

TTS Scripture S2 – 2 Tim 1:8

⁸ Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God. [2 Tim 1:8]

Context:

- a suffering church in Ephesus
- Paul in chains
- Not looking good in a worldly sense
- Paul encouraging Timothy

Paul, in encouraging Timothy:

- Reminds him of the gift that he received from the Holy Spirit, through the laying on of his hands
(Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) Every Christian minister needs at times to return to the inspiration of his ordination, to be reminded not only of the greatness of his calling, but also of the adequacy of the divine grace which enables him to perform it. Indeed, every Christian worker engaged in however small a task requires assurance that God never commissions anyone to a task without imparting a special gift appropriate for it.
 - A spirit, not of cowardice or timidity; but of power, love and self discipline :
(Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) ‘the Christian minister receives a triad of graces, i.e. power, love and self-discipline:
 - The spirit of power means not that the servant of God must of necessity be a powerful personality, but that he has strength of character to be bold in the exercise of authority. The power of the Holy Spirit within him has enabled many a naturally timid man to develop a boldness not his own when called in the name of God to fulfil a difficult ministry.
 - The spirit of love is indispensable to all Christians, most of all to the chosen ministers of Christ, and none understood its power more clearly than the apostle

who wrote the incomparable hymn of love in 1 Corinthians 13.

- The third feature is self-discipline which is equally necessary in ministry for no-one can have discipline over others who has not first subdued himself. The apostle here has more in mind that stoical self-effort, for the self-mastery is part of the divinely bestowed gift.'
- Exhorts him, in the light of this:
 - not to be ashamed of the testimony of Jesus Christ, nor of Paul's imprisonment for preaching the Gospel: (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) 'the testimony about our Lord', would refer to the Christian message as a whole. Such a message would bring ignominy to its preachers, especially in a Greek environment where the preaching of the cross was foolishness (1 Cor. 1:23). Timothy might also be tempted to be ashamed of Paul's chains, since imprisonment for the sake of the gospel carried with it a social stigma. **'The apostle is so deeply conscious of the Lord's purpose in his present affliction that he can describe himself as his prisoner,** as in Ephesians 3:1 (cf. also Phil. 1:12-14). Men might imprison his body, but they could never enslave his spirit. To Christ alone he acknowledged himself a captive.'

Compare:

2 Tim 1:8 Therefore do not be **ashamed** of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the **power** of God, with

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

- And to 'share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God'. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) 'A new word seems to have been coined to express this thought,

synkakopatheō, which means ‘to take one’s share of ill-treatment’.

‘The concluding words by the power of God are intended to assure Timothy that the sharing of suffering for the gospel’s sake is never undertaken in one’s own strength. ‘Stronger than all suffering is the power of God’ (Jeremias). This is the complement of verse 7 where a spirit of power is included in God’s gifts.’

Post-Script – Nathan on Paul as Prisoner of Christ

- In 2 Tim 1:8, Paul describes himself as the prisoner of our Lord.
- This fits into a wider Biblical theme (and in Paul’s letters specifically):
 - *“But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere”* [2 Cor 2:14]
 - What’s the image here? **That of Christ as Victor, Christ as Conqueror, leading a train of captives in a ‘triumphal procession’.**
 - We see a similar emphasis in Ephesians – *“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men”* [Eph 4:8]
 - IN OTHER WORDS:
 - We’re here presented with a picture of Christ the Warrior King – who assaults the kingdom of darkness and transfers us (like prisoners of war) into the kingdom of light. (Cf. Col 1:13)
 - This is why, in Isaiah’s suffering servant prophecy, Christ is promised “a portion”, the “spoils” of war. (Cf. Isa 53:12)
 - This is also why Paul describes himself as a “herald” (2 Tim 1:11) and an “ambassador” (2 Cor 5:20) – he comes as an ambassador for this conquering King, pleading with people to make terms of peace.
 - This just one way in which the Biblical authors describe Christ – as a Warrior King, very much in keeping with Revelation.