

## “Ashamed”

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by Wayne Goff

***“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Romans 1:16).***

### “Ashamed”

Jerald Prater had an excellent invitation Wednesday night on the subject of “**shame**.” The talk pricked my mind to consider the word “*ashamed*” found in Romans 1:16. I have quoted that verse a million times in my teaching and preaching. Paul was **not ashamed** of the gospel of Christ. He not only said this by way of Divine inspiration, but he also lived it out in his work as an apostle and preacher. Just look at the book of Acts and see how Paul approached people whom he viewed as possible converts. He used the Scriptures *to reason, to teach, and to persuade* men to obey Jesus Christ. He knew the gospel message was God’s “*power*” to convince and convert the souls of men. The gospel saves the *kind* of people God wants to save, and leaves the rest alone. The gospel does **not** return to God void, even if not everyone believes it (see Rom. 10:16). The humble, penitent man or woman who will turn to God for help can be saved.

Unfortunately too many preachers are ashamed of the gospel of Christ. You can tell it when they feel obligated to use “gimmickry” to attract others. They announce “special Sundays” for their visitors. They offer to “eat their lunch on the roof top” of the church building if the congregation brings enough guests. They bring in clowns, hot air balloons, carnivals, and other carnal attractions to allure people. They do not realize that in doing so, the people will only come and stay as long as the gimmicks continue. They are not interested in their eternal souls, nor are they interested in a soul-saving message. They think they are “good enough” as they are. The wrong crowd shows up.

Jesus experienced the same thing in John 6 when He understood that the multitudes following Him were there for the “loaves and fishes.” He had worked the miracle of feeding the 5,000 on one occasion and 4,000 on another to make a point: **He is the bread of life**. Those who come to Him for spiritual nourishment and satisfaction will never go away hungry. However, the crowd forgot the real purpose of His miracles and came for the *next free meal*. At that point, Jesus stopped feeding them and reminded them that “*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing*” (Jn. 6:63). Many disciples in the crowd turned away from Jesus, never to walk with Him again (Jn. 6:66). But Peter put all true disciples on the right track when he confessed to Jesus: “*You have the words of eternal life*” (Jn. 6:68). In all of this, Jesus was showing us that we should not be ashamed of the gospel.

Other occurrences of the same Greek word in the New Testament help us to appreciate what Romans 1:16 is saying. In Mark 8:38 we read, “*For whoever is **ashamed** of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.*” The gospel will convert the sinner who desires to change his heart and life. We cannot change the soul-saving message and turn it into an “ear-tickling” tune and expect to get the same results.

“*Therefore do not be **ashamed** of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God*” (2 Tim. 1:8). Paul exhorted Timothy to be unashamed of the gospel and of Paul himself. Timothy could have ignored Paul and failed to visit him in prison. But I am confident that he did not do so. He suffered for the gospel just as Paul did.

Paul himself was **not ashamed** of the gospel (2 Tim. 1:12). Onesiphorus was **not ashamed** of Paul’s imprisonment (2 Tim. 1:16). God is **not ashamed** to be called the God of such men (Heb. 11:16). It is important to understand the gospel is a spiritual message for a spiritual reason and it will have spiritual, eternal results. Don’t be ashamed of it!

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