

GOSPEL-CENTERED COURAGE

2 Timothy 1:8-18

Introduction:

- **Happy Father's Day.** Welcome to all the fathers here today, including those that have been fathers for many years and those that are fathers of babies still in the womb.
- It's appropriate then, that today we'll continue to study some of the **Apostle Paul's last words to his son in the faith, Timothy.**
- **Paul considered Timothy his spiritual child.**
 - **V. 2 - "dearly loved son"**
 - **1 Cor. 4:16 – "my beloved and faithful child"**
 - **Phil 2:20, 22 - "For I have no one else like-minded who will genuinely care about your interests.... You know his proven character, because he has served with me in the gospel ministry like a son with a father."**
- **Last Words:**
 - So these were likely **Paul's last words to young Timothy.** This was his **farewell letter.**
 - **Fathers: what would your last words to your son or daughter be? What would you want them to do with their lives? What would you want them to remember, and promise?**
 - **Children: what would your last words to your father (or mother) be? What would you promise them?**
- **Knowing that the end of our life is very near has a way of making us realize what's most important in life, what really matters.**
 - That's the context of this letter to Timothy. Paul was in prison in Rome (probably for the 2nd time, around 64-65 AD).
 - His time was near and he had to have known it. This time they would have his head.
 - So he writes this letter, knowing his death is imminent, to once again share with his son in faith what is most important and what he do with his life.
 - **He is urging Timothy** (who was around the age of many of you) **to be brave, to be courageous – for the gospel and for Jesus.**
- **Looking back:**
 - **2 Tim 1:7 - For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.**
 - **Pastor Tony: "Timidity is idolatry. When we act ashamed of Jesus (by what we do and don't do), we don't show courage for the gospel because we are fearful and timid. And that is not from God, it is idolatry. We idolize ourselves and others, more than God when we act ashamed of Him and the gospel."**
- **Today:**
 - After telling Timothy to develop and use his gift fearlessly and earnestly (**1:6-7**), Paul then gives Timothy **three challenges in verses 8-14:**
 1. **8a: "Do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord..."**
 2. **8b: "Share in suffering for the gospel..."**
 3. **13- 14: "Follow the pattern of sound words that you have heard from me... guard the good deposit entrusted to you"**
 - Following these exhortations, Paul then provides **examples** of individuals who did not have such courage (**Phygelus (FU-GE-LOS)** and **Hermogenes (HEAR-MO-GEN-ES)** and one who did (**Onesiphorus (O-NEE-SEE-FOR-OS)**)).

- As we examine these commands and examples, **we get a glimpse of the heart of the Apostle Paul.** We are also reminded that **those who are courageous for the gospel will likely suffer for it.** Many around the world endure great suffering and even death for the gospel.
- **Are we willing to do likewise? Do we have that kind of gospel-centered courage?**

Main Point:

Honor Jesus with Gospel-Centered Courage.

Don't Be Ashamed of the Gospel, Be Willing to Suffer for the Gospel, and Guard the Gospel. That is Gospel-Centered Courage.

1. DO NOT BE ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL (1:8a)

8a: Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner

- “Therefore” in v. 8 connects this passage to the previous section, where Paul reminded Timothy that God gave him a spirit to overcome timidity.
 - Now he says, **“don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord” (8a).**
- **What should we do with the gospel? First, we should not be ashamed of it...we should boast about it!**
 - **Gal 6:14a – “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**
- **As Christians our witness is about Christ.** We are not proclaiming a philosophy or a worldview or a government or a political system or even a religion in a general sense. We are to proclaim a person: Jesus Christ and Him risen!
- **Picture Timothy in the tough city of Ephesus,** where there's a myriad worldviews and religions – **not unlike Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill.** Ephesus was a **pagan city full of idols.** According to Acts, a **riot** ensued following Paul's ministry in this city because Christianity was becoming an **economic threat** to their system of idol worship.
- And like the Corinthians, there were surely Ephesians who **believed that the cross was foolishness.** They probably thought, what kind of god would be crucified in a cross? Who would want to worship such a god? **There will always be those that mock the cross and consider Christianity foolishness.**
 - **1 Cor 1:18 - For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**
- Today we have all kinds of conflicting and competing worldviews. One popular one is **moralistic, therapeutic deism,** a belief that **if people “do good,” “feel good,” and “believe in God”** (in a general, Big Guy Upstairs sense), **then there's a pretty good chance they'll go to heaven.** The idea that we are sinful and in need of a Savior is seen as ignorant, primitive, narrow-minded or even foolish. **Repentance** is a foreign concept.
- We also now have what I would call **neo-atheism.** This harsh brand of atheism **rejects not just God but even a respect for belief in God.**
- In the US and Europe it can be especially challenging. We are expected be tolerant of all worldviews so long as they are pluralistic and non-exclusive. Unfortunately such tolerance does not extend to those who claim to have **the truth,** especially **the only truth that saves.**
- In all these contexts and many others, the sad reality is that, **even if you do your best communicate the gospel with love and grace and mercy,** you will undoubtedly meet **opposition and even persecution.**
- But remember what Jesus said about this in **Mark 8:34-38:** **And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For**

what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

- **Jesus is saying not to be ashamed of him and his words. Gospel-centered courage demands that we take our stand with Jesus and his teaching, and be willing to suffer for it.**
- **What are you ashamed of?**
 - **Gen 2:25 - And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.** Later, in Ch. 3, **after the fall, the first thing they realize is that they're naked and they're ashamed of it.** They didn't even know they were naked before they sinned. But after they ate, they realized they were naked, they were ashamed and hid from God their creator. So nakedness is one thing we're ashamed of. (makes be wonder if we'll be naked and unashamed in Heaven)
 - What else are we ashamed of?
 - **Informal survey of our Growth Group...what are you ashamed of?**
 - Poor singing voice
 - Don't control my tongue
 - Fears & weaknesses
 - Children's behavior
 - I'm afraid to share the gospel
 - There are times I love sin more than God
 - Past sins that still haunt me
 - I'm not completely loyal to God
 - Not as faithful as I should be
- **We show our shame by what we say and do, but also by what we don't say and by what we don't do; by what we avoid and don't talk about.**
- **Patriotism and gospel-centered courage**
 - The sad truth is many people, including professed Christians will gladly, proudly and courageously defend our flag, our country, our freedoms, and the very soil we stand on (which is all good), but far too often won't say a word or lift a finger to defend Jesus and follow his commands. We rightly admire and recognize that courageously defend the United States but not the Word of God and gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - Don't get me wrong, I'm all for patriotism and defending liberty. Like many of you, I love and appreciate this country and especially those who have and continue to sacrifice life and limb to defend it. I'm extremely grateful, and I don't want to say or do anything to diminish or dishonor that.
 - **But...I'm just asking the question, in light of today's passage, do we as Christians have the same attitude, the same enthusiasm, the same dedication, the same willingness to suffer and die, the same courage to defend the gospel? Actually, not just the same level of courage, do we have a greater courage?**
 - **Rom 1:16-17 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith.**
 - **Phil 1:20-21 - It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage, now as always, Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**
 - **Do we have that eager expectation and hope not to be ashamed?**

- John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Life*: "Shame is that horrible feeling of guilt or failure when you don't measure up before people whose approval you want very much... [and] the opposite of being shamed is being honored...[but] for Paul the opposite of being shamed was not *his* being honored, but *Christ's* being honored through him."
- Martin Luther King Jr.: "Cowardice asks the question: is it safe? Expediency asks the question: is it politic? Vanity asks the question: is it popular? But conscience asks the question: is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular- but one must take it simply because it is right."
 - It may not always be safe, or practically beneficial or popular to share and defend the gospel, but it is right, it is always right.
 - The time has come...take a position for what it right...the gospel.
- Paul goes on to include himself in this charge to Timothy: "or of me his prisoner."
 - Many were scoffing not just at the gospel, but also at Paul personally. People had abandoned him...when he needed them most.
 - But even though many did abandon him, and even though that must have hurt Paul, he did not live for their approval.
 - He identifies himself as Christ's prisoner. He is not in chains to earn the popular praise of men; he is in chains because he chose to be courageous for, rather than ashamed of, the gospel.
 - What are we to do?
 - Heb 13:3 - Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.
- I asked before, what are you ashamed of? Now let me ask you the opposite question...what are you proud of? What do you boast about (graciously)? What stirs you to action, despite your fears and anxiety?
 - Is it the gospel?
 - Is it Jesus?
- When we have gospel centered courage what does it look like? What do we do with the gospel when we aren't ashamed of it?
 1. Talk about it.
 2. Defend it.
 3. Apply it to our daily life, our struggles, our suffering, and our sin.
 4. Send, help and pray for its missionaries.
 5. Obey its author and his commands.
 6. Go and make disciples of it.
 7. Claim it and proclaim it, in thought, word and deed.

2. SUFFER FOR THE GOSPEL (1:8b-12a)

8b-12a: but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 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, 10 and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 11 for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, 12 which is why I suffer as I do.

- Not only must we be unashamed of the gospel, but Paul also tells Timothy (and us) that he should share in the suffering for the gospel.
- Suffering is a major theme in this letter so we're going to spend some time talking about it.

- Specifically, in verses 8c-12a, Paul answers **three key questions: (1) how we are to suffer, (2) why should we be willing to suffer, and (3) when we should expect suffering.**

1st question:

1. How Are We to Suffer? By the Power of God (8b)

- How can we endure suffering and even death? By the power of God.
- It **doesn't seem we're made to endure suffering**. Indeed, in our flesh, in our finite, frail human bodies and with our limited ability to endure pain, we're not built for it.
- But...
 - Like Timothy, we are weak and perhaps even timid, but by God's power we can endure hardship. There is a **marvelous mystery** in the biblical concept of **strength through weakness**. Jesus supplies sufficient strength to his followers so that they can endure opposition, weakness, and persecution.
 - Paul says in **2 Cor. 12:9-10: But He [Jesus] said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."** Therefore, I [Paul] will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me. So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, catastrophes, persecutions, and in pressures, because of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
 - Jesus is sufficient for you to endure suffering.** If and when you suffer for the gospel, remember that you have the privilege of sharing in the sufferings of Christ and enjoying the special power of Christ.
 - Perhaps the reason Paul found it necessary to tell Timothy to suffer by **"the power of God"** is that he knew of **believers' tendency to do everything but rely on the power of God.** **Let this verse remind you that apart from him we can do nothing. Abide in Jesus. Remain in Jesus. Rely on Jesus. He is with you to the ends of the earth.**

2nd question:

2. Why Should We Be Willing to Suffer? Because We Have Been Saved and Called, and the Gospel is Worth It! (9-12a)

9-12a: 9 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, 10 and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 11 for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, 12 which is why I suffer as I do.

- Here we have a summary of the gospel...
 - God saves us and calls us to a holy calling...to holiness
 - God saves us by his grace (not our works) and for his purpose
 - We receive this salvation in and through Jesus Christ (who is eternal)
 - Jesus abolished death and brought life and immortality
 - The gospel should be preached and taught
- In these few verses, **Paul once exalts the gospel**. When he finishes with this awe-inspiring description of the gospel, he says, **"And that is why I suffer these things" (12a).**
- C.S. Lewis: **"You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you."**
- The reason Paul was willing to lay down his life in this mission was that he believed the gospel was worth it; Christ was worth it!**
- Religious people find God useful, but cross-bearing disciples find him beautiful.** You can endure suffering when you see what Paul saw.

- What did Paul see when he contemplated the gospel? From these verses, notice how Paul speaks of: (a) the results of the gospel, (b) the grace of the gospel, (c) the source of the gospel.

1st thing Paul saw in the gospel:

A. The Results of the Gospel (9a, 10b)

- Three phrases in these verses capture God's great work of salvation:
 - He saved us
 - He called us to a holy calling (holiness)
 - He brought life and immortality to light
- **First, God saves us.** What a concise description of the gospel: **God saves.** In his sovereign grace, God rescues sinners from their awful condition and places them into his kingdom forever. In the words of Jonah, **"salvation is from the LORD" (Jonah 2:9).**
- **Second, God sanctifies us.** He calls us to a holy calling (holiness). **God saves us to sanctify us.** We are called to live obedient lives that bring glory to God.
- **Finally, God glorifies us.** Notice the "**immortality**" that is promised in verse 10. It's just Paul who spoke of immortality; Jesus himself promised it in **John 11:25-26: "I am the resurrection and the life. Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die —ever."** Praise God that he promises us life forever!
- **Marvel at the greatness of God in your salvation. He rescued you. He is making you holy. He assures you that you will never die. Justification, sanctification, and glorification. You've probably heard this explanation before but in any case, consider...**
 1. **Justification:** God saved us from the penalty of sin.
 2. **Sanctification:** God is saving us from the power of sin.
 3. **Glorification:** God will save us from the presence of sin.
 4. **Only this gospel will sustain you in great suffering. Preach it to yourself daily!**

2nd thing Paul saw in the gospel:

B. The Grace of the Gospel (9b)

- Paul reminds Timothy and us that **we are not saved by our works but rather by the grace of God.** Listen to what he says in verse 9: God did not save us and call us to holiness **"because of our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began" (9b).**
 1. **God gave us grace before time began! He gave us grace in the person of Jesus, and he gave it to us according to his sovereign purposes.**
 2. Paul reminds us in Romans: **"It does not depend on human will or effort but on God who shows mercy" (Rom. 9:16).**
- The **source of our salvation, then, is not our merit, but in God's unmerited favor.**
 1. **It's not grace + works. It's all grace and only grace, nothing but grace.**
 2. Paul says later in Romans: **"Now if by grace, then it is not by works; otherwise grace ceases to be grace" (Rom. 11:6).**
 3. And **not only** did he save us in spite of our inability to do enough good works, but he did so **before** we could even attempt them! **His grace goes back before history, into eternity, and it will extend throughout eternity.**
- **Our only hope is grace. We cannot make ourselves alive; we cannot atone for our sins; we cannot cleanse ourselves.**
- **We need that which we do not deserve: saving grace. We cannot "do it," but there is one who has already "done it!"**

1. If you haven't done so, by God's grace, repent & believe in the one who cried out, "It is finished!" and be saved.
2. If you are a believer and Christ follower, remind yourself daily – especially in your suffering – that you were chosen by grace, you are kept by grace, and you will see the Savior one day by grace.

3rd thing Paul saw in the gospel:

C. The Source of the Gospel: Jesus (10)

- Salvation is rooted in the person and work of Christ.
- As verse 10 tell us, Christ appeared in his incarnation and "abolished death and...brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (10).
- Jesus "abolished death" meaning that he overthrew death. He defeated death. He rendered our physical death powerless.
- Though we will all die physically (unless Christ returns first), we do not all have to die ultimately. Instead, as believers, when we die, we enjoy the presence of God forever.

3rd question:

3. When Should We Expect Suffering? As We Make the Gospel Known (10b-12a)

- Paul brought the gospel to light by living out his appointment as "a preacher, apostle, and teacher" (11).
 1. As a preacher, Paul announced the gospel. We must proclaim the gospel!
 2. As an apostle, Paul was sent with the gospel. We must go with the gospel!
 3. As a teacher, Paul explained the gospel. We must disciple with the gospel!
- You don't have to be an Apostle to do these things. All believers are sent into the world to proclaim and teach the good news (Matt 28:18-20).
- But like Paul, if we proclaim it will likely suffer for it.
- Paul says, "This is why I suffer these things" (12a). Paul suffered because he spoke boldly, and he spoke boldly because he believed that the gospel was worth it.
- Listen to what the Apostle Peter says about this same thing:
 1 Pet 4:12-19 - 12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.
- Justin Martyr: "You can kill us, but you cannot do us any real harm."
- John Piper: "A life devoted to making much of Christ is costly. And the cost is both a consequence and a means of making much of him. If we do not embrace the path of joy-laden, painful love, we will waste our lives. When we embrace with joy the cost of following Christ, his worth will shine in the world. The cost itself will become a means of making Christ look great."

- Do you desire to make much of Jesus? To make known the good news and help free the captives?
- All devotion is costly. And devotion to Christ will cost you. It may even cost you your life. But though it is costly, it is also priceless. His glory will be revealed to us and that should be more than enough to encourage us to be courageous for him.
- Remember what Paul says in **Rom 8:18**: For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

3. GUARD THE GOSPEL (1:12b-14)

12b-14: But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. 13 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

- Two steps to guarding the gospel...

1. Remember God will Guard His Gospel (12b)

- Paul first reminds Timothy that **God himself is the ultimate guardian of the gospel**. He says, “I am not ashamed, because I know the One I have believed in and am persuaded that **He is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day**” (12b).
- The word for “guard” here is a **military term** used of a **soldier on watch**. Paul is saying that God is watching his gospel and **will protect it without fail**.
- Paul is confident that because of **God’s faithfulness, the gospel will be preserved and protected**.
 1. **God will insure it is passed on from generation to generation and people to people**. God, the omnipotent, omniscient creator and king of the universe is **always on duty**, so we don’t need to worry that the gospel will flicker out. God promises it won’t.
 2. **Timothy could trust this promise, God has fulfilled this promise** for 2000 years and **we can trust this promise too: God will guard what has been entrusted to us until that Day**.
- John Stott: “We may see the evangelical faith, the faith of the gospel, everywhere spoken against, and the apostolic message of the New Testament ridiculed. We may have to watch an increasing apostasy in the church, as our generation abandons the faith of its fathers. **Do not be afraid! God will never allow the light of the gospel to be finally extinguished**. True, he has committed it to us, frail and fallible creatures. He has placed his treasure in these brittle, earthenware vessels. And we must play our part in guarding and defending the truth. Nevertheless, in entrusting the deposit to our hands, he has not taken his own hands off it”.

2. By the Spirit, Guard the Gospel (13-14)

- Timothy is then charged to “hold on to the pattern of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who lives in us, that good thing entrusted to you” (1:13-14).
- Notice Paul’s choice of words to describe the gospel: **the pattern, sound teaching, and the good deposit**.
 1. **The Pattern** (13): can be translated as “**outline**.” I prefer the terms **blueprint, skeleton or bones**.
 - **Architect**: draws the **overall structure of a building or house**, then add the details
 - **Artist**: sketches the **outline of a painting**, then fills it in
 - **Writer**: drafts **outline** before writing the manuscript

- Timothy is told to follow **outline or pattern of the gospel**. Don't make up your own outline, add to it, or take away from it.
 - There is but **one true gospel, one pattern**.
 - **We may teach, contextualize and apply it in different ways, but we can't change it.**
2. **Sound Teaching** (13): means "healthy teaching."
- The **gospel makes spiritually sick people well in Christ**. It is the **only completely and eternally effective cure for our depravity**.
 - **My high cholesterol and need to eat healthy**: I like to eat unhealthy foods, especially **fried, greasy, messy foods**. And I like to drink **Coke made with real sugar**. They're my favorites. But....eating unhealthy is **not good for me and hurts me** – even if I can't see its effects **obviously or immediately**. Eating **Five Guys** will take its toll on me and so I need to eat a healthy diet. That's easier said than done.
 - Likewise, **Timothy is to give God's people healthy teaching so that they can grow up healthy in the faith**. Also easier said than done.
 - **And he's told to do this "in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus."** He must be **balanced in his approach** and so should we.
 - **We must be unashamed and courageous... in the love and faith of Jesus.**
 - **We must be like Jesus when we are courageous for Jesus**
 - **It's important we get the "what" of the gospel right, but it's also important we get the "how" right as well.**
 - **We must have the right attitude, not just the right aptitude.**
3. **The Good Deposit** (14): "Good" can also be translated as "beautiful."
- Paul is describing the gospel as **beautiful** and **precious**, so it should be **natural** for us to **guard** with such care that it is **not damaged, diluted or depreciated**.
 - Because of the **presence of heretics**, Timothy was called, **like us**, to **protect and preserve the gospel**.
 - **This passage applies in a particular way to those called into ministry, but it is also very relevant for all of us. We all have been called to protect this gospel.**
 - **2 Tim 2:15 - Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.**
 - **JF story – p. 304**
 - **Where do we find the strength to stand for the gospel in the face of suffering? "through the Holy Spirit who lives in us" (14).**
 - **We are not alone in our mission. God is with us, in us, and for us. And if God is for us, then who can be against us?**

4. **LEARN & FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN COURAGEOUS FOR THE GOSPEL (1:15-18)**

15-18: You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me—may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day!—and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.

- Paul now **negative** and **positive examples** to reinforce what he's been telling Timothy.
- **Negative Examples: Phygelus and Hermogenes**
 - These two men are **not mentioned anywhere else in the NT**. Could have been **leaders of a particular group within the church** or perhaps **led their own churches near Ephesus**.

- Whoever they were, they **disappointed Paul**. And they **represented others who turned away from the apostle**. Paul says, **"all those in Asia have turned away from me."** Asia probably refers to Asia Minor, or modern day Turkey, the Roman province where the city of Ephesus was.
- **Positive Example: Onesiphorus.**
 - Paul asks the Lord to **"grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus"** because he **refreshed Paul often** and **"was not ashamed of [Paul's] chains"** (16).
 - **Twice** he asks/prays for him to **receive mercy**: **"May the Lord grant that he obtain mercy from Him on that day!"** (10)
 - **Paul loved Onesiphorus. Why?**
 1. He **refreshed** him.
 - He **visited and was present** with Paul. He may have met some of Paul's physical needs, but undoubtedly **he refreshed Paul by being there**.
 - **He was loyal, as should we should be as well.**
 2. He was **unashamed** of him.
 - He was **unashamed** of Paul's chains. Even when Paul was in prison, he was not ashamed to come to visit.
 - **Are there places or people you would be afraid or ashamed to visit?**
 3. He **searched** for him.
 - Language suggests that Onesiphorus searched with the **singular intent of finding Paul** and Paul is **grateful to his friend for his steadfast pursuit**.
 - **Keep in mind Jesus' words:** **"The merciful are blessed, for they will be shown mercy"** (Matthew 5:7).
 - **The merciful and faithful servant, Onesiphorus was an example of unashamed, sacrificial service.**
- **Which example are you? Are you quick to flee when faithful obedience and boldness is required? Or, are you a loyal servant who works hard to refresh and minister to others?**
- **Mamaw & Papaw**
- **Two applications:**
 1. **Remember, pray for and DO SOMETHING for those in prison and the oppressed.**
 2. **Remember, pray for and DO SOMETHING for those that have or are sacrificing, suffering and dying for the gospel. Be proud not ashamed of them.**

Conclusion:

- **As a father, what if I only had a few moments left and few words, what would my last words to my children be?**
 - **Follow Jesus wholeheartedly, obey the great commandment and great commission.**
 - **Let nothing be more precious to you than the gospel...treasure, guard and proclaim it.**
 - **Let nothing be more important to you...not money, not your career or your education, not your accomplishments, not even the Clemson Tigers.**
 - **Be willing to suffer, sacrifice for the Lord.**
 - **And as God told Joshua...be strong and courageous (Josh 1).**
- **So fathers, mothers, children, everyone....what are you ashamed of? Your sin or the savior? What are you proud of? What are you most proud of? Your accomplishments or His? Your work or His?**
- **John Piper: If we exiles and refugees on earth (1 Pet 2:11), and if our citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20), and if nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (Rom 3:35), and if his steadfast love is better than life (Ps 63:3), and if all hardship is working for us an eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17), then we will give to the winds our fears and "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matt 6:33). We will count everything as rubbish in comparison with Christ (Phil 3:7-8). We will "joyfully accept the**

plundering of our property” for the sake of unpopular acts of mercy (Heb 10:24). We will choose “rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin,” and we will count “the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt” (Heb 11:25-26).

Honor Jesus with Gospel-Centered Courage.

Don't Be Ashamed of the Gospel, Be Willing to Suffer for the Gospel, and Guard the Gospel.

Heb 18:8-15:

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. ⁹ Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. ¹⁰ We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. ¹¹ For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. ¹² So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. ¹³ Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. ¹⁴ For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. ¹⁵ Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.