

"I Am Not Ashamed..."

2 Tim. 1:12

Introduction:

- A. Many reasons offered for church's not growing as did in past and should now.
 - 1. Some reasons often cited - probably element of truth in each of them.
 - a. Church and individuals not out getting the gospel to the lost.
 - b. Various factions that have arisen.
 - c. Materialism of our prosperous society.
 - d. Humanism in our society.
 - 2. A big factor may be in how we feel about ourselves as the Lord's church.
 - a. Too often, we seem to be apologetic and uncertain about our faith.
 - b. Too often, we allow criticism and rejection by others to cow us down.
 - c. Too often, we may allow human abuse of Lord's words make us ashamed of those words - this we cannot do. (cf. Mark 8:30)
 - d. Too often, we allow such things rob us of "joy of salvation" (cf. Psalms 51:12,13)
 - e. Too often, we allow opposition to "call our shots".
- B. Three things of Christ of which "I am not ashamed..."

Discussion:

I. I Am Not Ashamed Of The GOSPEL of Christ. (Rom. 1:15,16).

- A. The world has perverted the gospel of Christ. (Gal. 1:7).
 - 1. The gospel according to various denominations and TV evangelists.
 - 2. The "gospel of Christ" suggest these off-brands of gospel to many.
- B. The word of God still calls it "the gospel of Christ".
 - 1. We still need to proclaim it as the gospel of Christ. (1 Cor. 9:16-18).
 - 2. We need not hunt ways to avoid calling it "gospel of Christ" of misuse.

II. I Am Not Ashamed Of The NAME of Christ. (1 Pet. 4:14-16).

- A. The world has perverted the name of Christ. (cf. Matt. 24:5).
 - 1. "Christ" and "Christian" are badly abused.
 - 2. Terrible acts done daily by "Christians(?)" in name of Christianity.
- B. The word of God still calls Lord, "Christ" and followers "Christians" (cf. Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16).
 - 1. Shall we be ashamed to talk about being of Christ because of abuses?
 - 2. Shall we avoid the name "Christian" because of these abuses?

III. I Am Not Ashamed Of The CHURCH(ES) of Christ. (Rom. 16:16).

- A. The world has perverted the church(es) of Christ.
 - 1. It has been denominationalized, institutionalized and factionalized.
 - 2. It has been completely misunderstood and misrepresented by own members.
- B. The word of God still speaks of "churches of Christ" and "church of God".
 - 1. The "God" in "church of God" is Christ -- "HIS blood" (Acts 20:28).
 - 2. Abuse and misunderstanding abandon use than is for gospel or name.
 - 3. Yes church can be referred to in other way, so can gospel and Christians - even just "church" misunderstood by many.
- C. The efforts to conceal identity as "church of Christ" from public a problem.
 - 1. Signs, other advertisement and personal work techniques obvious efforts.
 - a. Do not doubt their sincerity.
 - b. Kind of sympathize with their problem.
 - 2. Such efforts create some serious problems that need to be considered.
 - a. Craftiness and guile. (2 Cor. 4:2).

- b. Honesty (honorable) in sight of all. (Rom. 12:17 cf. "bait & switch")
- c. We may get caught in our own craftiness. (cf. 1 Cor. 3:19).
 - (1) "Independent" or "non-denominational" easily misinterpreted.
 - (a) 26 listing under "Independent" churches in B'ham phone book.
 - (b) 18 listings under "Non-denominational" churches.
 - (2) "Christians meet here" subject to same misunderstandings.

Conclusion:

- A. We do not need to be ashamed of the gospel, name nor church of Christ.
- B. We need to freely identify with each, making sure that we understand and live up to what the terms suggest in the Bible and try to explain their Scriptural meaning to others.