Do not be Ashamed (Daniel 3:1-18 and 2 Timothy 1:1-18) 18-Oct-26

Daniel 3:1-18

The Image of Gold and the Blazing Furnace

3 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits
wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. **2** He then
summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges,
magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the
image he had set up. **3** So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers,
judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the
dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood
before it.
4 Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "Nations and peoples of every
language, this is what you are commanded to do: **5** As soon as you hear the
sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must
fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set
up. **6** Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a
blazing furnace."
7 Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp
and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down
and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.
8 At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. **9** They
said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "May the king live forever! **10** Your Majesty has
issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither,
lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of
gold, **11** and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a
blazing furnace. **12** But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs
of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no
attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the
image of gold you have set up."
13 Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and
Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, **14** and Nebuchadnezzar
said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not
serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? **15** Now when you
hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if
you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you

do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"
16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

2 Timothy 1:1-18

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,
2 To Timothy, my dear son:
Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thanksgiving

3 I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

Appeal for Loyalty to Paul and the Gospel

6 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 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. 8 So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. 9 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, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith
and love in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—
guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.
Examples of Disloyalty and Loyalty
15 You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including
Phygelus and Hermogenes.
16 May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often
refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. 17 On the contrary, when he
was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. 18 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.

There are **Bibles** in front of you

And a sermon **outline**

I encourage you to have your **Bibles opened** firstly at **Daniel chapter 3** and then we will look at **2 Timothy chapter 1.**

Let's pray…

Intro/Unashamed of God (Daniel 3:18)

I came across this old story while preparing this week.

A man and his young son were riding their heavily laden donkey when a passer-by criticised them for burdening the poor animal. The man got off the donkey, then his son got off. By the time they reached the town, they were both carrying the donkey!

Some people are so sensitive to criticism that they change their behaviour simply to please others.

But in Daniel 3, we meet three men who refuse to compromise, even when the pressure is enormous.

Around the time of Judah's exile in Babylon [587BC] King Nebuchadnezzar erected a huge golden statue and commanded everyone to bow down and worship it.

[Slide-Daniel's friends]

But three Jewish men - Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down, even though they faced a fiery furnace.

They trusted God to deliver them, but even if he did not, they would not bow down. They would remain faithful to God whatever the cost.

They are **not ashamed** of their God and **will not compromise** their allegiance to Him.

Why?

Because they know and follow the 1st and 2nd commandments – ***not to worship other gods – and not to make images and bow down to idols!***

They also **trust God to deliver them**, but even if He does not, **they will not bow down!**

(pause)

What would we have done?

(pause)

[Slide-Repetition]

Notice the **repetition of playing musical instruments throughout Daniel 3**. The music emphasises the pomp and power of Nebuchadnezzar's ceremony – and helps us feel the overwhelming scale of the occasion.

The music draws people into the occasion, while the threat of the fiery furnace intimidates them into obedience. The king uses both attraction and fear to secure compliance.

And despite this overwhelming pressure, three men refuse to bow down.

[Slide-pressure]

For us…

The world can create enormous pressure on us to conform, but a Christian's allegiance to Jesus must be stronger than the pressure to fit in.

So - what enables someone to stand firm unashamed when faithfulness to God and Jesus - *could cost them everything*?

Well – the Apostle Paul answers that question in 2 Timothy chapter 1…[Please turn there now]

Remember the Faith God has given you (2 Timothy 1:1-7)

[Slide-1st point]

Paul's 1st Point – **Do not be Ashamed – Remember the Faith God has given you – vv1-7**

Here we have Paul writing his second letter to his young protégé and pastor – Timothy – in Ephesus.

It's 67AD – Paul is writing from prison in Rome and his execution is approaching fast.

Paul – v1 – tells us he is an **Apostle** – that is someone called out of the world – personally by Jesus - to tell people the **Good News of Jesus** [Explain Good News]– and Paul says his apostleship is **God's will – it's NOT Paul's idea!**

Paul –v2 - refers to Timothy as "***my dear son***" – Paul is Timothy's spiritual father and mentor.

Now, remember, in Paul's first letter to Timothy – he had told Timothy to remain in Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3) – even though Timothy faced severe opposition and confronting false teachers – and even though Timothy felt discouraged and most likely wanted to give up!

So what does Paul do here? He reminds Timothy of the **faith** they both share!
V3 –Paul wants Timothy to remember that they both serve the same faithful God — the God who has been at work throughout the generations.
This is the God Timothy must not be ashamed of!
And notice, too, that Paul is praying for Timothy – day and night.
Trust me, a pastor or minister needs to be on people's prayer lists!
If Satan wants to undermine a church, attacking its leadership is one way to do it.
Ministers need prayer for spiritual strength, wisdom, faithfulness and protection.
Daily prayer for our ministers and church leaders is paramount!

V4 – Paul even recalls Timothy's tears from when they last saw each other and he would love to see his spiritual son again!

But the key thing is

V5 – Paul reminds Timothy – of his ***sincere faith*** – a faith which grew from ***the faith of Timothy's grandmother Lois and Timothy's mother Eunice.***

We must never underestimate the influence of Christian parents and grandparents. Heather will tell you that one of the greatest Christian influences in her life was her Nanna.

And here at Toukley, I've noticed that many of the children who attend Sunday Jaffa come because their grandparents have brought them.

Grandparents can pray for their grandchildren, teach them about Jesus and model what it means to follow him.

And even if we don't have children or grandchildren of our own, we can all encourage the next generation - pray for them - and help them understand the Good News of Jesus.

We all have a part to play in passing on the faith.

(pause)

But Paul doesn't stop at reminding Timothy of the faith he has received.

Verse 6: Paul tells Timothy ***to fan into flame the gift of God that is in him***.

God had given Timothy a gift for ministry, publicly recognised when the elders laid their hands on him. But it seems Timothy's fire for ministry was burning low!

The picture here is of a fire that needs to be stirred up and fed so it burns brightly again. **Timothy must not allow the difficulties of ministry to extinguish his God-given calling. His fire for ministry needs to be rekindled!**

And the same is true for us. We can become weary, discouraged or disappointed. But we must not allow those difficulties to make us ashamed of Jesus, or make us give up serving Him or stop using the gifts He has given us.

Now Timothy needs more than memories of the past; he needs courage to face the challenges he must face now!

So Paul reminds Timothy – v7 - ***"For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline."***

Or, as some translations put it, ***God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind.***

Now, does that mean Christians will never feel afraid?

No! We can all experience fear. Some of us might be fearful of speaking in public. Others might worry about what family, friends or colleagues will think if we tell them we follow Jesus or if we put Jesus first in our lives!

We may feel afraid, but we must not allow that fear to stop us being faithful to Jesus. God has given us His Spirit, and notice the **three things** Paul says the Spirit brings us...

First, there is - power.

God gives us strength to stand firm, rather than relying on our own strength. But notice that the power God gives us is accompanied by love.

Second, there is - love.

Jesus was given all power and authority by His Father. But how did Jesus use that power and authority?

He didn't use it to exploit people or promote Himself. He used that power to **love** His disciples and even wash their feet. And He **loved** the people of this world so much that He gave His life on the cross so that sinners could be forgiven and receive eternal life.

Power with love makes all the difference.

That is the kind of love that should accompany our Christian witness.

We don't proclaim the gospel to win arguments, or to put people down or to make ourselves look superior. We proclaim it because we love people and want them to know the salvation that is found in Jesus Christ.

And third, there is - self-discipline — or a sound mind.

Self-discipline or a sound mind – produces in us - wisdom, sound judgement, self-control and the ability to think and act wisely. To ask ourselves what would Jesus say or do here?

God doesn't simply give us courage to speak without thinking. He enables us to exercise wisdom, to control our words and actions, and to respond appropriately when people oppose us.

So when we're tempted to remain silent about Jesus because we're afraid of what others might think, we need to remember what God has given us.

His Spirit equips us - with power to stand firm – with love to reach others - and with sound judgement to know how to respond.

For example: When someone challenges my personal opinion, I can sometimes back down quite quickly. But when someone challenges God's Word, I know I'm not simply defending my own opinion. I'm standing on God's truth and authority. That gives me a different kind of confidence when I'm doing God's work because this work has God's power behind it!

So – if God has given us this Spirit of power, love and self-discipline – Paul's **2nd point is** – **Don't be ashamed of the Gospel or its Servants** – vv8-12

[Slide-2nd Point]

Don't be Ashamed of the Gospel or Its Servants (2 Timothy 1:8-12)

In Paul's Day – the problem with a Christian giving witness or testimony about Jesus – is that this testimony included the fact that Jesus was crucified on a cross!

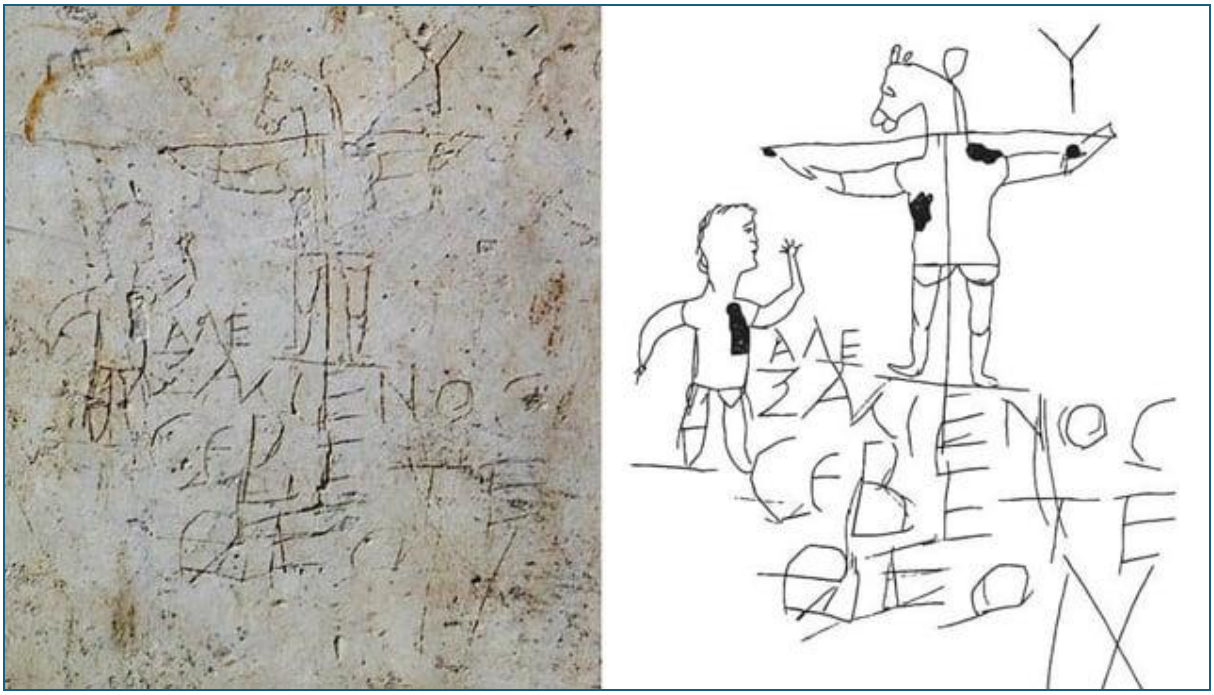
To many people in the Jewish culture – crucifixion was seen as a failure – because according to Deuteronomy 21:22-23 - ***anyone who hung on a tree was cursed*** – so many Jews reasoned - how could Jesus – cursed on a tree/cross - be a Saviour?

And in the Gentile Greek culture – they followed **wisdom** – so - to them crucifixion on a cross was a symbol of disgrace, humiliation and defeat – and the

idea of that a crucified man could be the Saviour of the World seemed utterly foolish (and not wisdom at all!).

To prove the point - in Paul's day - there was even graffiti that mocked Jesus' crucifixion.

[Slide-graffiti]



The graffiti shows Jesus on a cross with a donkey's head, with the inscription "Alexamenos worships [his] god"

And so if Paul is in prison for following Jesus who is deemed as a failure.
Then that also makes Paul seem like a loser and a failure too!
And Timothy might be tempted to distance himself from Paul and from the gospel or distance himself from the suffering that comes with proclaiming the Gospel.

[Slide-Back to Point 2]

Which is why - Paul tells Timothy specifically – v8 – "***So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner."***

Paul gives Timothy **three reasons** to **stand firm** in vv9-10

- **1st reason to stand firm - God has saved us and called us** — Our salvation was not earned by our works; it was God's plan from the beginning of time, and accomplished through Jesus Christ, who defeated death and brought life and immortality through the gospel (vv9–10).
- **2nd reason to stand firm** - Paul has been appointed [by Jesus] as a **herald**, an **apostle** and a **teacher** of this good news (v11) and **even though he is suffering** – **he's not ashamed** – it's all worth it – He's doing it for Jesus!
- **3rd reason to stand firm** – is because Christ is trustworthy — Paul **knows <u>whom</u> he has <u>believed</u>** (v12).

  For Christians it's <u>not just</u> <u>what</u> we belief but <u>in</u> <u>whom</u> we believe!

  You see - Paul is convinced of <u>who</u> Jesus is. And Paul is convinced that Jesus is able to guard Paul's life and ministry which Paul has entrusted to Jesus until **<u>that day</u>** (v12) **<u>That day</u>** being either - when Jesus returns - or when Jesus calls us home when we die – whichever comes first.

  You see nothing can derail Paul – He doesn't care if he is totally rejected as an outcast for Jesus' sake – He's done what Jesus wanted him to do – as he says Philippians 1:21 – "***to live is Christ, to die is gain***". If Paul stays alive – he continues telling people about Jesus – if he gets executed – He dies and gets to be with Jesus immediately! Either way, he can't lose.

And it's the same for us.

The world may consider us losers for following Jesus, but our future is secure in Jesus.

But how do we remain faithful when the pressure from the world continues?

Paul's 3rd point – We must – **Guard the Gospel with the Help of the Holy Spirit – vv13-14**

[Slide-3rd Point]

Guard the Gospel with the Help of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 1:13-14)

V13 - Timothy must ***hold on to the pattern of sound teaching he heard from Paul*** and - v14 - ***guard the good deposit (the Gospel) entrusted to him***.

It is not enough simply to have the courage to speak about Jesus. We must also remain faithful to the truth of the gospel rather than dilute it to make it more acceptable to the world.

And Timothy is not left to do this in his own strength. The Holy Spirit helps him guard the gospel faithfully.

For us, that means knowing God's Word, understanding it rightly and obeying it faithfully. We must not change the message of Jesus simply because the world finds it uncomfortable.

The devil will use people to question and doubt God's Word; the devil will twist God's Word and encourage disobedience. But - just like Jesus stood firm by using Scripture faithfully and obeying his Father – so must we!

But the Holy Spirit is the counter-attack to the devil's influence – and that is why Jesus' disciples were bold and empowered when they received the Holy Spirit – and willing to die to spread the Good News of Jesus!

(pause)

Paul now gives Timothy two contrasting examples of how people respond when faithfulness to Jesus becomes costly.

Which is **Paul's 4th Point** – **Don't be Ashamed – Choose Faithfulness rather than Shame** – vv15-18

[Slide-4th point]

Choose Faithfulness rather than Shame (2 Timothy 1:15-18)

Sadly v15 – Paul reports that everyone one in Asia Minor (modern day Türkiye) had deserted him and he specifically names Phygelus and Hermogenes. What great shame to have your name in the Bible for deserting Jesus' apostle!

One thing that struck me in Bible study this week was how Paul's experience mirrors Jesus' own experience of being deserted by those who should have stood by him.

The most likely reasons for Paul being deserted :

- His friends feared persecution
- They were embarrassed about Paul's imprisonment
- They acted in self-preservation
- They wanted to please other people rather than God!

But - praise God – Paul also mentions **a faithful friend** in vv16-18.

A man named **On-esi-phorus**, who refreshed Paul, was not ashamed of Paul's imprisonment and searched diligently for Paul in Rome. He had also helped Paul in Ephesus.

On-esi-phorus did not merely claim to support the gospel; he **demonstrated** his loyalty through practical action, even when it was costly.

For us: Not being ashamed of Jesus is more than what we say. It is demonstrated in our willingness to identify with Jesus, stand alongside His people and serve faithfully even when it costs us something.

Likewise in Daniel 3: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego **did not merely believe in God privately**; their **allegiance to God became visible and public** when they refused to bow down to the statue!

Who will we be like? Paul's friends who deserted him or **On-esi-phorus** who remained faithful?

(pause)

[Slide-Challenges]

Challenges/Conclusion (Romans 1:16)

Let me finish we **3 challenges** we can ask ourselves this morning:

[Slide-challenge 1]

1. Am I willing to identify myself as a Christian and share my faith, or am I allowing fear to make me ashamed of Jesus?

[Slide-challenge 2]

2. Am I living the way Paul calls Timothy to live?

[Slide-challenge 3]

3. How can I demonstrate practical faithfulness to Jesus and His people this week?

[Slide-Romans 1:6]

Let's finish with these words from the Apostle Paul – Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes."

Let's pray

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gracious gift of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. Help us through your Spirit, to fan the flame of your gracious gift; help us to not be timid as we face opposition and suffering; but to embrace power, love, and self-discipline from your Spirit. Help us not to be ashamed to give a testimony about our faith in our Lord and Saviour. And please help us to guard the good deposit of the Gospel entrusted to us and share the Good News with others. In Jesus Name. Amen.