



This Sunday we continued our new series at Magdalen Road, looking at 2 Timothy, remembering the context of the letter as Paul is writing to Timothy with a sense of urgency – both as Paul is in prison and his time is drawing near, but also due to false teaching within the church.

To tackle these verses we simply focused in on the summary in v8 and looked at it – clause by clause, drawing in the rest of the section:

#### **Don't be ashamed...**

We noted that the very fact that Paul mentions it means that all Christians have the potential to be ashamed...

#### **...of the testimony about our Lord...**

By which he means the message of the cross of Jesus. What we believe in and stand for – to the world – sounds silly. It's always been the case, but perhaps increasingly so in our culture due to less people having learnt about them at school, but also the vocal comments of well-known atheists. In Timothy's context religious riots were not a thing of the past – the temptation would be there to focus on other things or be a bit less vocal, rather than boldly proclaiming the gospel of Jesus.

#### **...or of me his prisoner...**

It's not just Jesus that people are ashamed of – sometimes (more often?) it's his messengers too. Paul has always divided people – we can see that clearly in the passage but it's been that way in church history too. CS Lewis noted that 19<sup>th</sup> century biblical scholarship, rather than attacking Jesus – attacked Paul (*everything they disliked in Christianity, they attributed to St Paul*)

#### **...rather join me in suffering for the gospel...**

Perhaps our question is why bother? Paul's answer (v9-10) – because the gospel is about true life, it's about God's grace – not depending on our track record, it's always been the plan. And if it's true – then surely it's worth suffering for. We can see how it's transformed Paul... v11 – he's an herald (a bringer of news), an apostle (one with authority, sent by Jesus into new territory) and a teacher (one who applies and makes disciples).

Paul keeps going because he knows the one whom he serves – he has entrusted to God gospel fruit (or possibly been entrusted the gospel by God).

#### **...by the power of God.**

But God helps us, he gives us his Spirit (v7) and is able to guard the gospel with the help of the Holy Spirit (v14). And to do so in a way that is loving (notice again v7 and v13).

Here are just a few questions that might get things going, please adapt for your group:

What's the context of the letter?

Why is there such an urgency as Paul writes to Timothy?

Why might there be a similar urgency for us in our context and situation.

Are you ever ashamed of the gospel message or gospel messengers? Why?

Why is it worth pressing on anyway?

What will make us prepared to suffer?

Why is it important that God equips and enables us?

Why do we need him?

Why is not just about an academic preservation of a truth, but rather done with 'love in Christ Jesus'.

What 1 thing can you take away from these verses?