

Not Being Ashamed

"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." II Timothy 1:8

In this verse, Paul admonishes Timothy to not be ashamed "of the testimony of our Lord." A few verses later he reminds Timothy, "I am not ashamed."¹ Toward the end of the chapter he says of Onesiphorus, "he was not ashamed."²

We know very little about this man Onesiphorus. Paul says, "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me."³ His whole family shared the risks that he took in seeking out and finding Paul. It seems that he needed God's "mercy" to protect him from being executed by the state for identifying with Paul.

There are at least **five factors** that contribute to the believer being ashamed:

- 1 - The world has made a caricature of those who are faithful to Christ.
- 2 - People create the impression that the Gospel is not relevant for today's complicated life.
- 3 - A constant appeal to being broad, reasonable, accepting, and tolerant.
- 4 - An aggressive anti-Christian movement arguing that we have freedom from religion rather than freedom of religion.
- 5 - An unwillingness to put in jeopardy our jobs and social acceptance for the sake of the Gospel.

¹ II Timothy 1:12 ² II Timothy 1:16 ³ II Timothy 1:17

The Faithful One and the Faithless Many

"This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me..." II Timothy 1:15

This epistle may be the last extant letter we have from the Apostle Paul. A cursory reading reveals a litany of failures: "All Asia turned away;" "Persecutions and afflictions;"¹ "Demas has forsaken me;"² "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil;"³ "No man stood with me."⁴ I have often thought that if this were a letter of application to a mission agency, no one would take Paul.

Paul wrote from prison, and few wish to be identified with a criminal; life is too short; it is better to pull away and do something else. Peter refused to acknowledge that he knew Christ, and evidently people refused to acknowledge knowing Paul.

When people say that they no longer believe, it is usually an excuse cloaking the real reason. It seems that there are **three principle reasons people fall away**:

First: The cost of identifying with Christ. There is a difference between comfortable Christianity and costly Christianity. People do not wish to pay the price.

Second: Affluence. Jesus said, "The cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things enter in and choke the Word."⁵

Third: Wanting to Sin. The moral restrictions that come with following Christ are too onerous for people. They would rather have the pleasures of sin for a season than a relationship with God for an eternity.

¹ II Timothy 3:11 ² II Timothy 4:10 ³ II Timothy 4:14 ⁴ II Timothy 4:16 ⁵ Mark 4:19