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Sermon Notes

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Boldness & Faithfulness in the Gospel, pt. 2: Don't Be Ashamed

2 Timothy 1:8-18

I. Introduction: 1630 in Massachusetts and Japan

On March 22, 1630, an English Puritan leader named John Winthrop stepped onto a ship named the *Arabella* to begin his voyage to New England. The *Arabella* was the flagship of a fleet of eleven ships chartered by the Massachusetts Bay Colony to sail from Southampton to New England. Those ship carried over 700 Puritan emigrants, 240 cows and 60 horses, the largest migration yet from England to the new world. Winthrop was crossing the Atlantic to become the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which those Puritan forefathers had hoped would be, in the words of Jesus Christ “a city on a hill” for all the world to see. They were leaving England to escape religious persecution by establishing a government according to their own convictions. Ultimately, the nation of America was established on principles of total freedom of religion, with Christianity permeating popular culture so much that generations of Christians grew up without ever having to suffer for their faith.

Around the same time that John Winthrop stepped on the *Arabella*, on the other side of the world a small band of Japanese Christians in Nagasaki were undergoing torture for their faith. Matsukura Shigemasa, the leader of Japan, hated Christianity and decided to try to destroy it. So he herded out suspected Christians, had a picture of the cross or of Jesus Christ put onto the ground, and ordered the people to tread on the picture. He believed that no true Christian would ever walk on the cross or on Christ, so if someone walked on that picture, they were free to go. However, during that time of persecution, between 5 and 6,000 Japanese people refused to walk on that picture and were tortured and killed. Some were branded, some burned at the stake, some forced to hand upside-down over a smoldering pit for days on end. Some were pushed off of cliffs, many of them crying out “Lord Jesus, receive our souls as they were pushed.” I myself have seen one of the places where these great Christians suffered and I will never forget it. I asked myself the question, “What would I have done?” Of them the Book of Revelation testifies, “...they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”

Although few Christians in America have had to suffer persecution for their faith, the times are changing. Popular culture around us is degenerating quickly. I don't think it will be long before we are hearing stories of open persecution, even from our government. It's up to us to be ready!

This morning, we are going to come face to face with one of Satan's greatest weapons in preventing the advance of the Gospel: fear!! Perhaps many of you feel God's pull in your heart to be a faithful and bold witness for Jesus Christ, but you're afraid what might happen to you if

you step out in faith... today's sermon is for you. As for all you people who are already bold, faithful witnesses for Christ, please bear with the rest of us as we receive a reminder from God's word!

2 Timothy 3:12 "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

II. Overview of the Chapter

- A. Paul's First Charge to Timothy: Fan the Flame of the Spirit (vs. 6-7)
- B. Paul's Second Charge to Timothy: Don't Be Ashamed of Christ (vs. 8-12, 15-18)
- C. Paul's Third Charge to Timothy: Guard the Gospel (vs. 13-14)

III. Paul's Second Charge to Timothy: Don't Be Ashamed of Christ (vs. 8-12, 15-18)

A. Why & How the World Persecutes

1. Why the world persecutes us: Because they persecuted Christ!!

John 15:20 "Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also."

- a. why they don't come to Christ

John 3:19 "This is the verdict: light has come into the world, but men loved the darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."

- b. why they hate Christ

John 3:20 "Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."

John 7:7 "The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil."

Is it true of you that the world cannot hate you??

Martin Luther: "Always preach the gospel so that, when you are done, men will either hate you or hate their sin."

i.e. be a fork in someone's road... when they came to you, they knew they had a crucial decision to make about their sin

2. HOW the world persecutes... on two levels, usually in two stages

- a. first level: societal rejection
 - begin to avoid, ostracize you
 - start to make fun or insult you
 - don't include you in their company

Illust.: Bob at work... first mocking me, then avoiding me; but I did same thing to Steve!!

WHY so powerful? Deep desire for social acceptance... Nathaniel as a baby

- b. second level: active opposition
 - loss of job or property
 - exclusion from community

Illust. Jane's tree church... the Maasai in Kenya

- physical attacks
- imprisonment
- death

3. Christ's call to His Church

- a. first level: societal rejection... Christ's call: ***"Don't be ashamed!"***
- b. second level: active opposition... Christ's call: ***"Don't be afraid!!"***

B. Three Types of Shame

(vs. 8)

- 1. ashamed of the **name** of Christ
- 2. ashamed of the **people** of Christ

3. ashamed of the **gospel** of Christ

Illust. Can't avoid shame by avoiding the temptation... the temptation is built into the very nature of the world and of the gospel; therefore, deal with shame now or deal with it later:

Mark 8:38 "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the heavenly angels."

C. Overcoming Shame

1. understand your earthly portion (vs. 8)

- a. Paul reminds Timothy of his share of the burden, his portion

verse 8: "join with me in suffering for the gospel..."

Philippians 1:29 "It has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him but also to suffer for him."

Acts 14:22 "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of heaven."

2 Timothy 3:12 "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

- b. Paul's portion is our portion, if we are bold and faithful with the gospel
c. we all get our share... unless we decide not to live a godly life in Christ Jesus

2. focus on God's power (vs. 8)

verse 8: "join with me in suffering for the gospel **BY THE POWER OF GOD"**

- a. ONLY God's sufficient power can enable us to lead a life of suffering
b. God's power alone can strengthen us for the marathon run
c. BUT understand how that power works... it's not a total lack of fear so that it means nothing to us

1 Corinthians 2:3-5 “I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom but on God’s power.”

Illust. Sharing the gospel with Ron Ducker and Ray @ Eaton-Nova

d. God’s power doesn’t take away all the sting... actually it tends to empty out the preacher- look at Paul!! BUT God’s power also enables you to do what you know you need to do

3. study role models: negative and positive (vs. 8, 12, 15-18)

a. negative... people who have shamefully deserted

verse 15 “You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus & Hermogenes.”

4:10 “Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.”

4:16 “At my first defense, no one came to my support but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.”

Illust. What to do with the “lapsed”? Donatist controversy... *traditores* had handed over the Scriptures or even their own brothers and sisters in Christ, and now sought to be restored to the church

b. positive... people who have held true

-Paul

verse 8 “Join WITH ME in suffering for the gospel...”

verse 11-12 “Of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. YET I AM NOT ASHAMED...”

-Onesiphorus

verses 16-18 “May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus

*name means “bringer of profit”

*came all the way from Ephesus to Rome, searched hard for Paul until he found him, and met his needs

*separated from his family, willing to suffer potential imprisonment for the gospel

4. review your calling: holiness, gospel ministry (vs. 9, 11)
 - a. dual calling: 1st to holiness... “separation”
 - b. second calling: to the gospel ministry
5. remember your reward (vs. 12)
 - a. “personal reward should be no motivation”... FALSE!!
 - b. constant use of such motivation by Christ

Matthew 5:11-12 “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely speak all kinds of evil against you. Rejoice and be glad because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Matthew 6:19-21 “Do not store up treasure for yourself on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

c. Paul’s use in this epistle:

2 Timothy 2:11-13 “If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him.”

2 Timothy 4:7 “Now there is in store for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”

Origen’s zeal for martyrdom... mother hid his pants

6. exult in the glory of Christ and in the gospel

IV. Conclusion: All a Matter of Faith... Do we love this world or do we love Christ?