

## **“Saved and Called by the Grace of God” (An Exposition of 2 Timothy 1:9)<sup>1</sup>**

### ***Introduction***

A couple of Sundays ago we began to look at this passage from Paul's second epistle to Timothy, and we spent most of our time on v.8, where Paul exhorts Timothy, saying:

**“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,”**

We saw that in some ways this is the main theme or emphasis of this letter. Timothy was *not to be ashamed of the gospel*, and this meant that he had to be willing to join with Paul in *suffering* for the sake of the gospel. To avoid suffering for the gospel would require the silencing of the message of the gospel, which is the essence of being ashamed of it.

Many of you probably know of Pastor Voddie Baucham. We prayed for him a while ago regarding his emergency heart surgery, and in God's kindness he seems to have made a full recovery. He has written a terrific book called *Fault Lines*, in which he exposes the dangers of the social justice movement, and how it is in many ways contrary to the true Christian faith. I cannot commend that book to you strongly enough.

Recently on social media I saw a quote<sup>2</sup> from Pastor Baucham where he brilliantly sums up the message of 2 Timothy. He said:

“The message of 2 Timothy is this: Timothy, they are about to kill me for preaching the gospel. When they do, you preach the gospel until they kill you.”

That really is basically what Paul is telling Timothy to do – to preach the gospel of Christ, being willing even to lay down his life for the truth of the gospel and for the sake of the name of Christ if need be.

Throughout much of the rest of this letter the Apostle Paul will tell us what that looks like in practical terms. Here are just a handful of examples that Paul gives us in this epistle:

- For Timothy to *not* be ashamed of the gospel means that he must be willing to **“share in suffering”** with Paul and suffer like Paul (v.8).
- For Timothy to *not* be ashamed of the gospel means that he must **“follow the pattern of sound words”** that he had heard from Paul and **“guard the good deposit”** that had been entrusted to him (v.13-14). He was to *hold fast to the truth*.
- For Timothy to not be ashamed of the gospel means that he must not abandon Paul the way those in Asia did, including **“Phygelus and Hermogenes”** did (v.15), but to seek him out in Rome and 'refresh' Paul like **“Onesiphorus”** did, *not being ashamed of Paul's chains*, but ministering to his needs (v.16).
- For Timothy to *not* be ashamed of the gospel means that he must *pass along the doctrine* that Paul had taught him and **“entrust [it] to faithful men who will be able to teach others also”** (2:2).

---

<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>2</sup> The exact source of the quote was not given. It may have been from a sermon or lecture.

- In addition to this, for Timothy to *not* be ashamed of the gospel meant that he had to do his best to *present himself to God as one approved*, “**a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth**” (2:15).
- And if Timothy were to not be ashamed of the gospel, he must “**preach the word**” and “**be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.**” (4:2)

That is something of an overview of what is to come in the rest of this brief epistle or letter. That is the job description, so to speak, of a faithful pastor. (Pray for me and other pastors whom you know!)

But in our text today, Paul *doesn't* just go into detail about the “what” of gospel ministry, but the “why.” Here he exhorts Timothy to faithfulness in the ministry of the gospel, and gives him the right biblical motivations or encouragements by which he was to do so.

And these same motives and encouragements are not just for pastors and elders in the church, but are to be understood as the reasons why *every one of us as believers in Christ* should be willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel and the glory of the name of Christ!

### ***Our Salvation in Christ***

Everything that follows in v.9-11 explains in one way or another the reason why we are believers should be willing to suffer for the name of Christ. And in one way or another, it all circles back around to *our salvation in Christ*.

Our salvation, first and foremost, is the *only* thing that can really give a believer the power to overcome the temptation to fear and being ashamed of the gospel. And so here in v.9-11 Paul goes into some detail about different aspects of our salvation in Christ. Bible commentator William Hendriksen calls this passage Paul's “beautiful digression” about “the work of redemption.”<sup>3</sup>

In v.8b-9 Paul writes:

**“ . . .share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, *who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,*”** (Italics added)

So the first thing that Paul reminds us of is that, for those of us who believe in Christ, God “**has saved us**” (v.9). If Paul had said nothing else, that alone would have been sufficient, if rightly understood and fully appreciated.

Our salvation from sin that is ours only in Christ by faith, ought to serve as the motivation for everything that we do in serving the Lord and seeking to do His will in our lives. The value and greatness of our salvation simply *cannot be overstated*. This is why our Lord Jesus says things like this:

**“For what will it profit a man if he gains *the whole world* and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?”** (Matthew 16:26, italics added)

---

3 *Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus* (New Testament Commentary), p.231

There is *nothing* that can compare with salvation in Christ. *Nothing*. If you gain **“the whole world”** and yet have not Christ, you lose your soul, and are cut off from God, forever suffering His just wrath for your sin. How many go through this life seeking to gain the world, or *even just a little part of it*, but neglect their eternal souls!

What is salvation? What does it entail and include? We scarcely have the time this morning to try to do justice to the grace of God in salvation. But it includes things like *justification* – being freely forgiven all of your sins against God & being accepted by God as righteous in His holy sight, only on account of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith alone!<sup>4</sup> And as Paul says in Romans 5:1–2,

**“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”** (Italics added)

*Peace with God!* A right standing before God in His grace! Having the sure **“hope of the glory of God.”** Our *being* **“reconciled to God by the death of His Son”** (Romans 5:10)! Not just the reconciliation itself, but *the price that was paid* to purchase it for our sakes - **“the death of his Son”!**

Salvation in Christ also includes *sanctification*. That is “the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.” (*Westminster Shorter Catechism* Q/A 35)

Not only does our great salvation in Christ save us from the *penalty* of our sins, but also from the *enslaving power* of sin! As Paul says in Romans 6:14, **“For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.”** In Christ we may still struggle with sin in this life, but we are no longer slaves to sin!

And one day, when the Lord Jesus comes or calls us home, we will then be free from even the very *presence* of sin as well! No more sin, misery, and death. No more will the sins of ourselves or others mar our fellowship with God and each other!

There is much more that could be said, but let that suffice for now. And God has given *all of that* to us if we are in Christ by faith!

### ***Our Calling in Christ***

Not only has God saved us in Christ, but He has also **“called us to a holy calling”** in Christ as well. If not for this calling by God, none of us would ever have repented and turned to Christ by faith for salvation. This is *not* just the *outward calling* of the preaching of the gospel (which you are even hearing now in the preaching of the Word of God), but *the effectual calling of God*, whereby He draws us to faith in Christ. *Westminster Shorter Catechism* Q/A 31 says:

**“Q. 31. What is effectual calling? A.** Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.”

---

4 See *Westminster Shorter Catechism* Q/A 33.

On our own, dead in our sins and transgressions, none of us are rightly convicted of our sin and guilt. On our own, none of us rightly understand the gospel of Christ, and none of us are willing or able to turn from our sins and turn to Christ for salvation. *None of us*. Not me, and not you!

In John 6:44 the Lord Jesus says,

**“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”**

And in Romans 3:10–12 Paul writes:

**“None is righteous, no, not one;  
no one understands;  
no one seeks for God.  
All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;  
no one does good,  
not even one.”**

If you are a believer in Christ, thank God for it. Don't just thank God for your salvation, but also *thank God for the very faith by which you believe* on Christ for salvation! In Ephesians 2:8–9 Paul says:

**“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”**

What is it that is **“not your own doing”** (or **“not of yourselves”** - KJV, NASB)? Not just your salvation, but even your faith! Both are **“the gift of God.”**

And Paul tells us that this **“calling”** that God has called us to (or *with*) is a **“holy calling.”** It is *holy*, as it is from God alone, and it is *holy* in that when we are called to Christ by faith, *we are called unto a life of holiness*, in being set apart for Christ in all things. We have been **“bought with a price,”** and so we are *no longer our own* (1 Corinthians 6:20)!

### ***Saved and Called by the Grace of God***

*Now why did God do all of this?* Why did God save us and call us to salvation in Christ? Do we deserve salvation in any way? Did we deserve to be called by God unto faith in Christ while so many others hear and remain in their unrepentance? No!

In v.9 Paul also reminds us of the *“why”* of our salvation. There he writes:

**“who saved us and called us to a holy calling, *not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace*, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,”** (Italics added)

Our salvation and calling in Christ is **“not because of our works.”** We do *not* deserve it, nor did we do anything to earn it. Rather, *all of it* – our salvation from beginning to end – is **“because of his own purpose and grace.”** *God's* grace alone. *God's* purpose alone, and *not* our own.

This is what Paul says elsewhere in Romans 9:9–16,

**“For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”**

**“What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.” (Italics added)**

It is *God’s* purpose that will stand. It is *God’s* grace and mercy by which we are saved. That was true of Paul and Timothy, and it is true of everyone who believes and is saved! And so all of the praise and glory for our salvation belongs to God alone!

And in case that was not clear enough already, what else does Paul tell us here in v.9 about our salvation and calling in Christ? That these are things **“which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.”**

God saved us and called us in Christ unto salvation in Him – and these things were given to us **“before the ages began”** (or **“from all eternity”** - NASB)! You didn't earn anything before God created you! As Paul says elsewhere in Ephesians 1:3–6,

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, *even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.” (Italics added)**

If you are a believer in Christ, God **“chose”** you in Christ. *And when did He do that? It was “before the foundation of the world.”*

## ***Conclusion***

That is just scratching the surface of what Paul is saying here in this passage. The greatness of our salvation in Christ – of God's *saving us and calling us by His grace and purpose* – should serve to strengthen us in all of our duties in serving Him.

May we dwell much on the greatness of the grace of God toward us in our salvation in Christ! And may **“the joy of the Lord”** be our *strength* (Nehemiah 8:10), and *the joy of our salvation* enable us to do all things unto the glory of God, even suffering for the sake of the gospel! - Amen