

## Unashamed. 2 Timothy 1:8-18

### Don't be ashamed

I don't know if you have been following the reporting of the treatment of Associate Professor Yoni Nazarathy at a symposium at QUT on Anti Racist Research after he leaked a cartoon mocking 'Peter Dutton's Jews.

"They stood up and they all yelled 'shame' in unison. It was a co-ordinated public humiliation." [The Australian Jan 26<sup>th</sup>], co-ordinated by the conference organiser Chelsea Watego who led the chant of shame.

Public shaming, the singling out for criticism of someone, has been used to reinforce group values and punish and pressure to change the person who deviates from that group's values for centuries.

Used, because shame is powerful, especially where the person being shamed has internalised those values, has been brought up to believe they are right, and where the public criticism from family or community meets with that strong desire we all have to be approved, respected.

Timothy's society was practiced in shame.

First century Greco-Roman culture was one where children were 'trained from childhood to seek honour and avoid disgrace' and where the honour and disgrace an individual earned reflected not just on themselves but their whole family, a culture where bringing shame to a family or society brought real consequences – rejection, exclusion, beatings.

People were very sensitive to being shamed

And in this culture Paul writes to Timothy

*2 Timothy 1: 8 So don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, that is the apostolic witness to Jesus in the gospel, or of me his prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God.*

Don't be ashamed

If Timothy, or you and I, are going to persevere in being identified as believers in the Jesus of the gospel; if we are going to share that gospel freely and joyfully, we must be unashamed – for you don't last long in your commitment to something you are ashamed of.

At least you won't last long in your public commitment

Someone might practice a shameful vice in private – like watching child porn on your computer, for years, always fearing discovery

But that won't work for the Christian faith. The gospel is a public message, and trusting obedience to Jesus involves the whole of our life, cannot be kept secret

Shame is the inhibitor of all faithful ministry. Shame is the water that will always put out the fire of zeal, the scourge that will drive us from the public square

To be ashamed of the gospel is the first step on the road to abandoning it

Don't be ashamed, says Paul to Timothy

### Why might Timothy and we be ashamed of the gospel

But there was much in the gospel that at first sight might make a first century person ashamed.

At the heart of the gospel message was Jesus' crucifixion, yet crucifixion was a form of execution designed for slaves and common criminals, a lingering death designed to be not only painful but shameful, humiliating its victims. To claim your leader was crucified was to be associated with what was shameful from the beginning.

The gospel's call to abandon the worship of your family's or city's gods, on whom the welfare of the whole community was thought to depend, to instead worship Jesus was seen as shameful, a failure to seek the collective good

The notion that the Christian community was one where slaves mingled as equals with people of other classes – was shameful

As was the idea that those who had done what was shameful could be forgiven, go without penalty

Even Paul, the gospel's messenger, being in chains was seen as shameful – for it portrayed him as a criminal and a threat to the stability of society

And enduring public mockery for being identified with such weird beliefs

Was shameful

Don't be ashamed, says Paul, but there was much in the gospel that would prompt shame

Then, and now

The cross has been sanitized but it still makes no sense to many

How is it just that one innocent man can die in place of another?

Then there is the Christian sexual ethic that is seen as oppressive, denying to people the path to flourishing by being true to themselves

The claim that there is only one way to God, seen as exclusive, in a society that promotes inclusiveness

The teaching on judgment that many see as an attempt to control the behaviour of others

The lack of sophistication in believing in miracles, the alleged rejection of science, the destruction of other cultures

There is much that our culture identifies as shameful in the 'testimony about our Lord' and in the life of His messengers

But Paul tells Timothy he should not be ashamed and instead be willing to suffer with Paul for the gospel

And that is what God's word is calling for from every believer, from you and I – to not be ashamed of the apostles' witness to Jesus in the gospels or the suffering, mocking and humiliation of it messengers, but to join with them in suffering for the gospel

Why?

### **Why not be ashamed?**

Why not be ashamed?

It is because the gospel brings the salvation of the living God

*<sup>9</sup>He 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. <sup>10</sup>This has now been made evident through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

### A saving work and a holy calling

The gospel is not one competing human philosophy amongst many

It is about something the living God is doing

He Saved us – salvation is a big idea. The word is like a freight train packed with Old Testament promises and expectation

It is forgiveness, and so much more

[Paul talks about it as past and complete here – He saved us – because He is confident in God fulfilling His purpose, while elsewhere he can talk of believers being saved, or even awaiting salvation]

To be saved is to be at peace with God and to share in that time when His people will live in peace in His presence

In the new heaven and earth HE has promised – where they will be secure,

Freed even from the threat of our own sin – having new hearts that delight to do God's will

TO be saved is to become one of His people, called with a holy calling – called in the gospel to be God's people who will be holy as HE is holy, to live holy lives [Lev. 19:1, 1 Pet. 1:16]

Don't be ashamed – for the gospel is the work of the living God that does good to those who believe it – it saves them, and to the society in which they live – it commits them to living holy lives, that is lives of love, self-controlled lives that keep God's commands

And don't be ashamed because this saving work God does through the gospel is a sure work because it has its origin in God's grace and purpose

#### A gracious work

*He saves us - not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace,*

People who are called through the gospel come to share in this wonderful salvation – as a gift.

It is not earned

It comes from God's mercy and His determination to fulfil His gracious plan

Hope here for those who have no hope, whose works could never earn them peace with God

And that is all of us

What our works earn is judgment, for they are all tainted with our sin, our rebellion against God

But in the gospel of Jesus

All can be included, whatever our religious background, our intelligence, our wealth

It doesn't depend on the time and chance of human opportunity and achievement

But on grace

Don't be ashamed – the gospel speaks of God's generosity, of a God who is rich in mercy

And it speaks of a work God is determined to bring to completion because it has its origin in God's eternal purpose in Christ

#### A sure work, the outworking of His eternal purpose in Christ [Eph. 1:3-10]

*according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.*

The grace believers receive was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, before the times of the ages.

God's purpose is settled, His plan certain – from before time

He doesn't have to adapt and change, accommodate the unforeseen

His saving us is the outworking in the present of a gracious purpose He has settled on in eternity.

We can be confident he knows what He is doing and will most certainly bring what He intends to pass.

We will never be embarrassed by disappointed expectations, promises unfulfilled.

And we and all the world come to know this purpose and grace through Jesus, for this eternal salvation is accomplished through the appearing in time of the Lord Jesus

<sup>10</sup> *This has now been made evident through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

#### A work focused on Jesus

That is the gospel claim. Jesus brings the long planned, long promised, salvation of God.

He doesn't just announce it by His coming

He achieves it

He has abolished death

What a lot of good news is contained in that phrase

Death the judgement on our sin

Death, the covering that is cast over all peoples [Is. 25:7], whose long shadow falls across every society,

Death, fear of which has held us bondage all our lives

Death, the end of joy, of light and life and love

Jesus has abolished by His own death and resurrection, the death and resurrection the gospel proclaims.

In His death for sin Jesus has dealt with our judgment, removed death's sting, freed us from fear of death, and destroyed the devil who has the power of death [Heb. 2:14-15]

HE has Made the death of our bodies now a falling asleep from which we will awake refreshed in His presence

And In His resurrection guaranteed our own resurrection to life on the day of judgment

Why would you be ashamed of so good a message that has such a sure foundation as the death and resurrection of Jesus – in history, witnessed, sure,

And He has revealed this to us and to all in the gospel, the testimony about our Lord, the message He has sent into all the world through the apostles He chose

#### A work revealed in the gospel

Having abolished death Jesus *has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

In believing the gospel we can come to share in the life and immortality Jesus has achieved

There is life and immortality for all who believe the gospel

Some Find this talk of eternal life troublesome for it relativises human achievements and judgements, limits the impact of coercive human power, means that this world, its pleasures and griefs, are not ultimate

But this life Jesus brings is good

Immortality is not primarily speaking of duration but the quality of life – it is the life of salvation, life that does not know the decay and corruption of death

or marred with lies and lack of trust

A Life marked with beauty and light

A life where there is Never grief, never a sundered relationship, never the loss of love, never the painful confusion of misunderstandings, without regret and tears

Life where we know God

This life is Brought to light through the gospel

It is not kept a secret.

You might be ashamed if it was kept a secret – what all need, life, hidden, only for those with secret knowledge.

But that is not the gospel

God wants this long planned, gracious salvation accomplished in time through His Son

Known

He is determined this gospel be heard by all.

Paul's appointment, and that of the other apostles, makes that clear

<sup>11</sup> *For this gospel I was appointed a herald, apostle, and teacher,*

#### A work God wants known

A herald was, in the ancient world without newspapers, radios, or TV's, someone who made public announcements, gave news of things like the arrival of kings, their proclamations, the beginning of public games.

A herald had two requirements – a loud voice and the ability to repeat exactly what they had been told, to convey the information, the news, accurately

Paul had been appointed by God to convey the good news accurately to all

And he could do this with authority as an apostle, someone who had seen the risen Jesus

And as a teacher he could make known the meaning of and how to respond to what He proclaimed.

Why should Timothy not be ashamed of the gospel witness to Jesus and of Paul its preacher?

Why should we not be?

– Because Christ proclaimed in the gospel through that shameful cross is God's Saviour bringing the promised salvation of God, the outworking of His eternal purpose, to all who believe in Him

And the gospel is God's message that makes that salvation known

A good word,

from the living God, and so a sure and certain, reliable word

a word from His Grace, that brings grace and mercy, life in our death

a word for all – not a secret that God wants us to keep to ourselves

<sup>12</sup> *and that is why I suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day.*

It is to make this good gospel known that Paul suffers as he fulfills his calling to make it known

And he reminds Timothy, who might be tempted to see Paul's sufferings as a cause of shame, that he is not ashamed

For the gospel he preaches has brought Him to know and trust the God who commissioned him to preach the gospel

*But I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day.*

<sup>12</sup> *That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. NIV*

I know whom I have believed, or trusted.

The gospel brings us to know God

Not some vague idea of god, not a philosophical construct whom one day we might be convinced of and the next day doubt

But the God who acts and speaks, who has revealed Himself in His Son, the only God

The God we know knows us

The God who makes promises to us

The God who is powerful to raise the dead

The God who brings us into relationship with Himself, who gives us His Spirit in our hearts crying Abba, Father

I know whom I have trusted and I am convinced, *persuaded that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day.*

'What has been entrusted' is a phrase used to translate one word of the Greek text, paratheken

That is a word meaning 'deposit', a word in everyday use for something, which could be money, or people, or things [Mounce p.487], you would leave in the care of a friend or a temple for safekeeping, when you were, for example, going on a journey.

The one thing that mattered was that the person you deposited them with would be faithful, and they would be kept unharmed and returned to you when you came for them

Paul says that he is persuaded that God is able to guard my, Paul's, deposit until that day, the day of judgment when Christ returns

It could be, as the CSB translates, what God has entrusted to me – meaning the gospel

Many modern versions adopt this sense as in v. 14 the same word is used of the gospel entrusted to Timothy – guard the good deposit.

But it is more likely to be 'my deposit' as in the NIV, what Paul has entrusted to God, his life, ministry, and honour

Paul is saying he is not ashamed, despite his imprisonments and hardship, despite the fact he will soon lose his life for the gospel, because he won't be a loser, his life won't be a waste,

Because he has entrusted his life to the God he knows and has trusted through believing the gospel of the Lord Jesus and he is trustworthy. HE will vindicate Paul's life and ministry at the last day, when the LORD vindicates his own gospel and reveals Jesus the Saviour in glory

Then the human judgment on Paul's life, one that has tried to cover him with shame as a convict, will be reversed. He will be covered in glory, the messenger of the eternal king

Just as the human judgment that mocked his message of the cross as weak and foolish, will be shown to be empty as the gospel is revealed as true and powerful

Paul says to Timothy and to us – Don't be ashamed of the gospel, be willing to suffer for it

For saving through the gospel is the work of God

Bringing Life and immortality to all who believe in the Jesus proclaimed in the gospel

More, it will bring you to know the living God, Father, Son and Spirit, whom you can trust with your whole life, to know Him as your Saviour so that you too can say as you come to the end of your life "I know whom I have trusted and I am persuaded, convinced, that HE is able to guard what I have entrusted to him, my whole life, unto that day."

### **Being Unashamed**

So what are we to do if we heed Paul's call to be unashamed?

In vv. 13-18 Paul gives Timothy a picture of the ministry and life of the unashamed

*2 Timothy 1: <sup>13</sup> Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup> Guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit who lives in us.*

#### Preserving and Passing on the gospel

Being unashamed means passing on faithfully the message of the gospel unchanged and conforming your own life to it.

*<sup>13</sup> Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.*

Timothy must teach after Paul's model and pattern and not depart from it.

Pattern has to do with both content and shape – its content is what Timothy has heard from Paul and that content is to be faithfully proclaimed, taught and passed on following Paul's example.

That means it will have the same emphasis, not going after myths or quarrelling about words like the false teachers, but focused on Christ crucified

That teaching, unlike that of the false teachers, is sound – health bringing, life restoring

But there can't just be faithfulness to the message, Orthodoxy alone is not sufficient

There must be faithfulness to the Lord Paul's gospel proclaims seen in a life of faith and love

Timothy, and all who are unashamed of the gospel, must be believing the promises of the gospel themselves and trusting the Lord who makes them

And they must be obeying that Lord, living the life of love our Lord commands, the love, that like our Lord's and Paul's, will pay a cost for people to hear and believe the gospel.

And those who are unashamed of the message of Jesus and Paul his appointed messenger will also

*<sup>14</sup> Guard the good deposit that has been entrusted to them.*

They will protect the gospel they have received from the apostles from harm, alteration and corruption so that they can pass it on intact to the next generation of believers just as Paul has passed it on to Timothy

They will not let it be altered, by addition or subtraction, by adding the words of men to the word of God or by denial and cutting out of any of its content

Why this emphasis on faithfulness to the message received, for it is the source of a great divide?

A division between those who think what has been entrusted to us can be changed and adapted, who seem to think their custodianship is ownership

And Those who know they are given a deposit for safekeeping, and it must be preserved and passed on unchanged –

You see that divide in the difference in history between the Roman Catholic church and protestant churches, in the Protestant rejection of added doctrines like the sacrifice of the mass, transubstantiation, papal infallibility

They are additions that change the gospel, change it from one of justification by faith alone to one that includes human works in our justification

And you see that divide today

There are those who think that teaching that is not in harmony with modern concerns should be changed and so, for example,

We should accept the practice of same sex relationships

Inclusion of women in the eldership

That all religions are ways to God

And those who think we have to be faithful to what we have received in every respect, the pattern of sound words taught by the apostles, believing and doing all it teaches

But why this emphasis on guarding the good deposit, on teaching what the apostle has taught us without alteration, subtraction, or addition?

Times change, surely we have to be able to adapt it to changing understandings of the world.

We pass it on unchanged because, like Paul, we are convinced that the gospel entrusted to him is not a man-made word.

It is the word of God, the means God, who alone can save, uses to bring life and immortality.

That is the choice

To think the Gospel is made up by people, their reflection on their experience,

One expression amongst many of human questing for meaning and connection with the ultimate

Or to receive it as Paul declares it to be

The word of the living God revealing the salvation that God Himself has achieved in His Son

God's gospel not a man made message

From God, a unique word God has entrusted to the apostles' which has to be protected, preserved, and passed on to every generation of believers to do the work only God can do

Only God's gospel can bring us life and immortality

Only God's gospel can bring us to know the God who will never shame us. No human word can do that.

If we are unashamed of the gospel we will preserve the pattern of sound teaching we receive from the apostle, and guard what has been entrusted to us

But that will mean pressure and suffering, and so when Paul calls on Timothy to not be ashamed of the gospel he points him and us to the resource God supplies to allow us to do that – the Spirit He gives us



*2 Timothy 1: 8 So don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of me his prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God.*

<sup>14</sup> *Guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit who lives in us.*

the Spirit who works in Timothy and us that power, love and self-control we will need to be persevering in the work of the gospel

*2 Timothy 1: 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment. 8 So don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of me his prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God.*

In this work we can rely on God, for it is God's message, and He wants it heard by all the world, by all nations, and so we should be drawing near to Him for His help through His powerful Spirit

### Supporting gospel preachers

But those unashamed of the gospel not only transmit it faithfully themselves, they support others engaged in that work.

Sadly believers, when they see gospel preachers criticised and opposed, will fall into two camps.

Many, craving social respectability or perhaps fearful of the cost of associating with those suspected of being enemies of the powerful, distance themselves from them

<sup>15</sup> *You know that all those in the province of Asia have deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. 16 May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. 17 On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he diligently searched for me and found me. 18 May the Lord grant that he obtain mercy from him on that day. You know very well how much he ministered at Ephesus.*

That is what happened to Paul. It is not likely that all those in the province of Asia, that is modern day Turkey, abandoned the faith. But they did abandon Paul, did not want to know him once he had been arrested.

But there was one who did not – Onesiphorus

He was not ashamed of the chained Paul, Paul who had been branded a criminal, a danger to the stability of society.

He sought Paul out, and he refreshed him in a time of need.

He gave emotional support when he was feeling betrayed by many. And he gave physical support, for prisoners had to provide for themselves, depended on friends and family for food and clothing. [Paul asking Timothy to bring his cloak]

Think about Onesiphorus

He took the initiative to care – he sought until he found Paul. He was not passive in his support.

And he was not put off by social disapproval. He treated Paul as HE was – not a cause of shame but a messenger of God's life giving gospel

He was practical in his support

He was persistent – he often refreshed me

And it flowed from a pattern of life already established – he was in the habit of supporting the work of the gospel

As Onesiphorus showed Paul mercy, so Paul, recalling our Lord's blessing – Blessed are the merciful [Matt. 5:7], for they will receive mercy, - wishes mercy to Onesiphorus and his family

And he will receive mercy

Onesiphorus, unashamed of the gospel and its preachers whatever their plight and whatever their society thinks of them, is one of those who will be surprised on the last day by hearing our Lord, the glorious Son of Man say -

*Matthew 25: Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'*

*<sup>35</sup> "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me; I was in prison and you visited me.'*

Remember how Jesus continues?

*<sup>37</sup> "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?' <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and take you in, or without clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick, or in prison, and visit you?'*

*<sup>40</sup> "And the King will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'*

Transformed by the gospel, he loved the gospel preacher, and in loving the gospel preacher Onesiphorus loved His lord

He was an unashamed believer

### **The unashamed believer**

Will you be an unashamed believer?

So confident that the gospel is God's word that brings life because it reveals God's salvation through His Son

That you will Suffer to be faithful to the gospel, suffer to make it known?

Be undeterred from sharing it by being politely ignored, mocked, excluded, thought ignorant, or accused of being unloving

Will you labour to Preserve and pass it on unchanged?

That is the responsibility of every believer

Each of us should be diligent to avoid and resist error, to work at understanding the truth, both its content and its shape, and where we have opportunity to teach it faithfully – and we do have opportunities – in our homes, in Yth Gp, Sunday School, Growth group

Being unashamed of the gospel, the pattern of sound teaching we have from the apostles, takes determination both individually and collectively

Unashamed, will you be undeterred from sharing the gospel

Will you be faithful in preserving and passing on the gospel, and

Will you be willing to support and encourage faithful ministry even when it is subject to public disapproval and opposition?

Never underestimate the encouragement that comes from a kind word

Of Taking initiative, of help offered before it is asked for

Of persevering prayer

Of providing material support, however small

Suffering for the gospel, preserving and passing on the gospel, supporting and encouraging gospel ministry - that is the life of those unashamed of the gospel and its ministers

Is that your life because you know the gospel to be the word of God revealing the work of God that brings life and immortality

More, because you know, through believing the gospel, the one you have trusted and you are convinced that He will keep what you entrust to Him

Your life

Your reputation

Your eternity

*2 Timothy 1:<sup>8</sup> So don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of me his prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God. <sup>9</sup> He 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. <sup>10</sup> This has now been made evident through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*