

Text: 2 Timothy 1:1-14 (NIV)

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, ²To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. ³I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. ⁴Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. ⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. ⁸So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, ⁹who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. ¹¹And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. ¹²That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day. ¹³What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

Theme: Not at all Ashamed of Jesus

Today we celebrate the work of one of the great organizations of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, the Lutheran Women's Missionary League. Over the years it has been a joy and honor for me to serve several times as the zone LWML counselor and do the Bible studies in the Rallies. The LWML ladies that I have served in both of my congregation have always been mission leaders of the congregations. The mites that the LWML collects in the coins in those little boxes fund millions of dollars of mission work. Next spring Benediction will host a district LWML multicultural event. The LWML has taught us all to be not at all ashamed of Jesus.

I. The reason why we are not ashamed of Jesus is because He has called us to a holy life.

In verse 9 Paul writes, *“He has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything that we have done but because of His purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus...”* There is nothing about any of us, which endeared us to God. God didn't think, “Wow, there is someone that I can use. He is so brilliant.” To the contrary, God sometimes calls people to show that if he can use someone like me, he can use anyone. When he called Paul, he called the chief of sinners. (1 Tim 1:15.) In 1 Corinthians Paul writes that God chose the foolish things of the world so that no one may boast before Him. We were all poor, miserable sinners when God chose us. But He chose us in grace. This is God's undeserved love. He chose people who were unlovable, and loved us, so much that He gave His Son for the forgiveness of our sins and called us to faith in Him. He also chose us because of His purpose. He looked at us and thought that He could do something special with us. I recently watched the old movie “Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.” In the movie the character, that Dick van Dyke plays, takes an old rusty race car and makes it into something special. That's what God does with us. He takes sinners and washes us clean of those sins, fills us with His Spirit, and enables us to live lives to His glory.

All of this He does through our Savior Jesus Christ. He gave His life on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. He washed us clean in Holy Baptism. He feeds our faith in Holy Communion. He is with us every step of the way throughout our lives, and He will call us to eternal life with Him in His glory. The salvation that we have in Christ is the greatest gift that anyone will ever give to us. He makes us holy, calls us His own, and promises that nothing will ever separate us from His love.

II. For that reason we can never be ashamed of Him.

Lois and Eunice were not ashamed of Jesus. Paul writes in verse 5, "*I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you.*" Ever since he was a small boy, Timothy's mother Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, taught the Scriptures to him. They sang the psalms to him. Those Scriptures brought him to faith in the Messiah. At first he looked forward to the Messiah's coming, and later he and his family rejoiced when Paul showed that the Lord had come and redeemed His people. Like the women of the LWML and many Christian women in our lives, Timothy's mother and grandmother did a good job teaching him God's Word. That Word brought him to faith.

Apparently that was no easy task. There was no support from Timothy's father, who was a Greek, and an unbeliever. (Acts 16:1) He didn't even allow Timothy to be circumcised as a baby according to the Jewish faith. In spite of at least some opposition by Timothy's father, Lois and Eunice taught God's Word to Timothy, and that Word bore much fruit in his life. It brought salvation to him and through him to many other people. All of this happened because Timothy had a faithful mother, who was not ashamed of Jesus.

Paul was not ashamed of Jesus. Timothy also had a father in the faith. He was St. Paul. In both of his letters to Timothy Paul calls him his beloved child. Paul writes about his witness to Christ in verse 12, "*That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed...*" There were so many times when Paul could have been ashamed of Jesus. He has been thrown out of cities where he preached the Gospel. He was stoned. He had to escape in a basket down the wall. He was shipwrecked. He was imprisoned once, and now he was in a dungeon awaiting his execution. It would have been easy to say that he was going to forget the whole thing.

But He knew Christ as his Savior. He was on His way to persecute the church when Christ called him to be a herald, an apostle, and a teacher. Jesus took the chief of sinners and made him holy. There was no way that Paul could be ashamed of Jesus. He gladly suffered persecution in this world, so that He could attain the crown of righteousness that Christ had waiting for Him in heaven. (4:7) He knew that his Savior would rescue him from every evil attack and bring him safely to His heavenly kingdom. (4:18)

Paul calls Timothy to not be ashamed of Jesus. He writes to his son in the faith in verse 8, "*So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord or ashamed of me his prisoner.*" Timothy had been a preacher of the Gospel, since he had been a young man. He had already been through a lot himself. His own father didn't share in his faith. He was often sent by Paul to straighten out troubled congregations. While many other people were deserting Paul because of his sufferings, Timothy continued to honor Paul as an apostle of the Lord. In the letter to the Hebrews we read that Timothy had also been imprisoned himself on account of the Gospel. Timothy had a sincere faith in our

Savior. In verse 5 Paul writes, “*I am reminded of your sincere faith.*” Literally the Greek is translated, “I am reminded of your unhypocritical faith.” There was no hypocrisy in Timothy’s faith. It was a true faith. God had called this timid young man to be a bold preacher of the Gospel and had blessed his service to the Lord.

What about us? There will be times for every one of us when it is tempting to be ashamed of Jesus. Maybe like Timothy, his mother, and grandmother, there is a family member who mocks our faith in Christ and makes it difficult for us to practice our faith. Like Paul we might be persecuted in some very strong ways. Our connection with Christ has brought some very real suffering and crosses into our lives. It would be easier to be ashamed of Jesus.

But think of all that He has done for you. He gave His life for you. He called you out of the darkness of your sin and made you holy. He has used you in ways to His glory that you never thought that He could. After all that He has done for you, how could you ever be ashamed of Him? We can’t help but to boldly proclaim the great things that our Savior has done for us.

It’s not easy to proclaim Christ to a world that often rejects His grace, but don’t be ashamed of Him, even if it means that you will bear a cross. You will find that when you are not ashamed of Jesus, He will not be ashamed of you. He will call you His brother or sister, and through Him God has made you His beloved child in Christ. May God give us each that bold confession of Christ as our Savior.

Amen

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