

Ashamed of Jesus?

By: Ray Comfort

Ask the average Christian, "Are you ashamed of Jesus?" and he will more than likely adamantly answer, "Of course not. He's my Lord and Savior." This unashamed boldness to proclaim Christ is seen in the abundance of "Real men love Jesus" and other T-shirts that clearly identify the wearer as belonging to Jesus. Every Sunday millions faithfully attend churches that exalt the name of Jesus. There are more "fish" on cars than in the Atlantic Ocean. Gospel music resonates with love for Jesus, and even has the accolades of the secular music industry. Christ-exalting television and radio daily fill the airwaves. Add the fact that millions unabashedly jammed theaters to see a movie about Jesus of Nazareth, and you have to conclude that we as a nation are definitely not at all ashamed of Jesus Christ.

But look carefully at what Jesus told us about being ashamed of Him. He said, "Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). Notice that He said, "Whoever is ashamed of Me *and My words*." No, we don't have a problem with Jesus. It's His *words* we have a problem with.

Paul wrote to Timothy, "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord . . . but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel . . ." (2 Timothy 1:8, emphasis added). It is the testimony of Jesus that *causes* "sufferings for the gospel." The apostle John was banished to the Isle of Patmos "for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:9). Revelation also tells us that it is those who "have the testimony of Jesus Christ" who receive persecution in the last days (Revelation 12:17).

What then does Scripture mean by the "testimony of our Lord"? What did Jesus *testify*? He specifically tells us in John 7:7: "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me *because I testify of it that its works are evil*" (emphasis added). He was hated because He *testified* against the sin of the world, and He preached about the reality of hell more than He did about heaven.

Jesus spoke of those who would be "ashamed" of Him and His words. "Ashamed" means to be "unwilling or restrained because of fear of shame, ridicule, or disapproval." Doesn't that pinpoint the problem? If "fear of shame, ridicule, or disapproval" makes us unwilling to testify of the *words* of Jesus to this lost and sinful world, then we are *ashamed* of Jesus and His words. That means, despite the fish, the music, the T-shirts, the trips to church and the movies, those who fit into the "ashamed" category may end up hearing Jesus denying that He even knew them (Matthew 7:21-23). *He* will be ashamed of them.

But there is hope. Scripture exhorts, "Study to show yourself approved to God, a workman that *needs not to be ashamed* . . ." (2 Timothy 2:15, emphasis added). You and I *need not* be ashamed. In other words, the problem has a solution. We are told to "*study* to show yourself approved to God." *Study* the subject of evangelism to learn how to share your faith. It's as simple as that. Proverbs 16:23 says, "The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips."

A great preacher once said, "It is the great business of every Christian to save souls. People complain that they do not know how to take hold of this matter. Why, the reason is plain enough; *they have never studied it*. They have never taken the proper pains to qualify themselves for the work. *If you do not make it a matter of study*, how you may successfully act in building up the kingdom of Christ, you are acting a very wicked and absurd part as a Christian."

Have you ever looked at Revelation 21:8 and wondered why the "fearful" are aligned with the "unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers [fornicators], and

sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars" and will be cast into the lake of fire? All these are obvious sins. Is being "fearful" therefore a "sin"? The word used in Scripture for "fearful" is the Greek word *deilos*, which is also used in Matthew 8:26 where the disciples became fearful during a storm. Jesus said, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" The "fearful" is a specific reference to those who lack faith in God, and it's used in a negative sense.

God has not given us the spirit of fear, but He has instead given us one of power, love, and a sound mind (see 2 Timothy 1:7). We have been given "power" to witness for Christ. We have "love" to cast out all fear, and we have "a sound mind" in Christ to faithfully testify to the truth of the gospel--that God is holy, that hell is real, and that the cross is the only way of escape.

So let's continue to wear our Christian T-shirts, chew our "Scripture gum," stick on our bumper stickers, fill the airwaves, pack our churches, and support Christian movies. But at the same time let's **diligently study biblical evangelism**, so that we can rid ourselves of the paralyzing fear of man, and faithfully reach out to those who in a heartbeat may be snatched into everlasting hell.