

## Ashamed – Not Ashamed (2)

by Walton Weaver

In our first article we saw how the different words for “shame” are used in the New Testament. From this we briefly considered some things of which the Christian should BE ashamed. This time we will take a brief look at the other side of the subject.

### Let Us NOT Be Ashamed . . .

1. *Of Jesus Christ.* Jesus said, “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38). One thing that Jesus never did was to teach in such a way as to make his disciples think it would be easy to stand up for him. Living in the midst of an “adulterous and sinful generation” is to live among people who have rejected Jesus Christ. That is not easy. When one has come out of such an “adulterous generation”, how can it now be easy to do the right thing while still living among such people? Jesus knew how difficult that would be. One solution would be to take them out of that kind of environment, but he rejected that possibility and instead prayed to the Father, “keep them from the evil one.” Leave them in the world (though, he said, “they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”), he prayed, but “keep them from the evil one” (John 17:14-16).

This statement that “whoever is ashamed of Me and My words . . . the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him . . .” appears in a context where Jesus is teaching a lesson on self-denial. He has just shown that to be his disciple requires that one deny himself, take up his cross and follow after him (Mark 8:34). To take up one’s cross is more than what most of us have come to realize, and it is not at all what people usually think (more on this next month). One’s cross is one’s death to self, self-denial, dying to self.

This is the price one must pay if he would always stand up for Jesus Christ among people who have no regard for him. Christian friend, remember, you made your choice, and it was not an easy choice to make, was it? Becoming a Christian is not easy. Neither is it easy to remain true to him at all costs. Just as becoming a Christian was a radical decision that required your own death to self, so also living faithfully for him is the way of the cross; it is the way of death, death to self. Three verses earlier (Mark 8:35), Jesus said, “For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s sake shall save it.” We must never be ashamed of him who lost his own life to gain it and went the way of the cross for us.

2. *Of the Gospel of Christ.* Not only did Jesus say “whoever is ashamed of Me,” but he added, “and My words” (Mark 8:38). Are you ashamed of the teaching of Jesus Christ? It is after all “the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16). What do we find in the

New Testament that some people might be ashamed of today?

*The Doctrine of Hell.* In a world that has almost totally rejected *the doctrine of hell* taught in Scripture, are you ashamed of the things Jesus had to say on this subject? He spoke of some people going “into hell, into the unquenchable fire, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched,” (Mark 9:43-44), and some being “cast into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:45-46). He repeats the statement a third time in verses 47-48. In speaking of the final separation in the last day, he said of those on his left hand and on his right hand, “And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matt. 25:46). When the world views the doctrine of hell as outdated and unfair, will you stand up for Jesus and be counted on that subject, or will you be ashamed of his words when he spoke of hell as a place where God could destroy both soul and body (Matt. 10:28)?

*Baptism And Salvation.* Are you ashamed of Jesus’ statement that the “he” who shall be saved in Mark 16:16 is the one who believes *and is baptized*? Most of those who profess to believe in Jesus Christ reject baptism as necessary to salvation, and yet Jesus put both belief and baptism *before* salvation in Mark 16:16. He also says that one must be “born of water and the Spirit” in order to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). Water is one of the elements of the new birth. Paul speaks of “the washing of regeneration” (Titus 3:5), “the washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5:26), and having “our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:22). Peter says that eight souls were saved by water in Noah’s day, “And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you – not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience – through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21). These are clear references to water baptism, and Jesus’ statement in Mark 16:16 unequivocally places baptism before salvation.

Let others (the whole world, for that matter!) scoff at the idea that baptism has anything to do with salvation, but as one of Jesus’ disciples, what will you do? Will you boldly proclaim his truth on this subject, or will you be ashamed of his words and say nothing when the opportunity is given to you? If you speak up for Jesus on this subject you must be prepared to withstand the unjust criticism that is sure to come. “You believe in a ‘works’ salvation,” or “You can’t believe water baptism is necessary and believe in the blood of Christ,” are common misrepresentations. A Christian must prepare himself to properly respond to these kinds of false statements.

*Honesty and Purity Of Life.* There are many other things that Jesus taught that are not popular in today’s world. Are you ashamed of what Jesus taught about *honesty and purity of life* in the Sermon on the Mount? Are you too embarrassed because of what others may think of you if you live up to the high standard laid down by Paul and Peter, two of Christ’s spokesmen, on the *subject of modesty* (1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:1-6), or *to refuse some things* even if all others are doing them, as Daniel did in Daniel 1:8? What about Jesus’ teaching on *divorce and remarriage* in Matt. 19:1-9, especially the exception clause of v. 9, where he gives only one cause (that of fornication or immorality) for

divorce and remarriage? When there are so many divorces both in and out of the church, will you stand up and be counted to defend Jesus' teaching on this subject? Or, are you ashamed of his words as given in this passage of Scripture?

*False Teaching To Be Rooted Up.* Are you ashamed of Jesus' words, "Every plant which my heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13)? If you just ignore it, or treat his statement as if he did not say it, you probably aren't too sympathetic toward it. In the next verse Jesus identifies some of the plants that are to be rooted up as "blind guides," or false teachers. Too many Christians have too hard a time finding a false teacher today. Jesus seemed to see them as being present on every hand (see Matt. 7:15-23), and so did Paul (Acts 20:28-32; 1 Tim. 4:1ff.; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; 4:3-4). What do you think? Will you stand with Jesus, or will you in shame turn away from him and his words on this subject?

Paul charged Timothy, "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God" (2 Tim. 1:8). Timothy must receive Paul's message as a message from the Lord, because Paul and all other inspired spokesmen for him were his true messengers, and to receive or reject them was to receive or reject the Lord himself (Matt. 10:40-42). As one of Jesus' followers Paul was a prisoner for him. He was in prison when writing this last of his letters to the young preacher, Timothy. He would also die for him, because as he himself affirmed, "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" (Rom. 1:16). A true disciple indeed, and a true example of what Jesus meant when he tells us to take up our cross and follow him. Will you go that far for him?

3. *Of the Church of Christ.* How many of our church members really stand up for the church that Jesus built? We don't mean a Church of Christ denomination. I am speaking of the church before human denominations began. Don't forget that in the New Testament local churches are called "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16). They belong to him. Each member was purchased by Christ's blood (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:19-20). Not only that, but Christ is the head of the church that he built, and the members make up his body (Eph. 1:22-23). Whatever is done to those who are Christ's is done to Christ (Matt. 25:40). We can't be ashamed of Christ's church and not be ashamed of him.

*Only One Church.* Are we ashamed of the fact that Jesus *promised to build only one church*, and that this is evidenced by the fact that he used the word church in the singular when he said, "I will build my church"? Seriously, brethren, are we ashamed that our Lord never promised to build but one church, and that was his church? That Paul speaks of only "one body" (Eph. 4:4), which is the church (Eph. 1:22-23), just like he speaks of one hope, one God, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, and one baptism?

*Worship In Spirit And Truth.* What about Jesus' statement that *worship must be in "spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24), and that "truth" demands that our public worship

only include the Lord's supper on the first day of the week (Acts 2:42; 20:7), giving as we have been prospered on that same day (1 Cor. 16:1-2), singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), prayer (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 2:8; 1 Cor. 14:14ff.), and teaching (Acts 20:7). Are we ashamed of being thought of as being too narrow if we oppose other things being introduced into our worship, such as instrumental music? The church, you know, was thought of as being a sect in the early years of its existence, and it was everywhere spoken against (Acts 28:22). Should we expect any less today?

**Work Of The Church.** What about the *work of the church* being limited to evangelism (2 Cor. 11:8; Phil. 1:5; 4:15-18), edification (Eph. 4:11-16), and helping needy saints (Acts 6:1ff.; Romans 15:22-30; 2 Cor. 8, 9)? Are you ashamed of the likelihood that you will be viewed as too narrow if you raise a voice of objection to those who build fellowship halls with the Lord's money, provide recreational activities out of the church treasury, subsidize or support financially church auxiliaries (human institutions) to do the work of the church, or evangelize through sponsoring church arrangements (one church setting itself up as an agency through which other churches work to accomplish a work that is common to all) , etc.?

The church needs people who will stand up and be counted. It needs true, devoted disciples who will die the death for the cause of Jesus Christ. Can we count on you?