

Confidence At Christ's Appearance

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Given 07-Mar-26; Sermon #1862B

We live in a time when many people feel uncomfortable standing up for virtue and sound principles. On important issues, especially politics and religion, silence and passive indifference are often preferred over thoughtful disagreement. At the same time, embarrassment is frequently attached to trivial matters—clothing, possessions, or social image. Some feel ashamed if they lack the newest material things, while others fear being labeled intolerant, biased, or narrow-minded for holding firm convictions.

Please turn with me to Psalm 35. Now this reversal of values has produced a troubling paradox. Society often feels little shame over wrongdoing, yet deep embarrassment about being associated with faith and moral standards or the God of the Bible. What was once honored is now avoided, and what was once shameful is openly celebrated. Yet Scripture warns that such attitudes will not endure forever. There will come a time when hidden sins are exposed and true accountability brings a renewed sense of shame and awakening.

Those who shame others and lack shame are our enemies. Are you ashamed of God's way of life in any way? Can a person be ashamed of the gospel of Christ and still be worthy to observe Passover? Seventy-two psalms mention enemies who oppose not only us but also God's way of life. David prayed for God's protection from these enemies, fearing that their success would lead many to believe that the living God was ineffectual.

Psalm 35:26 Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion who rejoice at my hurt; let them be clothed with shame and dishonor who exalt themselves against me.

So David did not doubt his faith because he believed God would succeed. However, he did not want his enemy's victory to become an obstacle to others and cause them to be disbelieving. Now back 10 chapters to Psalm 25, verses 2 and 3.

Psalm 25:2-3 O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me. Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.

Sometimes even members of God's church feel ashamed of God's way of life in very subtle ways, and it is a very dangerous thing to fall into or to be in, especially among the youth and young adults who are pressured to feel this way, particularly if they attend government colleges and universities, or schools in general.

In English, we have various terms to describe the feeling of shame, such as being put to shame or mortified, embarrassed or humiliated, chagrined, discomforted, disconcerted, distressed, guilt-stricken, conscience-stricken, to name a few.

Please turn with me to Mark 8, verse 34. The feeling of shame or embarrassment about God's way of life shows itself as a sense of inferiority or unworthiness in relation to the world. We just do not feel that we are up to the standard of the world sometimes. And Satan can certainly put that in our minds just at the oddest moments. We are held back by this fear of shame which disrupts our dedication to Jesus Christ and His teachings. Now Christ said He will be ashamed of certain people upon His return. Are we sure we are not one of them? We should be very sure.

Mark 8:34-38 When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed

of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man will also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

So when Christ used the phrase "ashamed of Me and My words," He was contrasting it with being willing to lose one's life for His sake and the gospel's. To feel ashamed is to align oneself with this sinful generation instead of with Christ. The term adulterous is used to refer to unfaithfulness to God. And similarly, when Christ comes as Judge, He will be ashamed and will disown those who have disowned Him.

He pointed out one of the main reasons for the Jews' disbelief. They saw nothing in Jesus that matched their grand ideas of their Messiah. If Jesus had entered the world as a powerful and wealthy man, adorned with their earthly glories and honors, He would have gained many supporters, most of whom would be hypocrites. Christ's words were another source of offense to the Jews. They had to believe in the doctrine of mercy and forgiveness. They had to acknowledge the suffering Messiah, and they had to accept poverty and hardship, and maybe even suffer death for becoming His disciples, and they could not stomach these truths.

Our commitment to the gospel of Christ opens the way for God's power to transform us for His purposes according to His will, and that power is essential for us to stand unashamed of God's way of life.

Please turn over to Romans 1, verse 16. The apostle Paul was outspoken in his passion to spread the gospel of Christ. And he was neither embarrassed nor ashamed of his mission to preach in Rome. He did not see his task as unworthy or as a pipe dream.

Every time he spoke of the gospel of Christ, even if it was just to one person, it was well worth it. It was even worth him losing his life, if necessary. So he was always willing to challenge the philosophies and religions of Rome that competed for the public's attention because he knew from experience that God's power at work in sharing the good news can transform lives.

Romans 1:16-17 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 the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

The Greek word for power here (you are very familiar with it, I think) is *dynamis*, and sometimes the idea that the gospel is dynamite is appropriate. However, here the focus is not on destroying false religions, clearing a path for God's truth, or helping people overcome persistent habits they cannot shake. Paul explained how power should be understood. The emphasis is not on how it works, but on its effectiveness; it provides something unique—righteousness from God.

The Greek word from which believes is translated is a profound term. Belief in the content of the gospel is only part of its meaning. It signifies trust or personal commitment, conviction to the point of handing oneself over to another person. Although belief involves responding to a truth or a series of truths, this response is not just intellectual agreement but full-hearted engagement with the truth believed. It is not half-hearted.

To believe in Christ means to commit oneself to Him; to trust Christ involves becoming fully engaged with the eternal truths taught by and about Him in Scripture. Such full engagement fosters moral earnestness, dedication, and consecration evident in every part of our lives—24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And there are some aspects of the gospel that a man during Paul's time might be tempted to be ashamed of, especially since Jesus was viewed by the Jews as a criminal, crucified on a tree.

The gospel of Christ appeared simple, offering little to attract scholars. And those who professed it were despised, and it was mocked everywhere. Still, Paul was not ashamed of it. He was a Christian who was neither ashamed of the gospel nor ashamed to proclaim it. In chapter 4 of I Corinthians, Paul says that God has put the apostles on display like men condemned to die—public spectacles to the world, to humanity.

While others considered themselves wise and strong and honored, the apostles were treated as foolish, weak, and disgraced for Christ's sake. So they suffered constant hardship, hunger, thirst, poor clothing, beatings, homelessness, and exhausting labor. And yet despite being insulted,

persecuted, and slandered, they responded with blessing, endurance, and kindness. In society's eyes they were treated as the lowest and most despised of all, like the refuse of the world. What a contrast.

The Jews rejected Paul and saw him as an apostate. Among the wise of the Gentiles he was persecuted, despised, and chased out of town, and considered the scum of the world. Yet he was still not ashamed of the gospel. No matter what persecution came his way, he carried it with honor. He had a strong conviction of its value and truth, and he experienced many of its benefits and had seen how effective it was.

Now the Jews, by not believing in Jesus Christ and not accepting Him as the promised Messiah, but trusting in others, have been frustrated and shamed and confounded from that time to the present day. Their expectations have been cut off, and while rejecting Christ and expecting another Messiah, they have continued under God's displeasure.

On the other hand, those who believe in Christ have through Him all the blessings the prophets spoke about. Paul believed in Jesus, and by believing he gained life through His name. Through Christ he experienced an abundance of spiritual blessings, so much so that, filled with the happiness that an indwelling Christ brings, he could cheerfully say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." And why? Because he believed the gospel to be the power of God for salvation.

Please turn with me to II Timothy 1, verse 7. Paul urged the ministry to persevere through hardships and not be uncomfortable teaching the gospel.

II Timothy 1:7-8 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. 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.

II Timothy 1:12 For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

So the five essentials in this challenge to not be ashamed highlight the main points of Paul's reminder to Timothy. Just quickly, here are the five: 1) submit to God's power. 2) do not be ashamed. 3) share suffering with fellow believers. 4) hold fast through faithful trust. And 5) dedicate your life to God.

All obvious and simple, but they were part of Paul's message because it had to be repeated over and over again. Paul encouraged us not to be ashamed to testify about Jesus' teachings. It means we should not be ashamed to talk about these things with other people. We do not want to ram anything down anybody's throat, but we should be willing to talk about these things.

Now this is not to suggest that Paul's or Timothy's faith was so fragile that he would be ashamed of the gospel or back down. Instead, through experience, Paul understood that Timothy's role as a servant of God would expose him to severe persecution and pressure. So Paul aimed to warn Timothy about the dangers he would encounter in this area. Like Timothy with the imprisoned Paul, Christians are called to stand courageously with fellow believers in hardship.

To be ashamed now is to risk Christ being ashamed of us later. So the gospel and its servants are worthy not of embarrassment, but of loyalty and honor. So part of this being not ashamed in Christ is not being ashamed of each other. Are you ashamed of God's people? Would you be ashamed to appear in public with any of God's people?

This ashamed issue is far-reaching in every area of our lives. Paul urges, "but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God," which means expect hardships for the gospel's sake, prepare for them, rely on them, and be willing to stand firmly with the suffering saints of this world, meaning each one of us.

Please turn to I Peter 4, verse 14. Do not just sympathize with those who suffer, but also be willing to suffer with them and face similar hardships. If God's way of life is attacked, anyone who truly hopes for life and salvation through it will be willing to endure suffering for it. Peter's own shame over betraying Jesus was probably at the forefront of his mind when he wrote this here in I Peter 4, verses 14 through 16.

I Peter 4:14-16 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

Certainly Peter would have remembered Jesus' words in,

Matthew 5:11 "Blessed are you when they shall revile you and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake."

Christ sends His Spirit to strengthen those persecuted for their faith. However, this does not imply that all suffering results from good Christian conduct. Sometimes a person will complain about perceived persecution, even when it is clear to everyone else that their unpleasant behavior causes many of their problems. We have seen some of that before, have we not?

It may take careful thought or wise counsel to determine the real cause of our suffering, and we need to take it to God in prayer and ask, what have I done to cause this? It may not be your fault. It may be just the sins of society and the result of it, as we see with all of this cancer that is going on. So we can be confident, however, that whenever we face suffering because of our loyalty to Christ, He will be with us every step of the way.

Christ is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters.

Hebrews 2:11 For both He who sanctifies [that is, Christ] and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

The phrase "He who sanctifies" does not just mean someone who makes holy, but the one who offers atonement or reconciliation to God for others.

So the one who sanctifies is the one who provides atonement, and those who are sanctified are those who receive that atonement. And being reconciled to God, we become His children through adoption by grace.

As the Son of God was sent from the Father into the world, Christ readily identifies Himself with His followers as siblings. Jesus Christ, who sanctifies, and believers who are sanctified, are united. This further shows the unity between the Savior and those He redeems.

Psalm 22:22 I [Jesus] will declare Your name [that is, the Father's name] to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You.

So Old Testament scriptures show that Jesus Christ and Christians are brothers, and He is not ashamed to call us brothers. God is not ashamed to be called the God of the faithful saints.

Hebrews 11:16 But now they [that is, the saints] desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Since they have such a high goal, that is, the saints—us—He is willing to speak of Himself as their God and friend. They acted as His friends should, and He is not ashamed of the relationship He has with them. God is never ashamed of anything He does or completes, and He is working on completing us today—the faithful act—in such a way that makes it appropriate for Him to treat us as our benefactor, protector, and friend.

Please turn over to Philippians 1, verse 19. While imprisoned in Rome, the apostle Paul was confident that he would be released, but he did not know if he would be freed physically before his spiritual release.

Paul focused on the progression of his Christian life and his ultimate hope of standing unashamed both before human judges and Christ. Here in Philippians 1, we are going to read verses 19 and 20. Paul speaking,

Philippians 1:19-20 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

Although Paul's personal desire was to be with Christ in God's Kingdom, the church's needs convinced him that he would soon be released and continue working to strengthen their faith while alive. He wanted to meet Christ in His Kingdom, but he knew his role and commission was more important at that time on earth. I think all of us when we go through serious trials long for that association and contact with Christ in His Kingdom.

Paul believed that the current opposition would turn out for good because his fellow believers were praying for him, and as a result, the Spirit of Christ would provide a plentiful supply of what was needed for the current crisis that Paul found himself in. If we interpret deliverance in verse 19 in the broadest sense, we understand Paul to say that regardless of the outcome of his immediate physical circumstances, He had every reason to expect spiritual victory. So Paul knew this spiritual victory would ultimately culminate in his spiritual salvation.

Paul's earnest expectation describes an intense, forward-looking hope that he would not be put to shame and that Christ would be honored and glorified through him. As he awaited judgment, his primary concern was not personal freedom, but that Christ be magnified in his body, whether through life or death. Confident in God's help, he was determined to maintain boldness, remain faithful to the truth, and avoid any action that would dishonor God even under the threat of death.

Now Paul was determined to stand firm in his belief in God's truth. It was not just a preference to him. If his beliefs were merely a preference, he might feel ashamed of defending God's truth. A preference is simply a stronger liking for one thing over another, something you prefer but do not have to choose—just a first choice that can be replaced by others.

We do not want God's way to be a preference. We do not want the gospel of Christ to be a preference to us—we want it to be a *conviction*. So in contrast, a conviction is the state of being completely convinced of the truth. The agent of conviction is the Holy Spirit, and the means of conviction are either the Word of God or God's general revelation of His demands through nature and man's innate sense of right and wrong.

What I mean by innate sense, I mean that God has placed into every man a gut feeling of what is right and wrong. And they deny it and they are willfully against it if they go the opposite way. The purpose of conviction is to lead a person to repent of his sins, turn to God for salvation and eternal life, thus glorifying God. I am not referring to the legal definition of conviction, which means being found guilty.

Conviction precedes repentance and is often accompanied by a painful feeling of exposure to God's wrath. It is the work of the Holy Spirit revealing the severity of sin. Without conviction in God's truth, we will be ashamed of God's way of life in times of pressure and persecution, and then our hypocrisy is made manifest for all to see. Back in Philippians chapter 1, verse 20 Paul says,

Philippians 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or death.

Paul was prepared for his upcoming testimony before the imperial judges. To be a brave witness in such circumstances without Christ's help would be impossible. He was not relying on his own courage, but on the power of the Holy Spirit of God and in response to his prayers and those of the Philippian Christians.

Now Paul's dedication and loyalty to serve and honor Christ is an example for us. His commitment is evident in his hope and his dedication and his service, and his trust and his contentment. His supreme hope was that Christ would be glorified and His Kingdom advanced. He dedicated his body as a living instrument for Christ's purpose.

He served with boldness and without shame. He trusted that sincerely seeking God's glory would be fulfilled. He was content with Christ to be magnified through either his life or death. Paul was convicted even unto death! And above all, Paul's priority was to honor Christ in every circumstance through service, suffering, living, and dying if necessary.

Please turn with me to I John 2:28. Similarly, we must abide in Christ so we may have confidence at His coming. The apostle John urges us to stay in Christ so we can have confidence and not be ashamed when Christ comes back. In simple terms, John explained what it means to stay in or abide in Christ. Basically, he says, live righteously.

I John 2:28-29 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

Confidence, in the New Testament, refers to Spirit-given boldness, both in witnessing for Christ and in approaching God in prayer and at His return. So John emphasizes the need to persevere through trials so that when Christ comes, the faithful may stand before Him with assurance, joy, and unashamed.

And those who remain faithful will experience confident acceptance, while those who abandon Him will feel deep shame, regretting their unbelief, cowardice, ingratitude, false hopes, and the sinful choices that lead them away from the Redeemer.

If we know He is righteous, we understand that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. If we live in righteousness, we remain in Christ. Born of Him and remaining in Christ are basically the same things.

Please turn to Ephesians 2, verse 8. Remaining in Christ means staying in His law and love and consequently in our allegiance and obedience to Him, and this indicates we must accomplish His work by practicing His righteousness, practicing by living it.

We are renewed by the Spirit of Christ, conforming to the image of Christ, and we are created in Christ for good works which God has foreordained for us to walk in, as Paul tells us in Ephesians 2.

Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

So obviously being embarrassed or ashamed of Jesus and His words has serious consequences. In the end, at the judgment, the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, will be ashamed of that person. Luke 9, verse 26 says,

Luke 9:26 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of Him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."

For a final scripture, please turn with me to Psalm 22, verse 3. We can find comfort in the example of the faithful patriarchs who trusted in God. They had no reason to be ashamed of God or themselves. Jesus Christ will be rightfully proud of them as He resurrects them to eternal life.

Here in Psalm 22, we are going to read verses 3 through 5.

Psalm 22:3-5 But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; they trusted in You, and were not ashamed.

Israel's praise in God's sanctuary expresses deep gratitude, which helps turn hearts away from worldly shame toward a life centered on God. Repeated references to trust highlight a confident hope in His love and faithfulness. And because God's way produces lasting, good, and eternal blessings, the loyal have no reason to be ashamed of Christ.

With His help and constant trust in Him, we can be delivered from the evil of this world without shame. Therefore, let this truth not fill us with fear but with holy resolve and joyful hope. The warnings of Scripture are not meant to paralyze us; they are meant to awaken us. Today is the opportunity to stand openly, courageously, and lovingly for Christ without embarrassment or hesitation.

If we remain in Him, walking in His righteousness, trusting in His promises, and expressing our faith through obedience and love, we need not unconfidently dread His return. Instead, we can look forward to it with confidence. The same Savior who warns against shame also promises honor and acceptance and eternal joy to those who unashamedly belong to Him.

And just as the faithful before us trusted and were not put to shame, so we too can live with steady assurance. Our lives, shaped by gratitude and faith and the Spirit of Christ, become a testimony that we are His workmanship, prepared for glory long before we ever drew breath. So let us stand firm, unashamed of His name, unashamed of His truth, unashamed of the life to which He has called us.

When He appears in power and glory, we may not shrink back but lift our heads with joy, knowing that we are known and loved and welcomed by the One we never denied. And on that day, instead of hearing words of rejection, may we hear words every faithful heart longs for—that we belong to Him and that our trust was not in vain, and that we may enter into the everlasting light where shame is swallowed up by glory, and faith receives its inheritance, and love endures forever.