



## Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

### **This is My Gospel: I am Not Ashamed October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

*(2 Timothy: 2:3-14)*

<sup>3</sup> I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. <sup>4</sup> Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. <sup>5</sup> I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. <sup>6</sup> For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup> For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

<sup>8</sup> So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, <sup>9</sup> who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, <sup>10</sup> but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. <sup>11</sup> And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. <sup>12</sup> That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

<sup>13</sup> What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup> Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

1. Who were the people in your life that brought you to hear about Jesus?

I have been very blessed. My parents brought me to be baptized just a short time after my birth. They shared God's Word with me regularly, ensured that I had a Lutheran education all the way from preschool through seminary, and they lived their faith in our home and at church.

2. Paul was in chains for preaching about Jesus. Emperor Nero was rounding up Christians to put them to death. What are the pressures that threaten to silence you in your own context and environment?

Thankfully in America we have laws to protect religious freedom. However biblical Christian beliefs are constantly in the cross hairs of social media. "Don't judge others" has become the new golden rule. So it makes me tentative to talk about my beliefs when I fear they will be deemed intolerant and unloving. We also have social cues about what touchstone topics we don't talk about: religion and politics. By all means, keep your politics to yourself. But we cannot afford to keep Jesus to ourselves.

We also have the fear that if we are enthusiastic about sharing our faith we will be lumped in with the religious "wingnuts" that no one wants on their doorstep: Jehovah's witnesses and Mormon missionaries.

3. Share a time when you saw an opportunity to share your faith and you missed it? What do you think were the causes that kept your mouth shut?

I have thousands. While vicaring in Verona, we were living near multiple members that we knew were not connected to Jesus. We let a whole year go by without ever making an attempt to share our faith with them. That one was fear of the awkward and fear of straining our family relationship. Sometimes it's too busy of a schedule. Sometimes we just plain forget that our main mission in life is to grow in Christ and be his ambassador in our circle of people. Recreation, accomplishments, careers are all secondary to Christ.

4. What are the teachings of God's Word that you might wish you could change or find yourself feeling embarrassed about? For each one, come up with a way to state that teaching in a positive way to show people the blessing and benefits of it. The list could be very long. Here are a few biggies. Salvation by grace? Not by works? That's ridiculous. We have a God who does everything and we don't contribute to our salvation in anyway. Why would we not want to leave it all to him and say "Thank You!" He accomplished it much more perfectly in Jesus than my meager

Close communion: Who likes to tell guests at our worship that they can't come up to communion until we've had a chance to talk about what they believe and we believe. That's often a bomb just waiting to go off for someone. "What do you mean I can't come up to communion? Are you saying I don't believe?" Close communion is not a judgment on someone's faith. It is a beautiful teaching which emphasizes that everyone communing together is one in belief and confession. But you can't be one with someone who hasn't told you what they believe yet.

Homosexuality: The world cries, "Don't make me feel ashamed of who I really am—even if that's homosexual." Some of those thoughts start to rub off on us. Can't we just say its okay for them so we don't have to deal with such a big issue? God's blessing of marriage for the family was instituted while the world was still yet perfect. What a beautiful design it is! Male and Female bring children into the world and love each other in a family. Even by the very nature of reproduction, we see God's design for the family in place.

The roles of Men and Women. This ties together with family. Our American democracy teaches that everyone should be equal and allowed to have all the same roles. God in perfect wisdom on the other hand gave man and woman different roles, still equal, but complementary. Man's roles is to be a servant leader and woman's role is to be a servant helper. These roles benefit and complete each other. But the world hears the word "submit" and thinks the WELS is about holding

woman down under a manly fist. Not the truth at all! This teaching is so beautiful. If a husband was a servant leader to his wife as Christ loved the church, and a woman was a servant helper to her husband just as we all submit to Christ, do you think we would have any problems in our marriages, congregations, or in society? The design is perfect. Sin messes it up.

5. "God has saved us and called us to a holy life... This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus." Put together a sequence for the timing of your salvation which you can confidently say from Scripture.

See Ephesians 1 for more help. God called you to be his own, elected you before the world began in Christ Jesus. (He did not elect some for damnation on the other hand) God's plan to send Jesus to save us was in place from eternity. God created a perfect world. Man sinned. God promised the Savior and sent him in the fullness of time. So he appeared to destroy death and bring life through the gospel. You were born dead in sin because you inherited sin from your parents. You heard this Word taught by the gospel and believed through the work of the Holy Spirit or God created faith in your heart as a baby through baptism. God called you from eternity and brought you to faith in time. Your salvation surely and certainly waits for you through faith in Christ's resurrection.

6. Discuss: **The gospel is the only thing that overcomes our shame about the foolishness of the gospel.**

In what ways can you use the gospel like a bellows to fan your gifts into flame?

When we open up the gospel and see what it has truly done for us, the Holy Spirit leads us to trust in it more and more and makes us bolder in our sharing it with others. Daily meditation, gathering for worship, deeper Bible study, discussing God's word with others, practicing speaking God's word to others, letting God's word show us how to love our neighbors, are all

ways that we use the gospel to blow oxygen into the flame of our faith to make it burst into flame even more.

7. **“This little gospel light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine. Hide it under a bushel? No! I’m gonna let it shine.”** Take a moment to think through your circle of friends, coworkers, and relatives who need Jesus. Decide on two people, and one thing you can do to let your gospel light shine to them the next time you see them.

Many times we miss opportunity because we don’t plan ahead and arrive in the moment flat-footed. Then were not sure what to do, and we’re left thinking instead of doing. Think ahead of how to bring up Jesus in a conversation. Think of something nice you can do which might show unobligated love. Don’t forget to pray about it ahead of time and often. Continual prayer about something keeps us focused on seizing the opportunity when we see it.