essence as the father, the son of God, in the fullness of time, assumed our nature, took to himself a body, and did personally, entirely, perfectly, and perpetually obey the law, a perfect righteousness, and did suffer and die on the cross as a substitute to pay the redemption price to pay the ransom to purchase for himself a people for his own possession.

And in so doing, there is forgiveness of sins. And in so doing, there is perfect righteousness, which is required to be in a right standing before God. So while it is impossible for any of us to come to God with our obedience, with our righteousness, and in so doing, we would have to renounce Christ, we must renounce ourselves, receive Christ, and rest on Christ alone for salvation.

Not receiving Christ and then resting on our works or our continued works for our justification, but resting on justification because of Christ's righteousness imputed to us.

Next, we see the foundation. Now, this is carrying over according to his own purpose. His purpose, we see, is before time began. This is hard for us to even process because everything that we experience, there is before, during, and after, but God does not have a past which is out of his reach and control.

[20:25] He does not have a future which he is not yet there. For God, it is just one perpetual now, one moment. He fills all space and time. But what it's getting at here is outside of the bounds of time, in eternity, is the foundation, or the atemporal, outside the bounds of time, the atemporal decree of God.

And what this is getting at here is the covenant of redemption. The covenant of redemption is the atemporal or eternal intra-trinitarian agreement between the Father and the Son, the Father's sending of the Son, and the Son's being the mediator between holy God and sinful people of God's elect.

For a further understanding of this covenant of redemption, read Ephesians chapter 1. Next, we see the execution of salvation, starting in verse 10.

Before time began, it says, has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ. So that which was decreed in eternity, the foundation, his purpose before time began, to what God is eternal to us as creatures, this side of creation, what was decreed in eternity is now being unfolded, is occurring in time or temporal.

God's atemporal purpose is being accomplished in time. This is the covenant of grace, of Christ's coming, Christ's work of redemption, and Christ's work as a mediator.

[22:07] And for fuller understanding of that, read Ephesians 2. So Ephesians 1, covenant of redemption, Ephesians 2, covenant of grace. And the covenant of grace is built on the foundation of the covenant of redemption.

But moving on in 10b, we see the accomplishment, the accomplishment of the gospel, the accomplishment of salvation, of redemption. He says, has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

He has abolished death. This is what John Owen calls the death of death and the death of Christ. The death of Christ has abolished death. Now when we consider death and brought life, there's three dimensions of life and death that I want to bring to mind.

Before the fall, with Adam, before sin, before the fall, Adam had spiritual life, natural life, and eternal life. Spiritual life being union of the divine image with the soul.

That was lost with the fall. So before the fall, he had a perfect union being in the image of God with original righteousness. And this was lost with the fall.

[23:23] But there's spiritual life. There's also natural life. Natural life is the union of the body and the soul. This we definitely comprehend very easily because when there's a separation of the body and the soul, there's no longer natural life, there's natural death.

And then eternal life is union of the whole composite of man, of human composite, with God as the highest good. So with the fall, there was a loss of union and communion with God.

with the fall brought death. And there's the three dimensions then that come with death. With there being spiritual life, natural life, and eternal life, the fall brought spiritual death, natural death, and eternal death.

And now with eternal death, eternal death isn't annihilationism. Eternal death isn't just seeking to exist because we have immortal souls.

Eternal death, remembering if eternal life is the union of the whole human composite with God as the highest good, then eternal death is separation from the favor of God as the highest good, eternal misery, and eternal torment.

[24:40] So the fall brought natural death, spiritual death, and eternal death into the world. And John Bunyan, if you've ever read the Pilgrim's Progress, Christian along his pilgrimage as he comes to the celestial city, before he gets to the celestial city, this heavenly city, there's one last obstacle that he must cross, him and hopeful.

This last obstacle is the river, the waters of death, the river of death that he must cross through in order to get to the celestial city. so also the Israelites in the Exodus coming through the wilderness, they must cross the Jordan River, the waters of the Jordan River, before coming into the promised rest.

There's this last obstacle of having to cross through rivers of death, the river of death, before coming into the promised rest. But we see here that Christ has abolished death and brought life to light.

He has brought life, He's brought spiritual life, spiritual life at regeneration or beginning in regeneration, being restored in the image of God.

While we do not have original righteousness restored to us, we are restored in the image of God. Natural life, which at resurrection, being perfect, perfected in holiness, and then eternal life, being inseparably, and the favor and enjoyment of God as the highest good.

[26:17] In 1 Corinthians 15, 54, it says, So when this corruptible has put on incorruptible, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is

swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

the accomplishment is that he has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. The gospel to Christians is not a matter of shame, but a matter of glory.

And in verses 9 to 10, the summary of the gospel, we see the glory of the gospel. We see God's purpose, we see God's decree, we see God's working, we see God's accomplishing.

So whose glory do we see in the glory of the gospel? It's God's glory. Christians need to see the gospel not as a matter of shame, but of glory with God's approval.

[27:31] So third, the reason to suffer. The reason to suffer. God's approval and what God will do.

So God's approval as the reason to suffer. Notice in verse 11, it says, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

The apostle Paul, while there are no apostles today, the apostle Paul, by the approval of God, was appointed to preach the gospel. He was appointed to proclaim the word of God.

to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. Now, by the providence of God, we read this morning Romans 10.

And in Romans 10, we learned that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. This is very important. That is the preaching of the word.

[28:33] Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. How? Well, by the preaching of the gospel. That's the gospel call. Remember, the external call, the proclamation of the gospel.

The application being both the general external call and the internal effectual call. So, God's approval, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, the preaching of the gospel, preaching of the testimony, the pure and full doctrine.

And he says, do not be ashamed of the gospel. The gospel is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.

Do not be ashamed of the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. Do not be ashamed of the gospel. And next we see in the reason to suffer is what God will do.

In verse 12, it says, for this reason, I also suffer these things whether I am, nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him until that day.

[29:43] God is able to guard the gospel. God is able to guard the declaration of what is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes.

God is able to guard the gift of faith which he gives to the elect. God is able to preserve those whom he has saved. God is able to glorify those whom he has justified.

As we see in Romans 8, 29, 30. God is able to guard it. He will do it. Now, we saw in the accomplishment that he has abolished death and has brought life to light.

And God now is bringing life. He's bringing eternal life to perishing men through the proclamation of the gospel. And that is glorious and that is worth suffering for.

That is worth suffering the disapproval of a perishing world. So what are some concluding uses that we can take from this text? Well, first of all, our temptation is to avoid shame.

[30:53] Our temptation is to avoid the suffering of the disapproval of others. If I had the choice, I would not have tripped on the stairs at my graduation. I would have preferred to have avoided the humiliation.

But our temptation is to avoid shame. Now, if a stranger that we've never met before and we'll never see him again comes up to us and says, you're that church that preaches the gospel?

I don't approve of that. So I'll get used to it, I guess. There wouldn't really be much shame in it. But what if it wasn't just a stranger?

What if it was family members? What if it was your parents? What if your family, what if your parents felt disgraced because you were a Christian? Or what if other family members, what if it was a spouse?

Or what if it was extended family? Or what if it was our friends? What if conversion is recent and our friends feel disgraced, think that we should feel disgraced or ashamed of the gospel?

[31:57] Or what if it's coworkers or a boss? This is different than just a stranger who we'll never see again but affects every aspect of our lives. And our temptation is to avoid shame.

What if it's more than just a stranger? What if it's more than a family member or parents or a spouse or for coworkers or for a boss? What if it's the whole world?

What if it's the whole world that disapproves of the gospel, of our embracing of the gospel? Where our temptation is to avoid shame? It's because we don't like it.

We don't like shame. We don't like humiliation. It's not comfortable. But when the church is ashamed of God's word, which God's word includes 1 Timothy, what we've just finished working through, that includes 1 Timothy chapter 2.

When the church is ashamed of God's word, then it reconstructs something other than true Christianity, where Christ is Lord. Matthew 8, 38 says, For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, and this adulterous and sinful generation of him, the Son of Man, also will be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

[33:16] It certainly changes our perspective of being ashamed of the word of God, being ashamed of the gospel. And finally, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

And when the church is ashamed of the gospel and the church doesn't preach it, and yes, the preaching of the gospel will offend the world, but when the church is ashamed of the gospel and doesn't preach it, then the gospel call does not go out.

I know from Romans 10 that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?

And how shall they hear without a preacher? How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things.

So my final question is this, is whose approval are you living for? Are you living for the approval of the world? Or are you living for God's approval?

[34:22] Or to put it another way, do you see the gospel, do you see Christ crucified, do you see the cross a matter of shame or a matter of glory? Let's pray.

Amen.