

## I AM NOT ASHAMED

Sermon by Scott Lowther

People ask me why did I take this interim position. Reason is because God told me to. So I don't really need any other reason. But I take it with great fear and trembling. To be quite honest with you it's a heck of a way to come back off of pulpit probation. So here I stand. Another reason is from my heart because I wrestled with some of these issues myself and I grieved over them. I thought of Pastor Gene. I thought of a man who God had stirred his heart all those years ago to plant a church. And I saw the passion the man had for the church and I say God's faithfulness to him over an extended period of time. And how God had moved and how God had blessed and how this place had grown and my heart broke for the things that happened. I thought of the man and I said "there's no way that guy will put his head on his pillow on my watch and let his dream die". I want God's faithfulness to him to be fulfilled so he can pass and say "my God was faithful to all He has promised".

With that said this has been the most spiritual attacks we have ever had and as far as me personally, as far as any church I've seen spiritually - we can't even have a mike that works! It's been unbelievable. But God has been tremendously faithful. I pray that what I share today will be a blessing. I am a nobody. I'm a man who needs grace. I do know the Lord. And I can promise you that I will never step up here unless I'm heard from Him to share something to you. And our goal is to bring you integrity and leadership so that trust is established and if we can provide you with consistent, predictable behavior, we want to earn that from you.

I recognize that you may try to analyze every word and look for any hidden or secret meanings. I don't have any. I have straight up truth that I am going to throw to you. Something very simple yet something very profound. I know that there are people here who are visiting, we are glad that you are here.

I pray that you come and find what you weren't expecting. I pray that you find Him. I pray that you find the pastor of this people that has always been our pastor, the Lord God Almighty. We haven't lost our pastor. Our

pastor is Christ. He's always been our pastor. We haven't lost him. And so why we run around in fear when the pastor who has always been our pastor doesn't have a cell phone that doesn't work, who doesn't have an office that you can't get into, who you can go to anytime you would like to - just shows that maybe we didn't know who it was.

And so I've got a letter to read to you. It's not the one you are expecting. I prayed to the Lord and asked what should I share with these people of yours. God, said "give them a letter". And I go "I don't have one!". God said "I've got a letter for you". And so I said OK. So I went through and I pulled up what the Lord said and I'm going to read to you. You want to hear it? I could share anything you want, or anything I want. But I want to read to you a letter from the Lord. How do I know it's from the Lord? Because it's in red letters. So if you've got a problem with what I am going to share with you, take it up with the guy who wrote it! Because frankly I've got enough things to deal with!

Here's the letter. The words of the Son of God who's eyes are a flame of fire, who's feet are like burnished bronze. Those whom I love I reprove and disapprove in discipline. You'll be sorrowful but your sorrow will turn to joy. For I am the Alpha and the Omega, the one who was and is and is to come. I am the Almighty. Fear not little flock for it's your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Peace, be still. Why are you so afraid? Do not grumble among yourselves. No city or house divided against itself will stand. Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning. And be like men who are waiting for their master to come home so that they may open the door to him once He comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom I find awake when I come. Whoever is not with me is against me and whoever does not gather with me, scatters. The time is fulfilled, the kingdom is at hand - believe in the gospel. If you abide in me and my word abides in you, truly you will be my disciple and you will know the truth and it will set you free. You call me teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.

For I have given you an example that you should do just as I have done. Truly I say to you a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who originally sent him. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. I will give you peace. Not as the world does. So let not your heart be troubled. Neither let them be afraid, believe in me. Satan has asked to sift you as wheat but I have prayed for

you. I pray that you may be one just as I and my Father are one. Do you believe that I am able to do this? Love each other, showing the world that you are my disciples. I still have many things to say to you but you can not bear them now. Why are you afraid oh ye of little faith. Who is it that you have been seeking. I say these things so that you may trust in me and be saved. He who has an ear, let him hear, follow me”.

Now there’s a letter you can get behind. The thing that God pressed on my heart is simply this : Why do you reach for in vain what He has taken away instead of reaching for with great joy what He has willing to give you. You mean another guy? No, himself. God told Abraham, “ I am your exceeding great reward”. God wants to give you, Him. God wants you to be set on Him and focused on Him. And at any church anything good that ever happens because of the pastor there - it’s in spite of him. It is God who does the work. Who brought Israel out of Egypt? Moses? No, the Lord. Who put them in the promised land? Joshua? No, the Lord. Who will continue to lead this church? A man or the Lord? The Lord. The Lord. He will lead his flock and He will not forsake us or abandoned us.

Open your bibles to Romans 1. Do you ever wonder why Paul said in *1 Corinthians 2:2*: “*For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified*”. If you think that through you think is Paul going on these missionary journeys and all he has like two messages? Does he whip out his gospel track and go “ I have the 4 spiritual laws and that’s all I got”! Or is there something more and profound that the gospel is not just for the unbeliever. Is it just to get somebody saved or is it something that insures your salvation? Is it a message that just starts a process or is it the process itself?

If you look at *Romans 1:7*: “*To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints*”. In the versions “to be” - you can scratch it out. That’s not in the original language at all. It’s not in the Greek. Why is it not in the Greek? Because it’s not there. Why did they translate it or put those words in? Because they put words in to try to bring clarity. Sometimes the translator doesn’t get the proper affect that God is after. God is not saying that this is your job description, called to be saint, as if that is something you must achieve. He’s making a declaration of what’s true of His people. Called saints. Not something that you strive for but something that a person who trusts in Christ is. The distinction of the problems that we have is because people think that a walk with God begins with grace and

ends in works. It is grace that you are saved by and God makes the declaration of saint. Not the pope or anybody else.

*Romans: 1:8: First I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world".* He's heard of their deeds. There's evidence. They're not unregenerate, their Christians. Then in *Romans 1:15: "So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you, who are in Rome also".* Why does he want to preach the gospel to people who already are Christians? Funny, isn't it? Paul's whole life was preaching the gospel. It wasn't like we imagined it though. Why did Jesus live 33 years before He died? Does anybody know? Does anybody care? If it was just for Him to die, why didn't He just show up? Huh? We should be thinking people. The gospel is more than just 2 or 3 facts. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. It's talking about the end result of eternal salvation, not the beginning of something that takes place that's left up to you to finish.

So he wants to preach the gospel to the people who are already Christians. You see that? It's very clear. So the distressing tendency among the churches today is to segregate the gospel message to be something that only a non-believer needs. So whatever your need is today - God's answer to you is - the gospel. You're like "I've heard it". I really don't think you have. Because in the ages to come, God will show us scripture "His exceeding abundance towards us in Jesus Christ."

You'll know all about Eschatology when you go be with the Lord. But you will never tap the gospel. You will never scratch the surface of the grace of God revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Paul survived and preached daily on that one thing. We haven't heard it. We haven't even scratched the surface of it. This whole book is it. And there is more. And so as we go forward I want you to have that in your mindset. Whatever your concern is today, your answer is in the gospel.

*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 for 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".*

I want to talk to your today about shame. Are you feeling any lately?

People trying to heap it on you lately? I don't know if you have been. It is a tremendously difficult thing. Shame is what other's cast upon you. Shame is a violation of cultural value. The gospel will always incite shame from those who oppose it. It's not good news to people who hate it. Guilt or being ashamed is a violation of ones internal values. So the world has a value system and that value system of the world is opposed to the gospel. They don't want to hear it. They don't like it. They don't want you to say it to them. They rather you were just molded into their jello mold and be quiet.

Shame comes your way. It's what other's cast upon you. Guilt or feeling ashamed is what you cast upon yourself. Keep those 2 thoughts in mind.

Jesus knew the attack in *Isaiah 50:7*: *"For the Lord God will help Me; therefore I will not be disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed"*. You know one of the fruits of shame when your receive it - doubt. Do you have a lot of doubts? Your doubts come from the fact that you receive shame. It's a fruit that comes from shame. The fact that there has been so many people that are so full of doubt and I am trying to comfort them and say "hey, you're worried about nothing". Do you not understand that the Lord God Almighty reigns and nothing takes Him by surprise.

He is able to do immeasurable more than you can imagine or ask according to the power that works within us by His spirit. Do you not understand that God is in control. Do you think he just thinks "whooo these things are taking me by surprise, what do I do". Seriously. Is that what you think? Or do you think that there is an all-wise, all knowing, all loving, all caring compassionate God who works everything out after the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11), for the good of his people (Romans 1:8), to the glory of Himself (1 Corinthians 10).

Do you not know that? If you don't know that you need the gospel. So anytime someone comes to me and says "I have an issue" I tell them "the answer is the gospel".

The gospel will create shame in those who don't like it. It's the world's only defense system from it is to heap shame upon you. The gospel is contrary to the social values of the world. And the problem that seems to step up all the time is believing and preaching the gospel is what's bringing shame to Paul. He's going around preaching the gospel and people are

shaming him. So in order to not be ashamed there must be shame coming at you. And so he's the one preaching it and shame is coming to him. There's an offense in the gospel by design. Until there's good news and for good news to be good you've got to have bad news. Right? There's no good news if there is no bad news. And so what happens most of the time is the shame or stumbling block or rock of offense in the gospel. People don't get it and they just hear the perk or blessing of the gospel and it doesn't make sense to them. God loves you - I love me too! God has a plan for your life - I have a plan for my life too! This is great! It's not great news if left like that. It fuels the pride and arrogance of a man who assumes he's right with God already. Instead of bringing the reality that that is not the case.

So I want you to see the shame that came to Paul in Paul's life. This is Paul's basic ministry statement. If you want to get into ministry this is what you can expect. "Far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death, 5 times I received at the hands of the Jews 40 lashes minus one; 3 times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; 3 times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day; I was adrift at sea on frequent journeys and danger from rivers, and danger from robbers and danger from my own people; and danger from the gentiles; danger in the city; danger in the wilderness; danger at sea; danger from false brothers and toil and hardship through many a sleepless night in hunger and thirst often without food and cold and in exposure".

This isn't very encouraging, is it. That's the shame that came upon him. *1 Corinthians 4:13: When we are slandered we entreat them, we have become and are still are like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things*".

Listen, Paul's way of dealing with being shamed was not to keep himself in a good light of the people who were shaming him. He never tried to manipulate his way through life by getting people to approve what he did. OK? I'm bringing Christianity to you if you never heard it. Our master has not called us to participate in a culture where everybody speaks well of us. And admires us. That's not what we are suppose to be. It's not what we are suppose to do. Jesus actually said "Beware when all men do speak well of you". So if everybody thinks you are the greatest thing since sliced bread you have not been giving the gospel because the gospel is an offense. It's a stumbling block. And so Paul's way is not to cater his behavior so that he is a people pleaser. Jesus said in John 5: "How can you believe you who receive the praises from men yet refuse to seek the praise that

comes from the one and only God". In other words faith is impossible if you are a man pleaser. It's impossible.

So churches do this all the time. We think that in order to be relevant we have to be like the culture. The gospel is relevant because it is not like the culture. The gospel is relevant because it saves the culture. We are not looking for relevancy - it's not the same as equality in behavior. We're looking for something different. Churches jump into doctrinal errors because they fall into this stupid game. Why do unbelievers want to come to church. They don't want God - they want social clubs. "Meet my felt needs" club, "Anything that appeals to my flesh" club. Don't give me the bible, give me a sermonette. 2 or 3 words then leave me alone. Give me a few donuts and I'm happy to come back.

You know what - that's a goat pen and you don't need a pastor for that - you need a goat herder. What God wants for you are people of the book - they master the book and the book master's them. Who care enough of the culture to live completely, distinctly different, contrary to the culture and are willing to be shamed shoved upon them but not to be ever ashamed of the message.

And that's what Paul is after here. You know we love doctrinal error. We say that we don't. We like the emergent church because cool people are in it. We like the prosperity gospel and though we say "I don't like the prosperity gospel", well listen seriously when something of value is taken from you do you get mad? Then you love the prosperity gospel. Paul said "I don't consider anything I have worth anything. As a matter of fact its just a pile of dung compared to the surpassing greatest of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord". I don't care about things, I care about people. I don't care about stuff, I care about the Lord. Paul desires is to show something different. He doesn't want to have the coolest car, he doesn't want to be texting on the coolest phone, he doesn't want to have the coolest clothes. What Paul is interested in and what you should be interested in is "if I pursue after all those things, like the world does, it just shows the world that I value the same things are they do".

How will a suffering savior be glorified in a materialistic group of followers? And Paul said "I am willing to receive shame from following Him but I will never be ashamed of Him". We receive shame everyday. You may receive it now and may have people mocking you - "Why are

going to that place for?" You may be receiving that. The answer is if God called you here, bloom where you are planted. If God moves you, let Him move you. But bloom where you are planted and see what God will do.

Does this mean anything to you? It's keys I'm shaking. It's just jingly keys, right? This is why the gospel is so unaffected in our society. It's like someone standing on the corner, shaking keys. And we go "you are psychotic- why are you jingling your keys"? It doesn't mean anything until a person in a dungeon hears that. If you know you are in a dungeon that's the sound you want to hear.

But if you pervert the gospel or withhold the gospel because you are caving into shame because you want people to like you - that's why your gospel is just jingling keys. Do you hear me? So God is testing us as a church. Are we going to be a social club or are we going to be followers of the lamb? That's the question. It's a question you'll need to answer on your own.

Jesus way of dealing with shame was this. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith who for the joy that was set before Him adored the cross despising the shame. Jesus was shamed. He was beaten, he was stripped naked, he was crucified, his people left Him, they forsook Him, they abandoned Him. And Jesus response is "Shame, I am not going to cave into you. I'm not going to give you place in my heart. I will not let you control me. I will not listen to you. I will give you no place in my life even unto death. And I will never, ever be ashamed of My Father".

That's a Christian. One who would never be ashamed of the message or of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Shame is a good thing. I pray that you feel it now because we should have felt it all along. We should have felt that reproach from the world - why would you believe such a silly thing. Why would you strip down your life to not pursue everything the world's after? Because I have a treasure that can't be taken. This stuff is all going to burn. My God provides for all my needs according to his riches and glory by Christ Jesus not my wants. And he protects me by not giving me what I want but by giving me what I need. And He loves me too much to let me go down the pipe with the world that's perishing. And He calls me to come out from them and be separate and be distinctive. And live a life that is sacrificially loving so that people look and go "Man, tell me the reason for the hope that you have" "What do you think about these nuclear

clouds?” And I go “doesn’t phase me” “What about that tsunami earthquake” “Jesus said it was coming” “He did?” “Yeah, wars and rumors of wars, it’s the beginning of birth pains but look up for your redemption draws near”. I am not shipwrecking on the last watch of the night and the Lord’s call to you is to not do the same. Don’t look and reach for what He has taken, look and reach for what He is willing to give because it is Himself. Cling to Him. Because Jesus would not be shamed of His Father, he looked forward to the joy that was set before Him and He despised the shame.

I read the comments that people write about Christians now and I despise them. I don’t despise the person - I expect that from the world. But I despise the blasphemy of God. And I look at God and I see His tremendous patience and I see His longsuffering. Not willing that people should perish but should come to repentance. And it’s humbling.

Today we had a funeral. And the funeral was of the most godly man I know. He suffered tremendously. I saw him a week before he died and his only way to speak was to stick a popsicle stick with sponge with a little bit of water and put it on his tongue because he no saliva glands. He couldn’t speak or eat. He was a skeleton but inwardly he was a man of God. He communicated by writing what’s heaven going to be like. And I prayed for him. I asked him what can you learn from a live like that, with 3 or 4 cancers, body wasting away. He anticipated and longed for his time to be with the Lord and he said “I’ve been blessed”. And you think how can he be so blessed when he suffered for so long and this is the point I am trying to get across. The message of a suffering savior is best seen in the suffering of a people who say “to live as Christ and to die is gain”. It’s been pointed to not only believe in Christ but to suffer for him. It’s part of the gospel. You’re like “that’s not very good news”. It is! It’s very good news. Because in this world you will have tribulation but in the mist of that tribulation God will send to you the God that you follow to help you. If you live for mammon it will fail you. If you live for anything it will fail you. But the one who trusts in Him, scripture says, “will never to put to shame”.

So let’s look specifically at the gospel’s that’s on Paul’s mind. Paul says he is not ashamed of the gospel. “For it’s the power of God to salvation”. Not just for conversion. Any religion can give you a conversion. This is the power of God unto salvation. He’s talking about eternal salvation.

He's talking about a destination. He's talking about an ability to be sanctified and changed from what you use to be to what you are. I want you to know a secret. Man can't change themselves. God can change a man. A leopard can't change its spots but God can change a leopard. That's the issue. Self help is helplessness.

The problem is within, not the solution. What you need is outside everything. You need an outside righteousness, you need an outside peace, you need an outside contentment. Because inside there's just this waging war stuff.

And I want you to see what Paul's message says in *Romans 1:16: The gospel is the power of God not to bring about faith in salvation. It's the power of God to salvation for everyone believing*". Every word in scripture is important, every tense of every verb is important. This says "that the person who is believing continually the gospel of salvation" is the gospel of God is the power unto salvation for the person who is continually believing.

So the point is it's not the gospel version to faith the point is the gospel for the believer is a conversion in the salvation through a life of faith. So the tense of the verb "believe" literally is to everyone who is believing and goes on believing. You see that?

So now you see why the answer to your problem is the gospel. Because if it was just the one time thing that you done did then you wouldn't need it anymore. But it is the power of God. Why can't I change - because you are not living the gospel. You're not digesting it, you're not studying it, you're not walking in it. The power of God is found nowhere else. It doesn't just come upon you when you don't believe. It comes upon you on the basis that God covenant to his people to empower them to follow Him. The working in you to willing to do. The gospel is the power of God. Dynamite. Not to blow out a candle but to blow up a building kind of power. Most churches have no power, because they have no gospel. That's what Paul is saying. They don't have enough to blow their nose! There's no power because there is no gospel. Because they give a little bit of Jesus at the beginning and then do a bunch of social stuff. Instead of huge amounts of Jesus overflowing the ministry. The gospel is the power of God. To bring you to heaven. Every step in between. Keep on believing. And you say "Well, right now I'm not really feeling like believing, I feel like I'm falling and I don't know if I am going to make it".

That's the point. You may feel like falling but Jesus isn't falling. You either have a savior or you have a life coach. What do you want? You want somebody to stand on the side and go "come on get with it, get with it". Or do you want someone to say "come get your sorry carcass and carry you?". Jesus is a savior. Not a coach. He's a savior. A great savior. And I don't think we even have a clue what it is.

So let's look at *Romans: 1:17*: "*For (because) in it the righteousness of God is revealed..*" You know why people have problems with God. I'll give you a couple. We believe that God's righteousness and people's goodness are basically the same thing. In the same sense that cold and hot are on a scale of temperature. Right? We think cold is cold and if granny gets cold it's 70 degrees no matter what temperature you get cold at but cold and hot are not opposites there are just in physics a scale of temperature. And human being, in their warped sense of way, they think that God's righteousness and human goodness are the same thing. This is check it out and follow me. This is the problem. This is why people think you can be good and get to heaven. Because in the same way that hot and cold are on a scale of temperature, they believe man's goodness and God's righteousness are the same - an ax murderer is like way down on the bottom scale. If you help a lady across the street, you're a little better. Mother Therese - she's way at the top. And God, well he's like over the top. But it's the same scale. So as long as you hit the Mother Therese mark, there's got to be a point in the scale because it's the same thing, where you would make yourself acceptable to God. Right? The gospel denies that. The gospel says human goodness and God's righteousness are 2 completely different things. They are not even the same species, they are not on the same level, they are not even having the same goal, they don't have the same source, they are not even close to being the same. We're not talking temperature anymore. We are talking distinctively different entities.

Paul said this to Titus in *Titus 3:5*: "*not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy He has saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit*".

*Isaiah 64:6*: "*But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are like filthy rags...*"

The best a human being can do in his quote “goodness, is a dirty rag to God. You say “Oohh, that’s so offensive”. Exactly! The gospel has the offense in it. There’s no unrighteous. There’s no not one. There’s no one who does no good. There’s no one who seeks God. We’ve cover this in the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 chapters of Romans is a hammer condemning every single human being that’s every lived. There’s no one who is righteous before God. God gave His old covenant to the Jews and it was a covenant of obedience. You do this and I’ll be your God. You don’t do this, I’ll shuffle you off into captivity. Right? You do what I tell you. God’s righteousness in the Old Testament is an adjective. Describing His law. The law of the Lord is perfect reviving the soul. God’s word and His law and His commandments are righteous.

Adjective: It describes what they are. The righteous. And so we thought if we do enough of them, am I righteous too? And God said “if you break any of them you are guilty all of them”. And the shame that came upon you from you inner conviction of saying “I cannot keep God’s law”. Anyone who believes that God is holy will despair trying to please Him.

Who can give such a God something that would be acceptable in His sight.

And so Paul is saying in verse 17 that the gospel is different in righteousness than in adjective. In this text it is not an adjective, it is a noun. You should care because it’s not another adjective describing God’s righteous standard that you’ve got to try and meet. This is a noun that is a righteousness that God possesses. Now do you feel the good news? God isn’t saying I am holding up a standard of my righteousness that you’ve got to fulfill. God is saying that the gospel is the righteousness that I possess I’ll give you.

“He who knew no sin became sin” so that in him we might become the righteousness of God in Him. This is a noun. The righteousness that God possesses He gives to His people. Why is this good news?

Because “be perfect as your Father is perfect”. Have any takers in the flesh? “Pursue holiness for that which will see the Lord”. Any takers? “He who violates the law, is guilty of breaking all”. Takers? “There is a holiness without which no man will see the Lord” Takers?

If God came along and said “look, Paul, the gospel that you will receive shame for is another set of do’s and don’ts”. How can that be good news? How can it be good news to somebody who know that I failed at the last time I tried this. How is it good news to you when you say “when will God deliver me from this thing I keep falling into. Have I lost His favor. Am I out of relationship with Him now? Is there no hope for me now? “

The gospel is the righteousness of God himself. It’s put on His people. Therefore you’re sins and lawless deeds are He remembers no more. Therefore you are perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. Therefore every good and perfect gift comes to you on the basis of Christ’s work. But God doesn’t look at you as a sinner. He looks at you as a saint. Get with the program here. Why is Paul writing to the saints in Rome? See we are so prideful we like to boast in our wickedness. Don’t we? “I’m such a lousy sinner”. Well, you are - get over it! But the reality is if you are in Christ, you are a saint. You’re a saint. But I don’t act like one. I don’t know if I can . You are. “You can do all things through Christ who gives you strength” What’s your excuse now? “uh, I just love my flesh”. OK, fess up and move on. Let’s help you with that but don’t continue to wallow in a place where God hasn’t called you to wallow. The gospel is the power of God to save you from start to finish. And if you keep on believing in it - you’re going to make it. And in it the righteousness of God is revealed and given. And that’s why the beginning of it is good news.

If you look at the part where it says “as it is written, the righteous will live by faith”. You know what this says literally? Translators are so funny. Literally it says “the one who is righteous by faith will live”. Do you see that the pressure is not performance again. If you just read it like that, the righteous shall live by faith, so OK if I prove myself righteous I need to start living right. Because I need to prove to God what I am. Right?

And I hear it all the time and I say you don’t understand what the verse says. What it says is “the one who is righteous by faith will live”. So let me tell you what this verse says about the gospel, the part we think we all know so well. I’m not ashamed of it because shame is coming to me but I am not ashamed of the one who gave it. I don’t care how you treat me. I don’t care what you call me. Because it’s the power of God to save you completely if you keep on believing in Him. There’s power in it to change you, there’s power in it to reform you, there’s power in it to manipulate you

and conform you in the image of the one who gave it. And the righteousness that comes from it is the righteousness that God possesses and He puts it on you. So that you no longer are a sinner, but you are a saint as righteous as Jesus Christ. If you can't raise your hand and say "I'm as righteous as Jesus Christ" quite frankly you won't go to heaven. God's standard is perfect. He is too pure to look upon evil. You can present one set of deeds on that day, Jesus Christ or yours. What do you want to show? I'm just telling you. You ain't going to take a mingling of both. Your son started it and look what I did to finish it. Apart from me I never knew you.

The one who says "I cling to Christ alone as my standard, and I receive the righteousness He gave by faith. I believed in Him because you worked in me, willing to do. You held me on that path, you started the work and were faithful to complete it. And I trust in Him and not myself". God says "Well done". And the righteousness that you gave me is sufficient to cover every iniquity. And I rejoice and am glad in you" And God says "welcome home".

Any other excuse will leave you in outer darkness. Here's the reality. As it is written "the one who is righteous by faith in the gospel will live". Do you hear it now? Trusting in the gospel, receiving Christ's righteousness puts you on a different field where it is no longer a job description for you to go out and earn it, it is given. But if you don't understand it, you'll fall back into the flesh of trying to perform it. You will fall back into the condition of saying "I need to show God what I can do. Step back Lord and let me show you what I have done". Any time you get your eye off the prize you will fall.

You need the gospel every day, you need the Lord working in you every day, and let he who thinks he stand take heed lest you also fall. The reality here is this gospel will bring shame to you but you do not have to be ashamed. Do not let the inner convictions be changed by the world's pressure. God gives us conviction, walking. The gospel provides life changing power from glory to glory.

This verse is probably one of my favorites in all the scripture. "both the one who makes one holy and those who are being made holy are of the same family". So Jesus here is not ashamed to call you His brother or sister. The closer our relationship is, the more probability there is to be ashamed.

Right? Any of you guys have any red headed stepchild or like you have cousin Billy from Alabama or something and he comes out and you're like "oh, brother" he's one of those swamp people. And he wants to go with you to your work or something. And you're like "oh, lord, no". He wears pants that are 6 sizes too big and he doesn't wear a shirt, just a coverall thing. And maybe he's put in his teeth, or in his case, tooth. But you feel the shame and the ashamedness because you are a people pleaser. You care more about what people think about you than you do your brother or your relative. That's a John 5 warning.

Jesus knows us. He knows his people. He sees our frailty. He sees our stumbling, he sees the fact that we are helpless and hopeless. But He is not ashamed of us. Satan comes to Jesus as an accuser of the brethren as he flings shame at Him. Do you consider Pastor Jim and all that corruption in his heart (I don't know if he has any). But do you see the enemy slandering and throwing those things forth and Jesus says "I'm not ashamed of any of them". Why is He not ashamed? Because He put His righteousness on His own. And what God has made clean let no man call unclean.

If you are a Christian here today, I don't want to hear you talk about yourself as lousy no good sinners anymore. If God has made you clean, don't insult His sacrifice. God calls you saints, act like it. Talk like it. Just be who you really are. Stop letting the shame of the world mold you to where you are becoming ashamed of God and his people. That is a dangerous, slippery slope you do not want to be on.

*1 Peter 2:6: "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame".* This is literally whoever believes in Him will never be ashamed.

It's a very simple message God gave me to share with you. There's people here and I know that you don't know Jesus Christ. You came to look for a man's sin. God wants to deal with yours. You are not here by accident. I was really blessed by people putting bulletins on the front seats so they could pack the place. I pray that would be in the future because you are excited to see what the Lord will do. But if you are here for any reason I will give you the gospel now. The gospel is simply this: No matter what you've done, you've never met God's standard. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". And you say "I haven't sinned". But you are sinning now by lying. Well the church is full of hypocrites.

Then join us and make one more! Your sin has separated you from God so He cannot hear. He will not hear. Sin is falling short of honoring God in all that you say and do. Sin is failing to glorify God in your thoughts, actions, plans, whatever you call it. The greatest commandment is: To love God with all your heart, soul and mind and strength. The greatest sin is to not to. Can you honestly tell me that everything you have done you have done with the intention of glorifying God? That's what the bible says makes you a sinner. You were also born in sin according to the scripture because Adam was our representative and because of him all have sinned.

And so sin has separated you from God. And the result of that sin is death both physically in this life but spiritually in the end. God will not make any exceptions because to do so would be to blaspheme His Son. So God when we were yet his enemies demonstrated His love towards us in this "And yet while we were yet sinning and sinners, Christ died for us". And that gospel that comes along is not a gospel of saying "I'll give you a new start - show me what you got". It's the righteousness that you never had that you think you did on the scale of goodness in God's righteousness - that somewhere on that scale - God's not even on that scale- that you were dead in sin. Because the righteousness of man is a filthy rag to God. God is too pure. God is too holy. And because of that He sent a redeemer. Not because He had to but because He wanted to.

Because as we trample God's goodness and holiness under foot everyday, God sent forth a savior to glorify Himself and the redemption of His people. And that savior He gave for you. You can present one set of deeds on that day - yours or His. And I plead with you to hear what I am saying to you. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am probably worse than the rest of you. But He is rich in mercy. But He is tremendously just and righteous.

And so maybe you have come to look for some other man's sin would you consider your own. Have you been perfect? Are you as holy as Jesus Christ? If the answer is "no", I fear for your soul. Pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord - you can try it on your own and you will fail. Or you can come to the savior who will forgive you of your sin and give you the righteousness that He has and imputed to you and give it to you. And you can rest from your striving to please Him. It's a question you've got to answer.

