

Unashamed Suffering for an Unashamed Gospel

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[0 : 00] Please do sit down and take your Bibles again and we'll have a look at the passage of 2 Timothy that we read. This is our second in our series of 2 Timothy.

This week we're going to do chapter 1 verses 6 to 18. Unashamed suffering for an unadjusted gospel. Unashamed suffering for an unadjusted gospel.

So one of the questions I wrestled with this week on the back of last week is why should we study this letter? What is it about this letter that is worth all of our time?

Because as I tried to show you last week, the remit for the letter is quite specific. It is written to the youngish church leader Timothy, who is ministering in a church gone rogue Ephesus with a leadership team that's gone feral.

And it's all very tough. And Paul, the mentor, writes to his protege Timothy to say, keep going. So why is that important to all of us?

[1 : 13] Can't we just read this at pastors' conferences where everyone gets together and says how tough life is? Why take time to go through it together as a whole congregation?

If it's predominantly about church leadership and specifically about church leadership when things are really tough. It's a good question.

Is it just that as I speak, it encourages you to love your pastors more? I think that's a legitimate reason to do it. Is it just here to allow preachers and pastors to feel sorry for themselves?

Maybe. It certainly made me feel better last week. And this week. Well, maybe, but not exclusively. And I came up with four reasons why I think this letter is worthy of our time.

Our study and our serious consideration. Here's the first. Healthy churches are made up of healthy individuals. Healthy individuals. Healthy churches are made up of healthy individuals.

[2 : 29] And healthy individuals are matured through exposure to faithful gospel ministry. Therefore, if we've all got an idea about what faithful gospel ministry looks like, that's going to help us in our diets to make sure that we're those that are being matured as we're exposed to God's work.

2 Timothy gives us clear instructions as to the hallmarks of faithful gospel ministry. And therefore, if we can all join the plimso line.

Upon growing. There's point one. Healthy churches. Point two. As for leadership, so would the congregation. If you read the qualification for elders in both 1 Timothy and Titus, it is predominantly a list of character traits that people appointed to the positions or to exhibit in their consistent Christian lives.

The only real ability given is the ability to teach. Everything else concerns consistent Christian character. And these character traits listed in 1 Timothy and Titus are also elsewhere in the Bible demanded of other and all Christians in the New Testament.

And so therefore, what we learn in 2 Timothy is applicable far wider than just those in leadership and in pastoral ministry.

[4 : 03] As for the leaders, so would the congregation. Point three. Clear and present dangers to the church are much more deadly when they arise from within than when they come from without.

Churches predominantly die, not through pressure from outside, but from falsehood from inside. Wolves devour sheep.

And therefore, the more people being vigilant and spotting potential threats, which are clearly given us, clearly highlighted for us in 2 Timothy, the safer, the better protected our church will be.

If we all know what wolves look like, then we can all be on guard when they come in, even if some of them are disguised as sheep. 2 Timothy gives clear descriptions of wolfish behavior to be watchful for.

And point four. I thought about putting, I quibbled whether to put this in or not. Point four is succession. Now, I love Brunsfield. This is not some kind of pitch to say, I'll see you later.

[5 : 15] I love Brunsfield. I love being the pastor of Brunsfield. I'm so grateful for our church family. I'm so humbled by the growth, as I hope you are, that we see happening in this place.

However, I'm keenly aware that life is short and nothing is forever. However, different things happen. And my hope is that as we go through 2 Timothy, we'll all be very clear about what faithful gospel ministry looks like.

So that when it comes to appointing new leaders, comes to calling new pastors. For long into the future, we'll know exactly what we're looking for.

And there won't even be a gap or a break. Things will just be continuing as the Lord Jesus would have them being conducted in his church.

2 Timothy is really excellent meat for us to get our teeth into when we think about who we might call. And prepare us for what good gospel leadership looks like.

[6 : 25] I hope that helped because at the end of last week, I kind of felt that I was inviting you into John's pastoral pouting party. And hopefully if we see that, then we'll get much more from this letter.

So let me pray and then we'll look at our little portion for tonight. Father God, speak and help us. Father God, challenge and change us. Father God, give us a really clear sense of what you're saying to us tonight.

And Father, that we might go out from here and live for the Lord Jesus, no matter what the cost. No matter what the discomfort. Father, that we would get over the pain barrier and the shame barrier in order that Jesus might be glorified in our lives.

Father, bless us in Jesus name we pray. Amen. First thing I want us to see from these verses is the gospel trajectory.

Shall we look again with me in verse 6 and verse 7 and then verse 8? For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

[7 : 35] For the spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. Those two verses contain a very key triplet for understanding this section of 2 Timothy.

The triplet is this. Firstly, Timothy's ministry. See it there. Fan into flame the gift of God.

The gift, the ministry that God has given Timothy. Timothy's ministry. Secondly, see Paul's apostleship.

Fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. Now, I don't think from here we can get a clear way of doing what we would call ordination.

I think if you start to go down that road, I think it gets quite awkward. For example, how many hands should be laid on? Whose hands should be laid on?

[8 : 33] Do they need to be a special person's hands in order to lay them on? Do we dig up Paul's hands and lay them on? I think we get into some difficult territory if we start to make a doctrine of ordination from this.

But definitely Paul's apostleship is in view. And the third triplet is power to fulfill this ministry. So you see it there?

For the spirit God gave us does not make us fearful, but gives us power, love and self-control. So the triplet is this. Timothy's ministry, Paul's apostleship, God's power.

Now look at verse 8. See the triplet again. So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, Timothy's ministry, the testimony of the Lord, the gospel.

Or of me, his prisoner, Paul's apostleship, Paul's job. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.

[9 : 38] Look at verse 13. We'll see it again. What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

Keep as the pattern of sound teaching Timothy's ministry. What you heard from me, Paul's apostleship, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Then 14.

Guard the good deposit, Timothy's ministry, that was entrusted to you, Paul's apostleship. Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

Do you see that triplet comes up twice, both at the beginning and at the end of this section? Which leads us to an interesting question. Why does Paul say the same thing twice, twice?

Why is this in his view? What does verse 8 add that verses 6 and 7 don't include? What is different about verse 14 compared to verse 30?

[10 : 47] Well, I think the difference clearly is the trajectory of gospel ministry. The way it goes, the way it's heading, the place it is leading.

That it seems to say that the trajectory of gospel ministry is downwards. It is pain-filled and it's downwards. So verse 6 and 7 is about Timothy's ministry.

And verse 8, what is added is how Paul is suffering for the gospel. What does verse 14 add that verse 13 doesn't?

Well, it is that there's people that would seek to destroy the gospel so you've got to guard it. Verses 6 and 7 are reflective supposition from Paul.

Verse 8 is very biographical. Talking about how it is for this gospel that Timothy has a ministry to fan into flame.

[11 : 46] It is for this gospel that Paul is suffering. It is this pattern of sound teaching that will come under attack from a hostile world.

And therefore, Timothy has to guard it. Gospel ministry necessarily involves suffering is the big takeaway from Paul's developing logic.

When Jesus calls disciples, it is to take up a cross and follow after Jesus. It's not a cakewalk. It's not upwardly improving.

It's not always look on the bright side of life. It was a path for Jesus that ended dying naked, brutally abused and agonizingly on a cross.

It is a path that started for Paul on the road to Damascus. Involved stoning, shipwreck, imprisonments, lashing, rioting, slander.

[12 : 48] And eventually being beheaded as an enemy of the state in Rome. Paul isn't sugaring the pill for Timothy. Paul is saying gospel ministry and discipleship often involves suffering and necessarily involves the willingness to suffer for the gospel.

That's what he's saying. The trajectory of gospel ministry is imprisonment, shame, suffering. And putting yourselves in the crosshair of a hostile world.

Perhaps some of you were reading in the paper, the storm that's brewing around this man in the Scottish church scene. It's not Lionel Richie. It is Creflo Dollar. He is the fourth.

He is America's fourth richest pastor and a preacher of the prosperity gospel. And he's coming on a tour of Scotland in June. Don't mark it in your diary.

Creflo's gospel claims that Jesus came into the world to make his followers happy, healthy and particularly wealthy. Creflo even naming and claiming a \$65 million Gulfstream jet from his congregation as a reward from the Lord for his faithful ministry.

[14 : 10] Superimpose Creflo's idea on Paul's idea and they are radically different. Paul's ministry career and Timothy's experience of ministry so far and the one projecting out in front of him is one of suffering and shame and imprisonment.

There is a real natural reaction to be ashamed of clearly speaking people. Look at verse 8.

So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me, his prisoner. Why is Paul in prison? Because he's a clearly speaking individual who speaks with clarity about the things of the Lord Jesus.

Paul is in prison. And the temptation is for Timothy to distance himself from Paul. Particularly in Ephesus where everyone's going, oh, you're not still doing what Paul says, are you?

Have you not grown up a bit yet? We've all moved on a little bit. Paul would, Timothy could easily seek to distance himself from the perceived archaic opinions and dogmatic views.

[15 : 28] Of his mentor. It would be easy for Timothy to be ashamed. When I was in Lebanon, I had the privilege of getting to know him.

I'm working with the Korean field leader of OM. He was an absolute lunatic. Every time we went to Beirut International Airport, the people we were waiting for would come through arrivals.

And he would gather people in a massive prayer huddle in the middle of a packed arrivals lounge. He would then, at the top of his voice, which in a huddle is quite excruciating, pray as loud as he possibly could.

Giving thanks for Jesus. Always praying the gospel. Always thanking people for, always thanking God for a safe arrival. Always asking that their time here would be a blessing to them and fruitful in the work that we were involved in.

As soon as he said, Amen, the first thing he would do is pop out of the huddle so he didn't go too close or else you'd get his head in your nose. And he would look for people that were looking at him praying and he would go and talk to them.

[16 : 33] So embarrassing. Because everybody was looking. It wasn't always anyone looking. It is, which of the 300 people that are looking should I go and speak to? It is very tempting to be embarrassed of clearly speaking people.

The next time we went to the airport, I really had to fight the temptation that when I saw in the distance the people we were waiting for coming through the desk. To say, oh, I just need to pop to the loo so I wouldn't have to be associated.

Because it's very easy to be ashamed of clearly speaking people. That is Timothy's temptation. And Paul says, don't be ashamed.

Don't be ashamed of the gospel or of me who is in prison for the gospel. Join me in suffering.

Gospel trajectory is set in these verses. And it is necessarily away from comfort towards suffering. And we're to suffer by the power of the spirit.

[17 : 42] Isn't it interesting that in 2 Timothy, the power of the spirit is seen in Paul's willingness to be in prison for the gospel. And Timothy's ability to suffer for the gospel.

That is what the spirit is doing in 2 Timothy chapter 1. Enabling Paul to suffer and be in prison for the gospel.

And to be what Timothy is dependent on as he too suffers for the gospel. Gospel trajectory is downwards, away from comfort and towards suffering.

Now look with me at verses 9 to 10 and we'll see gospel clarity. He 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. But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our saviour, Christ Jesus. He was destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

[18 : 49] What follows in verses 9 and 10 are a summation of the gospel. A prairie of the gospel for which Paul is in prison and Timothy is suffering.

But it is not a comprehensive summary. There's no mention of Jesus' death for sin. No mention of repentance and an absence of the word faith.

However, what I think we see in these verses, these two verses, this gospel is a remedy for some of the falsehood that appears to be prevalent in Ephesus.

It is a summary carefully constructed by Paul to straighten out some of the crooked adjustments that people have imposed on the gospel.

I think there are three elements. Let me show you them. The first one is this, a holy life. He has saved us and called us to a holy life.

[19 : 52] Through the gospel, God has saved us and set us apart to be different, to be people for God's very own possession. It seems from the rest of the letter that Ephesus is starting to swallow a gospel that permits licentious living and requires no change in the individual.

Just flick with me to 2 Timothy 2 verse 19. Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription, the Lord knows those who are his, and everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.

2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 1. 3 Timothy 3 verse 19.

Or 2 Timothy 4 verse 19. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

They will turn their itch away from the truth and turn aside to myths. Why are they turning to myths? Because they want teachers who will legitimate the way of life that they want to live. The true gospel, on the other hand, requires a response towards a holy life.

[21 : 44] So there was a little couple. They were called Jimmy and Joan. And Jimmy started going to the local Salvation Army.

And he liked the people. He loved the coffee. He liked the little pink wafer that he got at the end of every service. And he started listening to the message of Jesus.

And so he went back the next week and the next week and the next week and the next week. And he came to the point where he repented of his sin and trusted in Christ.

And he went home and he told Joan, Joan, I've decided to follow Jesus. There's only one problem. The problem is this. Everyone else is wearing red sweatshirts, which is the Salvation Army uniform.

And I don't have one. And I really want one. Well, Joan was very good at doing textiles and embroidery. She says, I'll make you one. So she made him a beautiful red sweatshirt.

[22 : 49] But the only problem was, is the Salvation Army had a big emblem and some writing on the bottom. And Jimmy and Joan were illiterate.

And they didn't know what to write on it. So Jimmy had an idea. He went to his local corner shop. And he picked a random sign in the window. And he just copied out the letters.

And he took them home. And he gave it to Joan and said, Joan, please could you emblazon that on my sweatshirt? And I'll wear it on Sunday. He went to the Salvation Army on Sunday.

So happy. He blended in perfectly. Everyone was astounded at his red sweatshirts. And they said, we like your inscription much more than us.

Because the sign that Jimmy had copied from the window had simply said, Under New Management. And so Jimmy went and said, Under New Management.

[23 : 48] That is exactly what God has called us to. He saved us from our sin and calls us to be under new management. To live differently. And courageously in response to the gospel.

Second thing he's trying to correct is there. Not because of works. He saved us and called us to a holy life. Not because of anything we have done.

But because of his own purpose. And grace. He saved us not because of our goodness.

Our loveliness. Our greatness. Our intelligence. Our beauty. We weren't just adrift. We weren't just slightly lost.

We weren't just floating in the sea needing a bit of direction. We were dead in our trespasses and sins. We were hopeless and helpless.

[24 : 53] We were up the creek. And we didn't have a paddle. And we didn't have a boat. We were up the creek. We were up the creek. And our only hope. Was that God's grace.

Met us in the person of the Lord Jesus. Who dove in. Swam to us. And rescued us. And not only revived us. But resurrected us to new life.

The message of the gospel is humiliating to pride-filled people. That there's nothing we could do. Nothing lovable. And nothing lovely.

No ability. No rightness. And therefore the only reason. That we are saved and called to a holy life. Is all on account of God's purpose.

And grace given to us in Jesus Christ. I come to God purely pleading. The mercy available on account of Jesus' perfect life. And death for us.

[25 : 52] The only thing we contribute to our salvation. Is the enormous colossal pile of sin that made it necessary. And it seems that in Ephesus there are some people denying the gospel of grace.

Back in 1 Timothy 1. He writes this. 1 Timothy 1 verse 5. The goal of this command is love.

Love which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law.

But they do not know what they are talking about. Or what they so confidently affirm. It seems that in Ephesus there are people coming in.

And saying actually you need to do some stuff. You need to earn God's favor. You need to eat this and do that and live like that.

[26 : 54] And then God will love you and save you. In Acts 20 verse 30 Paul warns them. That even from among their own number. People will arise. Twist the truth and draw away disciples for themselves.

Saying if you do this God will love you more. This is the initiation into the next bit. This is how God will really love you. And Paul says no my gospel is clear.

It is grace from beginning to end. Not because of anything we have done. Religious people hate grace. Because religion is all about rules.

And in religion you either win or you lose. It's either pride or despair. Pride because I'm doing well. Despair because I can't make God love me. Because I can't keep the rules. And yet grace humbles us.

Who has the hardest time with Jesus and the gospel of grace? The religious people. Because they think God owes them something because of their religious observance. So Paul says be very clear Timothy.

[28 : 03] That the gospel is all about grace. And then finally his third thing. And his gospel clarity. Is not yet.

Verse 10. Verse 9b sorry. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time. But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our saviour Christ Jesus.

Who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He has extended the view. He says this grace was conceived before the beginning.

It has now come to light but it is not fully realized that is still to come. He is saying this is not immortality. Death destroyed life now.

Jesus has done that but it is not ours yet. The gospel is predominantly future. And so compare that to 2 Timothy 2 verse 16. Avoid godless chatter because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.

[29 : 07] Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus. Who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place.

And they destroy the faith of some. Not yet Paul says. The kingdom of the Lord Jesus is here because the king is here.

But it is not here in all its fullness. It is not yet. So don't listen to people. Don't listen to people who say. No it is now. The kingdom is fully now. Everything that God promises in the future can be yours now.

Paul is very clear about the gospel. It is unadjustable. You mess with my gospel. I will mess with your face. Says Paul. Listen to what John Stott writes.

To tamper with the gospel is to trouble the church. Indeed the church's greatest troublemakers now as then are not those who oppose, ridicule and persecute it.

[30 : 12] But those instead who try to change the gospel. Conversely the only way to be a good church person is to be a good gospel person. The best way to serve the church is to believe and live out and preach the gospel.

Paul has pinpoint laser guided gospel clarity. And he is urging Timothy not to be moved, not to be swayed or to be swamped by peddlers of a different gospel that is no gospel at all.

So we had a gospel trajectory that was down gospel clarity that was very clear on what the gospel is and also what the gospel isn't. And then we have some lovely gospel assurance verses 11 and 12.

And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. Three ways that Paul's life is totally wound up with the gospel because he is a herald, an apostle and a teacher.

That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame because I know whom I have believed. And I'm convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

[31 : 23] It is because of his stance and proclamation of the gospel that he suffers. If he was just a little bit less dogmatic about who Jesus was, he wouldn't be in prison, but he won't.

He won't be swayed. However, see the assurance that Paul has. I'm not ashamed. I know who I've believed. I'm convinced that he's able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

Steadfast assurance in God. I know him. He is able. That is his foundation of unshakable confidence in the unadjusted gospel.

What has Paul entrusted to God? Well, definitely his life. That's a given. But surely in context, it must be the ministry that God entrusted to him and then he entrusted to Timothy.

That is what Paul is trusting God with. This is a wonderful thing for Paul to rest in. Paul is in a prison cell. Paul is at the end of his life.

[32 : 39] He's writing to a church that he planted that's gone rogue. He's writing to his best man who is not doing well. It would be so easy for Paul to sit in this prison cell and think it's all been a waste.

It's all crumbling. It's all falling down around my ears. Yet Paul triumphantly proclaims. It's God's work. I know him.

I know him. And he is able. He is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. What's he entrusted to him?

Well, the very ministry that God entrusted to him in the first place. A wonderful truth to see God as ultimately the one who guards and preserves and expands and strengthens his church.

What a freeing truth that the buck doesn't finally stop with us. Be terrifying. Just imagine getting up in the morning and think gospel success actually did revolve around you.

[33 : 47] Or none of us would sleep. All of us would be too paralyzed to even get out of bed. And yet Paul says, I know him.

He is able. And he's able to guard what I've entrusted to him until that day. Gospel trajectory is downwards.

Gospel clarity is clear. Gospel assurance is seen in God's sovereignty over it all. And then he finishes the chapter with some real examples of those that are ashamed and deserted and those that weren't ashamed and stuck with Paul.

He relates information about the desertion of Phygelus and Homogenes. He names them particularly. We're going to notice in 2 Timothy that he uses a lot of personal examples.

It's not just Phygelus and Homogenes. It is everyone in the province of Asia. If we think back to Acts chapter 20, Paul preached for two years to Greeks and Gentiles until everybody in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

[34 : 58] And now 10 years on, everyone's deserted him. Why did they desert? Because they were ashamed of the gospel and they were ashamed of Paul. And so they made for the hills.

Phygelus and Homogenes may well have been people that followed Paul for a good while. Some of their good guys. How terrible. For Paul to write, they've gone, they've scarpered.

In contrast, see Onesiphorus. What a wonderful summation of what Onesiphorus did. He often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.

He wasn't ashamed of Paul in prison for the gospel. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me.

He sought Paul out. Imagine how dangerous that is. Paul is in prison as an enemy of the state for being a Christian. What is Onesiphorus going to say at the reception of the prison?

[36 : 03] Is Paul here? Yes. Why do you want to see him? He's an enemy of the state for being a Christian. How dangerous to say, well, I'm also a Christian and I'd like to see him to refresh him.

To celebrate all that we have in the Lord Jesus. That's the complete opposite of being ashamed. That's running towards danger. And joining Paul in his suffering.

It's kind of like a Hebrews 13 man from this morning. May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day. You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.

He's known. He's known even to the people in Timothy's church and Timothy himself. And so what are we going to do with this? Gospel trajectory.

Gospel clarity. Gospel assurance. And gospel examples for us to run from and to follow. And so here's four things.

[37 : 12] You can't divide Jesus and Paul. That's very clear from this passage. You can't divide them. You cannot amputate what Jesus teaches from what Paul teaches. It's very clear that to be ashamed of Paul is to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord.

They go together. Isn't that our world today though? We love a bit of Jesus. And we wish Paul wasn't just such a stickler. We'll kind of be embarrassed about him.

A bit embarrassed about his God-inspired revelation about manhood and womanhood. His sexual ethics. His teaching about order in the church. It would be very palatable to kind of cut him out.

And yet what we read in this passage is you can't divide Jesus and Paul. To be ashamed of Paul is to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. And to run from suffering because of some of the difficult things he says.

The two are inseparable. This is either all inspired or none of it's inspired. We cannot chop and change. We're not at Woolworths. It's not pick and mix. Number two.

[38 : 25] Gospel faithfulness is tested not just in what we say, but in who we're willing to be associated with. So often we're tempted when people are speaking clearly about the gospel to rerun the Good Samaritan and pass by on the other side.

I'm not talking about people that are being obnoxious with their megaphone, shouting at passers-by in ways that know nothing of gentleness and respect. I'm talking about people that are very clear.

Very clear on what God says is right and what God says is wrong. Clearly speaking people and our willingness to be associated with them is the litmus test about whether we're ashamed or delighting in the Lord Jesus.

We've got to stick with bold people. Boldness, being clear in the face of fear. That's what we see in this passage.

Do not be ashamed. Number three. You cannot guarantee successful ministry. You can't. Timothy's Paul's best guy and it's all going wrong.

[39 : 37] You cannot guarantee it. You can be faithful in it, but ultimately God is sovereign over it. And therefore we're to work and to strive and to pray.

To keep the gospel clear. To keep the fellowship together. To keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ. But even if we do all that, it's no guarantee of successful ministry.

It will certainly help. Timothy's doing the right stuff, but it's very difficult. There's no guarantee of successful ministry. And linked to that, people will desert you and it is heartbreaking.

You can almost see that as Paul pens, fight jealous and homogenies, he's smudging his ink as the tear comes out of his face. Probably his eyes. People will desert you and it is heartbreaking.

You'll train people and you'll train people and you'll invest in them. And you'll see real quality and real ability. But some will walk away. It's going to be very important that we get this.

[40 : 47] Particularly as we embark on this internship idea. That down the line we'll have invested in people and there'll be nowhere. And Paul was all right with that and we've got to be all right with that as well.

It's heartbreaking. And we mustn't give up. People will desert. We've just got to keep on going and keep not being ashamed.

To keep having that gospel assurance that I know him and he is able. And point five. I told you there was four but there was one free.

It was hiding under the bottom of the page. God is sovereign over the affairs of his church. Sovereign. He'll build it. It'll grow. He above all things is faithful.

We're to be faithful in the gospel. We're to be unashamed of the unadjusted gospel. And we're to trust that it is God through that gospel. Through the foolishness of that gospel.

[41 : 47] We'll accomplish wonderful life-changing eternity. Altering things. I don't know if you saw him at the end of Hebrews 13 this morning. But Timothy's mentioned.

And from the context it seems that Timothy's been in prison. I think that's quite encouraging. That Paul said to Timothy, don't be ashamed of me. Don't be ashamed of me in prison.

And it seems he wasn't because if Hebrews is written after 2 Timothy, which it probably is. Then Timothy ends up in prison because of the gospel. A wonderful idea that this letter really worked in Timothy's life.

And he wasn't ashamed. And he kept on going. He had real gospel assurance. And even when the trajectory was all the way down, he said, I'll go.

And I won't be ashamed. And may that be true for us as well. Let's pray and then we'll sing. Father God, all too often we're ashamed.

[43 : 00] All too often our confidence is rocked. All too often we run away. And are not as clear on the gospel as you ask us to be.

So Lord, I pray we'd hear what Paul says to Timothy and what you're saying to us tonight. That we're to be prepared to suffer.

That we're to be very clear on what the gospel is and what it promises and when that all comes to fruition. And that we would have real assurance in you that we would be those who could say, I know you.

You are able. And therefore we can entrust everything, our ministries, our lives, our families to you. Knowing that you're able to guard them and to work your purposes out in them.

So bless us and help us, we pray in Jesus' glorious and ever conquering name. Amen.