

# Not Ashamed

by Jim Cymbala

---

*Paul's sermon emphasizes the importance of being courageous and convicted in sharing the gospel despite the risks and opposition it may face.*

**Duration:** 32:29

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 2:1

**Topics:** "Gospel"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the early days of preaching the gospel and the opposition that came with it. They emphasize that while preaching the good news could lead to glorious results and life-changing transformations, it also brought about significant opposition. The speaker highlights that not everyone they encountered accepted the message, debunking the notion of false triumphalism. They also share a personal experience of preaching in a park, where people initially gathered thinking it was a commercial shoot, but eventually listened to the message. The sermon emphasizes the importance of boldness and courage in sharing the gospel, despite the mockery and rejection one may face. The speaker draws inspiration from Jesus' endurance of the cross and encourages believers to persevere in sharing the story of love and salvation.

---

## Transcript

We're getting back today to our study that we're doing together of the book of 1 Thessalonians. This is Paul's first letter that he ever wrote that's in the Bible. Chronologically, it's the first letter he wrote.

It's written to a church that he started when he went to Greece on a missionary trip, which is called his second missionary journey. He left from Antioch in Syria, and he went on this trip with Silas and Timothy and some other people, and he ended up starting in Philippi, where he had a rough time, and after starting a church there, he ended up being forced out of the city after serving a night in prison, and after being beaten and humiliated, and he was beaten illegally, his clothes were stripped from him, and they opened up his back and beat him, not knowing he was a Roman citizen, and Roman citizens were not allowed to be flogged, and Roman citizens deserved a trial, but they overlooked that, and then God delivered him out of the prison, supernaturally, and then Paul used his citizenship when they told him to get out. He said, no, they beat me illegally.

Let the magistrates and the leaders come and usher me out of the city if they wanna force me out, and then they got afraid, because they realized they had illegally beaten a Roman citizen, and the Romans

were very strict on keeping the laws, obeying the laws. He ended up going to Thessalonica, where he stayed, they don't know, two months, four months, something six weeks, and he started a church, left, and now he loves them so much, he's writing to find out how they're doing. Well, not exactly.

He wanted to know how they're doing, so he sent Timothy to observe what was going on. Brings back a report to Paul, and now Paul is writing 1 Thessalonians, there's another letter coming, which is in the New Testament, and he's reviewing with them, I love you, remember when I came, and we're learning from every single verse some important truth. This is Christianity as it's supposed to be.

Christianity in the Bible, not American Christianity, or Caribbean Christianity, not black Christianity, or white Christianity, this is New Testament Christianity, and God has this in the Bible, so we could learn and try to emulate. We have no right to start our own religion. Christianity is what Jesus wants it to be.

He's the head of the church. How many say amen? Now we come to verses chapter two, and it's the beginning of, as they say, of an apologia, A-P-O-L-O-G-I-A. Paul is gonna make a defense because people have come in after he left and put him down.

Instead of giving him props, they knocked him down and said, he's not that, he's a phony, he's after your money, he's like one of these guys that travels around in those days who were known as orators and speakers who would wow the people with their skills and then lift the money out of their wallets. He's being criticized after he left. So after the beginning of the letter, he just is talking about important things between him and them, and now he's beginning in the second chapter to make a defense.

We're gonna mention that. Why should you make a defense? So let's look at just two verses as chapter two begins, okay? You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. Notice the NIV has brothers and sisters.

The King James translate just the word brothers, but back in that time, it meant both sexes, men and women. For example, the verse God wants all men to be saved. That doesn't mean only men, it means all men and women.

So they more accurately here put in, you know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. In other words, something happened when we came to you with the message. We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God, we dare to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition.

So then when you read the Bible, it's good to like just analyze every phrase and talk to it, ask questions to it, who, what, where, when, why, how long, how much, and see what comes back to you. You know, brothers and sisters, in other words, he's banking on the fact that he can reason with them. You know what went down when I was there.

I'm not making stuff up. He's appealing to their experience. You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results.

In other words, there's a church there. You got saved, you became Christians. I didn't come there and waste my time.

Now, we had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi. He either told them what happened in Philippi or because Philippi was near Thessalonica, the word got there that, wow, it went

down bad for these guys in Philippi. They got beat half to death, got thrown in jail, and then got kicked out of town.

Why? Because they preached the gospel. And now they come and they're preaching the gospel again. You talk about courage.

You talk about brave. We were treated outrageously. We suffered.

That means probably the beating. And then treated outrageously, we didn't have our rights recognized and respected in Philippi, as you know. But with the help of our God, supernatural help from God, we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition, even in Thessalonica.

So now, let's see what we can gather from these two verses. Now, we try to deduce what are the lessons. What is that saying to us, this passage? Well, first of all, we see right quick here that back then, when you preached the gospel, you could expect glorious results, people's lives would change, but you always knew you were gonna face a lot of opposition.

That was a given. You preached the good news about Jesus? Yeah, she can get saved. But those four people are gonna come after you.

Yeah, some good things are gonna happen. Notice we see now that where Paul went, not everybody got saved. Sometimes you hear people talk this false triumphalism.

You know, we're the head and not the tail and wherever we go, we claim the ground and everybody gets saved. That never happened, has never happened, will never happen. When you go, you preach and you sow the seed and some of the seed falls on good ground and people get saved and other people turn on you.

Some people just ignore you, walk away, but other people provide huge opposition. That raises a question. Why? Why is it that the gospel causes such trouble? Because it's still happening today.

We face it, we'll get to that in a more subtle way. You go to parts of China, you go to Pakistan, you go to Muslim countries, you go to Hindu countries, Jesus is not a neutral word. Jesus rouses tremendous opposition and fury.

But Jesus told the disciples this. In other words, Paul and the rest of those early leaders, they weren't putting their hands up in the air and saying, what's going on? Jesus had told them, listen, no teacher, no student can be greater than his teacher. If they hated me, they will, if they opposed me, if they lied about me, they will, if they mock me, they will mock you.

Unlike some of the spin that we give to the gospel today to make it more palatable for people, the Bible gives us a different picture. If you serve Jesus and open your mouth for Jesus, great things are gonna happen, but watch out because you're gonna face opposition too. If you don't want opposition, you cannot be an aggressive Christian.

Look how quiet that got. See, that's the way we are, but that's the way we are. Nobody wants opposition.

People walk out sometimes over the years when I'm speaking about certain subjects to Christ. One time a person left and made a fist at me at the door in a previous facility, that's the truth. But I shouldn't, that hurt me, but that shouldn't surprise me.

So if you want to be accepted by everyone, you want to go with the flow, say bye-bye Jesus. Am I correct here or not? Just make up your mind now. You want to fit in with everyone? You want to run with the crowd? You want everybody to be high-fiving you and accepting you and thinking you're really nice and all that? Then you cannot be a Christian.

How could you follow the crucified one and never face trouble? Now we learn, not everybody got converted, and there's something about the gospel that is powerful to change people, but also, bow! You shut up, don't you mention Jesus. Whether it was the Romans saying, we have no king but Caesar, stop that. Whether it's the Jewish religious establishment saying, don't tell us we missed the Messiah.

Jesus is not the Messiah, he's a fraud, he's a faker. Don't tell me I have sins, don't tell me he had to die for my sins. Who are you to judge me? Listen, there's a thousand ways that people get set off, but they get set off.

That's something we all have to face. You want to be strong for Christ? You want to witness in the job? Watch out. It's blunt, but it's absolutely true, am I right? Those that live godly lives shall suffer tribulation.

We must enter the kingdom of heaven through many hardships, Paul tells the church, on this same journey, on the first journey he took. So that's the truth, we gotta lay it before everyone. Now, people know, ministers know, churches know, that people don't want to hear this inconvenient truth.

Someone said, truth is like poetry. Not too many people like poetry. Not too many people like the truth.

And the truth is, if you mention Jesus, this is laying it down, they crucified him, and his early followers had opposition, so we have to count the cost. This is part of taking up the cross and following Christ. And no matter how God moves, and no matter how wonderful the spirit comes, and all of that, not everyone's gonna be converted, and some of those that don't get converted might come after you, in different ways.

Here, in our country, from the government, to the media, to the board of ed, Jesus is not a popular subject. And I'm gonna tell you now, from my heart, it's gonna get harder to serve Jesus in this country, in the days to come, not easier. So this is a good gut check for all of us.

Excuse the term gut check, this is a good time to size up, where are we, and what are we willing to suffer for Jesus? Because it'd be cheap of us to read the Bible and see what they went through, and then make up a Christianity where nobody gets offended. It's called the stumbling block of the cross. So then, we know that now, so that we gotta pray for each other, encourage each other.

Then number two, what really must have been hurt Paul, was not only in Philippi, he got beat, went to jail, got out, now he comes to Thessalonica, and he says, I preach the gospel to you, amidst great opposition. And now, he goes to another city, and there's more opposition. And if you read the book of Acts, sometimes there were riots where he went.

Now, that doesn't happen to every minister, doesn't happen to every Christian, but we have to be ready now, and not get discouraged, and think, oh, where's God when I need him? Just because people get up in our grill because we're Christians, it's gonna happen. How many are willing to face it for Jesus? Come on, lift your hand up high. So, you'll lose some friends, so your family will turn against you.

So, let's really talk, do real talk, okay? So, your Trinidadian relatives, or your Polish relatives, or whoever relatives, some of them will turn on you. So now, here's the cost. Do you love Jesus enough to follow him,

even though the family turns on you, or do you want acceptance by the family? You can't have both.

Jesus talked about that everywhere. Unless you hate your mother, father, sister, brother, you can't follow me. Sometimes your enemies, your worst enemies, will come from your own what? Your own household.

So now, Paul faced that. That doesn't mean be mean, judgmental, harsh, nasty. A lot of people suffer because they're just nasty.

If you're gonna suffer rejection, and people aren't gonna like you, let it be for Christ's sake, not because you're obnoxious. Come on, can we say amen to that? Some people are just obnoxious. I met someone years ago who just couldn't get along with anyone, was the most nasty personality, but every time someone just walked away from them, they said, well, I'll suffer for Christ.

It wasn't suffering for Christ, they were suffering because they were nasty. They were obnoxious. So, we shouldn't do that, but when it comes, we don't throw up our hands and give up.

Number two, this is also hurtful to Paul, and it's everywhere. Wherever he preached, people would come in after him, and tear him apart beside the persecution. In other words, he got the persecution.

He went to jail, he had trouble. Now, he leaves Thessalonica, and this happened in Corinth, this happened almost everywhere he went. People would come in, sometimes they were outsiders, sometimes they were fake Christians, and they would say, Paul, he ain't all that.

He's just after your money. This is why, when we read the rest of the chapter, he's reviewing with them, I didn't wanna dime from you, and he's telling them how he acted. Because why? These letters were written because people came in and criticized him, and I believe that hurt probably more than the whip, because words hurt more than a punch.

Boy, you wanna be tested whether you're gonna be a Christian? You not only have to have the courage to face jail, and rejection, and people cursing at you, and all of that, but now, after you serve the Lord, and you do good work, people come and criticize the good work that you did. And yet, Paul keeps his equilibrium. He doesn't go crazy, he doesn't get discouraged, he doesn't get depressed.

You know what? A lot of our depression is just out of self-love. It's just out of self-love. We love ourselves so much that when anything goes wrong, we get depressed, because we're the center of our universe.

These people like Paul, Jesus was the center of their universe. So I get in prison, I go to prison. He died for me, I'll go to prison for him.

So people don't like me and criticize my work. I'll defend myself, but I'll take anything for Jesus. So now we see what the cost is here to serve the Lord, especially to be a leader.

Some people think you're Superman, and the other think you're a demon. I get a lot of letters like that over the years. Most of them, you know, your way, they overestimate, you're just a regular guy, I'm just, listen, below regular guy.

No, no, you're this, you're that. And then the others, you're a demon, and this and that. No one sees you hardly ever who you really are.

And that was the same with Paul. In certain places, they wanted to sacrifice to him because they saw how God used him. He had to stop them from sacrificing.

And then other places, they stuck a knife in his back, they turned it once or twice. He then defended himself. Some people think you should never defend yourself.

So now what do we learn? Some people say, no, when someone says something nasty about you, just close your mouth, you know, turn the other cheek, let's apply that verse. But Paul now is gonna take a whole chapter defending himself. So what should you do? Should you defend yourself, or should you not talk at all? Now we learn, when it's just personal and someone's nasty, especially if they're angry and they're upset, it doesn't even pay to defend yourself because they're not gonna listen anyway.

How many know what I'm talking about? Some people are just, they're off. They're crazy, they're in a rage, they're gonna talk about you, say these things. What's the sense of saying anything to say, sorry you feel that way, and you walk away? But notice Paul now is gonna defend himself.

You know why? Because the work of the Lord is at stake. The Christians are at stake. These liars, these criticizers, oh, criticizers.

Depression and criticizers. Does that not ruin most churches? People all depressed, can't sing in the choir, can't do anything, can't work that day, can't get along, why? Because you don't know what I'm going through. Oh my goodness, and here Jesus went to the cross for us.

And then the other thing that just eats us up is our critics. They don't do anything, they just criticize. They watch other people and punch holes in what other people are doing.

These criticizers would come after that and Paul would defend himself and say, church, don't believe that, don't believe that. Remember when I came? And he would make a defense of himself, but in a stately, Christian, constructive manner for the sake of the church. Not for his namesake, but no, no, this is gonna destroy the faith of these people if they believe I was a crook.

I'm gonna have to stand up for what I really did there. But this brings us to the thing that just is never spoken of, but it's just overwhelming as you look at the scriptures. Like, where did they get the guts to do what they did? If you were beaten and put in jail, and then God gets you out of jail, but your back is still sore and it's cut up like hamburger meat, all because you just preached the gospel.

See, Jesus is the litmus test. That's the word that sets everybody going. This is why they were persecuted, the name of Jesus.

Always remember when you talk to people, just don't talk about God, because God could mean anything to them. Could mean Hare Krishna, it could mean anything. You gotta say yes, the God who is the creator and the father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who sent his son into the world to die for the sins of the world.

That's the only true God, and that's the only way to know that God is through his son, Jesus Christ. That's where the firecrackers go off. That's when the dynamite gets lit.

While you're talking about God, you know, I believe in God, I turn my life to God. Yeah, I turn my life to God, too. And then everyone's talking, what God? Who knows what they're talking about? You gotta get to

Jesus.

You know, I've been on TV, radio programs, and as long as you're talking God, they're fine. The minute you say Jesus, you can just tell the camera people, everybody gets, ooh, he said the magic word, he said that, ooh. How many know exactly what I'm talking about? Lift your hand.

It's Jesus, it's Jesus. So here's the question. If you were beat and put in jail, all because you preach Jesus and the good news that you could be saved through faith in Christ, confessing your sins, would you go to the next city and risk that again? I'm asking you an honest question.

Come on, we're all human beings, we have feelings. We know pain, we know tears, we know joy. Would you go to the next city after what just happened to you, where would you get the nerve, the courage to go into a public forum and say, behold, I have a message for you? And the people are listening and you know what's gonna happen.

You know some are gonna get saved. You know some are gonna walk away and you know some are gonna come after you. It just happened.

Where do you get the courage to do that? Think about what we complain about and the way these people lived for Jesus. It's almost like it shames you. It's shameful.

What we complain about and talk about and here were these giants who made the church possible as they proclaimed the message of Christ and here they are, this courage to keep telling people about Jesus. Well, two things I wanna leave with you so we could just pray. Number one, they had to be so convicted and convinced.

They had to be so radically sure about the value of a soul, the assurance that there's a heaven and a hell, the assurance that everyone's gonna live eternally either with God or without God. That had to be so real to them. It had to be more real than the pain on your back.

It had to be more real than the whip. It had to be more real than the jail cell. The people in this place, they gotta hear about Jesus and the last thing he said was go into all the world and invite them to see the story of love.

Share the good news of Jesus. Some will reject you, some will mock you. The media and the elite and the intellectual left and the right and whatever, they're gonna mock you and make fun of you but keep telling them because some are gonna hear and believe and no matter what you go through, it's worth it because your leader endured the cross for the joy that was set before him of knowing that it would bring people into the kingdom.

That had to be so real to them that they were willing to pay any price. I'm not, see, we say it intellectually. Yeah, I believe in that.

Yeah, I know what you say is true. I know those verses but this thing must have so gripped them that they were like, they were just, they were radical. They were just, didn't care, didn't care.

They were not even caring what you did to their bodies and all of that and we get nervous if someone looks at us wrong. Am I wrong or right here? Am I off on a limb or what? We get nervous when people just mock us and say, I don't believe in that, you're nuts and then we're hurt for two days and they're willing to

go to jail. How many believe we need some of that which they had? How many, we need, we need this kind of conviction because that's the only real thing to them.

That was absolutely real. I don't care. You don't like me, I'll talk.

I'm gonna talk. Some might be converted. Yeah, some are gonna walk away.

Some will laugh. Some might come after me but you know what? He said to tell the world, I'm gonna tell the world because oh, the ones that come, life eternal. And lastly, they not only had to have such convictions about these things but goodness, the boldness, the courage.

I was doing a part of a series for Zondervan on the Holy Spirit and they asked me to do some filming down at the park here in Brooklyn near the Brooklyn Bridge there, that nice spot that they have. They brought lights and there was a camera guy and some lights and me and they said, no, we want you to face us with the backdrop being all the skyscrapers of Manhattan with all those lights and we want you to talk about power because without the power, all those lights go out. So that was the connection.

So I was gonna say something about that. Well, the people in the park there, it was a summer night, they saw a cameraman with lights and they thought, oh, he must be a movie star. He must be doing a commercial.

He must be doing something. We gotta go in there. So now they're gathering and more are gathering and more are gathering and they're just testing and seeing how far they need to be from me and I'm standing there and they're all gathering and some of them were looking, ice cream cone and some, they were with their family and all of that.

There had to be like 40 of them there waiting to see when the lights go on now, what's he gonna say? This could be so good. Wonder what he's selling or whatever. They looked at me and saw he's not a movie star, no.

So he'll, whatever, I'll never forget that. I was one sentence in and they just dropped everything and looked at me and started walking. Just one mention of Jesus, one mention.

That hurt me. He asked my wife, I came home. It bothered me for a day.

They didn't beat me. They didn't put me in jail. Judge just walked away but I could feel the, you gotta be kidding me.

We walked over here to hear that stuff. These guys were so bold. Where'd they get that boldness? And Peter was bold and all the other disciples were bold but I'm gonna ask you this question.

Where'd they get it because they didn't have it when Jesus was arrested? When Jesus arrested, were they bold? No, they were not bold. They ran. They hid.

Peter denied him how many times? Three times. The last time he cursed. Said I don't even know who he is.

So I'm asking you, how did they get this supernatural boldness? This is not something anybody can teach. Jesus was with them three years. He never taught them boldness because at the end they all fled.

You can't teach boldness. Nobody can teach you bold. You know, we're having a class, Seven Steps to Boldness.

Forget it, you can't get it that way. I'll tell you how they got it. Listen, here's the last verse then we'll pray.

After the first persecution of the church in Acts chapter three, they arrested Peter and John, threw them in the slammer overnight and then they warned them. Hey, you're in Jerusalem. Remember what happened in Jerusalem a couple weeks ago? We hung your leader on a cross and killed him.

Hey, it can happen to you. No more talking in the name of Jesus. We do not wanna hear that name out of your mouth ever again or else.

When they got done, they left him. They went to a prayer meeting. All the Christians gathered together like we're gonna do right now and then look what happened.

They started to pray and what they said was this. Now Lord, consider their threats. Consider the media.

Consider our government. Godless to the core. Consider the Board of Ed.

Consider everything around us and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus. After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God.

What? Holy. How did they speak it? Holy. I said how did they speak the word of God? Not afraid.

Not afraid, why? Because they were filled with the Spirit and when the Spirit fills you, you get bold. When the Spirit isn't controlling you, you get afraid. You get self-conscious.

You get all into yourself and you're worried about what people might say but when the Spirit of God fills you, you become bold like a lion for God has not given us a spirit of fear but of love and a power and of a sound mind. Let's put our hands together and say amen to that. Everybody, close your eyes.

Join the hands of the person next to you. Begin to pray out loud for the person on your right. Begin to pray right now for the person who's on your right.

All across the balcony, come on. God, make her bold. Make her bold.

Make him bold, God. God fill her with Your Spirit, fill her with Your Spirit. Don't let us be afraid God, don't let us be shy.

Help us to count the cost and march out in Your name Lord. Pray out loud for the person on your left, everybody pray out loud for the person on your left. Fill her God, make her bold, make her strong.

Take away shame, take away self-consciousness. Holy Spirit come and breathe, breathe on us, breathe on us Holy Spirit. Make us bold like lions God, make us bold, make me bold like a lion God.

For we are not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. For it is the power of God is salvation to everyone who believes. Everybody break hands and lift up both your hands and let's pray for ourselves.

Come on everyone just pray, God make us bold, come on say it God make us bold. Make us bold, make us strong. For Jesus sake, in our apartment buildings, on the job, in the school, with our family, with our families God, make us bold.

Lord help us to live worthy of our calling. Help us to live worthy of the name of Jesus. Never being ashamed, but being bold, but being kind, being loving, full of wisdom.

Not jamming anything down people's throats, but yet ever ready to speak a word for You Lord. Not afraid, and if people turn, reject, laugh, mock, give us the courage to keep going on. Keeping sweet, not bitter, take away an edge from any of us God.

For we follow the crucified one, Jesus we love You. We praise You Jesus. You're here with us Jesus.

We feel you walking around among us, and we tell you that we love you. Te amo Senior, we love you Jesus. Thank you for saving us.

Thank you that someone gave us the gospel. Thank you that someone came to that little town in Pennsylvania and told my grandmother and my family about Jesus. And the town reacted and dumped garbage on their lawn, but they kept believing and hanging on to you.

Thank you Jesus. We're going to live for you now. We're going to live for you like never before.

How many say amen? We're going to live. We're going to live and speak for you and love for you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you for being with us today. Dismiss us with your blessing.

Let all the first time visitors enjoy their gift. And let us have a beautiful rest of the day. We pray this in Jesus' name and everyone said, amen.

Everybody stand and begin to hug somebody.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27828.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-cymbala/not-ashamed/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**