



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

“UNASHAMED COMMITMENT TO CHRIST!” – 2 TIMOTHY 1:15-18

COLORADO

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Paul wants Timothy to take his responsibility to the gospel seriously. Heretical teaching was a constant threat. Only the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ can save. As believers, we not only have the responsibility to share this message, but also to keep and preserve it. It will require perpetual vigilance and the moment we drop our guard, deception creeps in. We not only have been given the gospel which brought us to salvation, but the gospel has been a good deposit, a treasure given to us to guard, keep, protect, defend, preserve and watch.

I. “UNASHAMED COMMITMENT TO CHRIST!” – 2 TIMOTHY 1:15-18

2 Timothy 1:15-18, “You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. (16) The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains; (17) but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me, and found me, (18) the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus.”

Paul reminds Timothy of his sacred duty as one who has been saved from darkness to a holy calling to God’s purpose. Therefore, Paul charges Timothy and every believer to hold tightly to the pattern of truth that is taught and take seriously your responsibility to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This true treasure is worth guarding, worth dying for and worth sharing. It must not be distorted, deleted or added to in any way because it is the Word of God that does the work of God. We must take our responsibility to the gospel seriously, even if there are many who will be unfaithful. We must have an unashamed commitment to Jesus Christ; the One Who saved us and now calls us according to His purpose.

A. “YOU ARE AWARE...THAT ALL IN ASIA TURNED AWAY” – 2 TIMOTHY 1:15

Even though many will be unfaithful, Paul exhorts Timothy to remain loyal to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the face of desertion, do not become discouraged or disheartened by those who are unfaithful. Clearly there was a contrast between those who were ashamed of the gospel and those who were not.

Paul reminds Timothy of what he knew all too well. There were a significant number of defectors from the faith. In fact the desertion encompassed most of Asia Minor including the capitol city of Ephesus. Asia Minor was a province made up of a large part of the western segment of modern Turkey with the largest city being Ephesus in which Timothy was pastoring the church. When Paul was imprisoned for preaching the gospel, these believers turned away from him because to be a friend of Paul would have been very dangerous. They were afraid that the same would happen to them.

They abandoned Paul for fear of their own safety. There will always be the faithless many, and there will always be the faithful few. Which one are you when things become tough?

Paul had given himself without reservation to church of Jesus Christ. He labored “until Christ was formed in them.” (Galatians 4:19) To be rejected by the world is not pleasant, but to be deserted by fellow workers in the service of Christ is particularly painful. To have those you have spent your life spiritually mentoring turn away from you, and sometimes, against you, is heart breaking in the extreme. The same thing that happened to Paul had also happened to Jesus Christ where His friends forsook Him and fled before He went to the cross.¹

Yes, Timothy was very much aware of the fearful cowardly defectors of the faith even in his own church. They deserted under the pressure of persecution. In fact, Paul calls out two of these men by name; “Phygelus and Hermogenes”. They are men we know nothing about except their cowardice faith.

“turned away from” Greek **%apostrepho**” refers to doctrinal apostasy, turning away from.

This same word is used in 2 Timothy 4:4 and Titus 1:14. Paul’s friends were both guilty of leaving not just him, but his gospel. They not only turned against Paul personally but rejected the gospel he preached. They were ashamed of Paul and Jesus Christ. This was a painful desertion by those once close to Paul but now they repudiated him.

Paul, that lover of souls, that amazing lover of people, whose very heart rose and fell with the church- the men whom he always kept on “praying for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18)- This man sat isolated and lonely in a Roman dungeon for the sake of the gospel. He would exit the cell only when he was led to death. And how did the church respond? Tragically, most of the believers in Asia Minor deserted him out of fear. Two of them we know by name.²

B. “THE HOUSE OF ONESIPHORUS” – 2 TIMOTHY 1:16-18

An unmistakable contrast exists between the house of Onesiphorus and many of the believers in Asia Minor. This is a contrast between those who are faithful and not ashamed of Jesus Christ or His messenger and those who are unfaithful. Paul asks Timothy to greet this family in 2 Timothy 4:19 so they must have lived near him, probably even in Ephesus. The name Onesiphorus means profitable

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and he was certainly that to Paul as we shall see. Paul writes the following about Onesiphorus:

(16) The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains; (17) but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me, and found me, (18) the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus.” 2 Timothy 1:16-18

The first thing Paul says in 2 Timothy 1:16 is that Onesiphorus “often refreshed me”. This word doesn’t just refer to a material or physical sense, but soul refreshment. He visited this aging Apostle and ministered to his needs there in prison without fear and without shame. And Onesiphorus didn’t just visit Paul in prison once or twice in Rome, but “often”, frequently. He wasn’t content with just one visit but multiple.

The second commendation Paul gives Onesiphorus is that he was “not ashamed of my chains”. (2 Timothy 1:16) He befriended and ministered to Paul while he was in a Roman prison even though the travel was far and it put his life in danger. Although many deserted, this one remained loyal. While others feared for their own lives in the face of Paul’s chains, not Onesiphorus. He cared for Paul, counting it a privilege to share with Paul the reproach he bore for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The third praise Paul gives is that “when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me, and found me,” (2 Timothy 1:17) As the aging Paul sat isolated and alone in a cold dungeon cell, imprisoned for proclaiming the gospel, Onesiphorus found him. Can you imagine what joy and encouragement that must have brought Paul? The word “searched” carries the idea that he searched hard, went to great trouble, was very determined to find Paul. It required much effort, time and probably involved danger.

Think about it, Onesiphorus would have asked questions, inquiring of Paul the prisoner and where was he held. He would have knocked on doors, followed clues, and even placed himself in danger looking for this prisoner who was to be executed by Rome. Maybe the location of Paul’s imprisonment had been kept from other Christians. After all, Nero had already burned the city and blamed Christians for it. Believers in Rome had been persecuted, killed and many had fled the city. Who would place their life in danger by even associating with Paul; a leader of this rebellious group? And it was dangerous enough to find him the first time, but Onesiphorus “eagerly searched”, couldn’t wait to find him, not just once but time and time again! He ministered to Paul whom he obviously loved dearly without fear for his own life and without shame for Jesus Christ or His messenger. What Eliphaz said of Job, Paul could also have said

of his friend Onesiphorus; “Your words have helped the tottering to stand and you have strengthened feeble knees.” (Job 4:4) This is no less our ministry to others as well.

Onesiphorus was a model for Timothy to imitate. He was devoted, determined and courageous. He was not afraid but had entrusted his life to the Lord. (2 Timothy 1:12) He was not “ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me (Paul) his prisoner.” (2 Timothy 1:8) And he was willing to “join in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God.” (2 Timothy 1:8) He had proven courage and faithful service “rendered at Ephesus.” (2 Timothy 1:18) Matthew 25:34-40 was clearly lived out in Onesiphorus’s life. Paul must have been moved by the love extended to him by Onesiphorus as expressed in his words, “the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day” from 2 Timothy 1:18 seeking even the favor of God on his behalf for his kindness. He was a man who ministered to Paul, obeyed Jesus Christ and was faithful to the gospel.

Paul was calling this young Ephesian pastor, Timothy to demonstrate courage and be like the few faithful believers who were willing to keep the faith like Onesiphorus with unashamed commitment to Jesus Christ.

And God is calling each of us as believers in Christ to imitate these as well. Are you devoted, determined and courageous in your faith? Does your life reflect proven, faithful service? Do you minister to others, obey Jesus Christ and are you faithful to the gospel? Be like Paul...be like Onesiphorus! Keep the faith with unashamed commitment to Jesus Christ!

¹MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.32.

²Hughes, R. Kent and Chapell, Bryan, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus; To Guard the Deposit*. Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois, 2000. Pg. 190.