

“Which kind of person are you?”

November 18, 2018

2 Timothy 4:9-22

I. Introduction

Today we come to the end of 2nd Timothy—the last recorded words of the Apostle Paul. Often, when we come to the closing comments at the end of a letter, we are tempted to pass by them quickly—it’s just a bunch of names which aren’t particularly significant to us 2000 years after the fact. But since these verses are part of God’s inspired Word, they are more than just a collection of hard to pronounce names, they are important to us. As he was facing his imminent death, people who had influenced Paul’s ministry in one way or another came to his mind. As he passed the torch of ministry on to Timothy, Paul brought the young pastor up to date on the spiritual condition, activities, and whereabouts of certain men and women. Some of them, including Timothy, he hoped would visit him before he died. Others he simply greeted or extended greetings from. Some of them Paul was sending out or had already sent out to strategic places to build up faltering congregations or to establish new churches. Others he mentioned because of the harm they had brought to him and to the ministry of Jesus Christ.

This section wasn’t written as an afterthought; it was an important part of the Spirit-inspired message. The Lord wanted His church to know about these people in Paul’s life and to learn from their faithfulness or their failure. First we see Timothy, the Dependable Son in the Lord.

II. Persons of Interest

A. Timothy: the Dependable Son in the Lord Sometimes we forget that Paul was a normal human being just like everyone else. He had normal needs and feelings. Although the faithful and beloved Luke was with Paul in Rome at the time, the apostle longed to see Timothy with the longing of a father for his son. In [1 Corinthians 4:17](#), Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians, **“For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.”** Timothy was more than just a dependable co-worker; Paul looked on him as his spiritual son. Timothy was Paul’s dependable son in the Lord. Paul longed to see

Timothy—turn to 2 Timothy 1:3-4. Since Paul knew the possibility of seeing Timothy again in this life would soon be gone, he wrote, "Do you best to come to me quickly."

B. Demas: the Deserter Paul then moved from the most faithful to the most unfaithful: Demas, the Deserter. Demas is mentioned three times in Paul's letters. In Philemon 24 he is listed in a group of men whom Paul called his "fellow workers." In Colossians 4:14, Demas is mentioned without any comment at all. And here in 2 Timothy 4:10 he has deserted Paul "because he loved this world."

At the time he wrote 2 Timothy, any friend of Paul, especially a co-worker, risked sharing persecution and prison with him. As the risk increased, Demas's support decreased because he "loved this world" more than he loved the Lord, the Lord's people, or the Lord's work. He may not have been a true believer after all. 1 John 2:15 says, "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Turn to Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23. Demas's heart may have been a rocky place, covered by just enough soil to outwardly accept the seed of the Gospel but not enough to bring full salvation. When the threat of persecution became too fierce, he withered and fell away. Or perhaps his heart was thorn infested and when "the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth" came along, his love of "the present evil age" (Galatians 1:4) choked the Word. Perhaps it was the love of money that enticed Demas back into the world. In the beginning, he may have been caught up emotionally with the idea of a noble cause, which he did his part to serve when the demands were not too great, but when the cause became costly, he was nowhere to be found. It must have broken Paul's heart to see Demas fail so shamefully.

C. Crescens, Titus, and Tychicus: the Faithful Leaders Then there were Crescens and Titus and Tychicus: the faithful leaders. Paul was just a man—he could only be in one place at a time. These three men were trusted co-workers whom Paul was able to send to churches to help them grow and reach out to the unsaved. They were faithful leaders. Then there's ...

D. Luke: the Faithful Companion Paul wrote, "Only Luke is with me." Luke is mentioned by name only three times in the New Testament, of which he is the only Gentile author—he wrote the longest of the four Gospels as well as the Book of Acts. Paul refers to him in Colossians 4:14 as "Our dear friend Luke,

the doctor,” and in [Philemon 24](#) as one of his “fellow workers.” From his writings we know Luke as a capable historian. It is assumed that as a doctor, he must have treated Paul and his other companions as their personal physician. Yet, as a humble servant of the Lord and his fellow workers, Luke carefully kept himself in the background.

Luke had been a longtime companion of Paul, accompanying him for many years and over hundreds, if not thousands of miles. Luke was with Paul during his first imprisonment (and the trip there, including the shipwreck off the shores of Malta). It is probable that Luke enrolled himself as Paul’s slave in order to be allowed to accompany Paul during Paul’s second imprisonment in Rome. Paul probably dictated 2nd Timothy to Luke. Luke was truly the faithful companion.

E. Mark: the Restored Worker Going on, Paul then wrote, “Get Mark and bring him with you.” Mark was very young when the Church began, but he lived at the center of its life. When Peter escaped from prison, it was to the house where many Christians had gathered—the house of Mary, Mark’s mother, that Peter went ([Acts 12:12](#)). When Paul and Barnabas set out on their 1st missionary journey, they took Mark with them—John Mark was his full name—to be their assistant ([Acts 13:5](#)). But [Acts 13:13](#) says, “From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John (Mark) left them to return to Jerusalem.” We aren’t told why Mark left in the middle of the journey, but Paul refused to take him on the 2nd trip and this led to a falling out between Paul and Barnabas—[turn to Acts 15:36-41](#).

What happened to Mark after that we do not know, but by the time of Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome—perhaps 20 years later—Mark had proved himself not only to Barnabas but also to Paul. Writing from that 1st imprisonment Paul wrote in [Colossians 4:10](#), “My fellow-prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)” Mark was the restored worker.

Mark became a faithful and valued leader in the early church and Paul admitted that John Mark was a valuable worker and he wanted Mark with him in Rome: “Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is

helpful to me in my ministry.” Mark is an example that one failure in Christian service doesn’t need to make one’s whole life a failure. Next there was ...

F. Alexander: the Enemy of the Lord Paul devoted almost as many words to “Alexander the metalworker” or “coppersmith” as he did to all the other men combined whom he mentioned in the previous 4 verses. We know nothing more about Alexander. In some way, he resisted Paul’s teachings and apparently brought intentional harm to him. Some think that he may have been an informer who gave info leading to Paul’s arrest. He was an enemy of Paul and of the Lord. Paul may have been angry with him, but, he was faithful to God’s teachings in Romans 12:19, “Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.” Paul left vengeance in the hands of God. But because Alexander was still around, Paul warned Timothy to “be on guard against him.”

G. The Unnamed Faithless Ones Paul then wrote a rather depressing thing, “At my first defence, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me.” These were the unnamed faithless ones. At Paul’s preliminary hearing, no one stood by him or testified on his behalf. It would seem the Onesiphorus, who Paul wrote of in 2 Timothy 1:16 “was not ashamed of my chains” and the faithful Luke must have been elsewhere at the time. Had they been there at the time of Paul’s arraignment, they undoubtedly would have stood by Paul and gladly shared his fate.

To be fair, the price for such a stand could have been high. Because of Paul’s reputation and because Nero, the emperor at the time, was so vehemently anti-Christian, some scholars believe Nero himself may have presided over Paul’s hearing. Only a few years earlier, Nero had set Rome on fire, blaming the unbelievably heartless and evil deed on the Christians. But Nero didn’t stop there, he had had Christians, who were still alive, sewn into skins of freshly killed animals and released into the arena among wild dogs, who tore them to pieces. Others were coated in pitch and set on fire to light Nero’s garden parties. But that would not be an excuse for those whom Jesus called to take up their crosses and follow Him.

Although their actions were indefensible, perhaps some of them only rejected Paul and not Christ. Some may have been weak-hearted and not false-hearted at all. Regardless of the reason, Paul prayed that

their desertion “**May not be held against them.**” Like Stephen in [Acts 7:60](#) and the Lord in [Luke 23:24](#), Paul had a forgiving spirit.

H. Christ: the Faithful Lord His friends may have deserted him, but Paul wrote that “**The Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.**” Paul not only had the strength to stand before the court, with the strength of the Lord, he was able to preach the Gospel message to those gathered there. Jesus Christ was the faithful Lord.

Paul knew that Christ was the Faithful Lord—Jesus said in [Matthew 28:20](#), “**Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**” Turn to [Acts 26:15-18](#). Throughout his ministry Paul had faced death, and at least once he was left for dead ([Acts 14:19](#)). “**Whatever I face,**” he wrote, “**the Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.**”

Paul knew that his death was near but for him, as for every believer, “**to live is Christ, and to die is gain**” ([Philippians 1:21](#)). As he wrote in [2 Corinthians 5:8](#), he preferred “**to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.**” Although Paul would not give up the battle until the Lord took him home, his loneliness, pain, imprisonment, and desertion made the prospect of heaven all the more appealing.

For that and for everything the Lord had done, was doing and was yet to do, Paul wrote, “**To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.**”

I. Final greetings Finally, there came greetings sent and given, There was a greeting to Priscilla and Aquila, that husband and wife team whose home was a church wherever they lived and who at some time risked their lives for Paul’s sake ([Romans 16:3-4](#)). There was Onesiphorus who had sought out Paul in prison ([2 Timothy 1:16](#)) and who, it may be, had paid for his loyalty with his life. There was Erastus whom Paul had sent as his representative to Macedonia ([Acts 19:22](#)) and Trophimus who had accompanied Paul from Greece to Troas ([Acts 20:1-6](#)).

Before he gave greetings on behalf of fellow believers who now ministered with him and to him in Rome, Paul one more time told Timothy to “**do your best to get here before winter.**” And then Paul finished with a benediction: “**The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.**”

III. Conclusion

Hebrews 11 is often called the Faith chapter—in it are a plethora of examples of men and women from the Old Testament who lived by faith in God and His Word. The first verse in chapter 12 goes like this: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses or examples, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” Today’s Scripture continues the list of examples—some good, some bad. Every Christian—really every person—needs to look at his or her life—his or her heart. Since God is going to have the final say, what does God say about your heart and life? Remember, Jesus said in [Luke 11:23](#), “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters.” Later in [Luke 16:13](#) Jesus said, “No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.” Don’t be like Alexander and serve the wrong master.

Who is your master? You may say that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, but what do your actions say? Are you like Demas or the unfaithful ones that deserted Paul? When there’s nothing better or there’s no pressure to do otherwise, you serve God—you do “godly” things, but if something better comes along or the pressure to be part of the “group” increases, you put God on hold or mute. If you find the attractions of the world, the accolades of friends and family more important, more inviting than walking as God would have you walk, you may be a Demas in disguise. You are just pretending to be a Christian and you’re just fooling yourself—you’re not fooling God. It’s not too late to really make Jesus your Lord and Savior.

Perhaps you’ve been like Mark—you have made Jesus your Lord and Savior but you have drifted from walking as He would have you walk. It’s not too late to become the child of God you should be—the Christian you want to be. [1 John 1:9](#) says that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” Jesus is faithful, He will forgive you—if you really mean it. And if you let Him, He will restore you into a faithful worker for Him.

If you are a faithful worker, Paul warned in [1 Corinthians 10:12](#), “If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” Later, in [1 Corinthians 16:13](#) he wrote, “Be on your guard; stand firm in the

faith; be men/women of courage; be strong.” You can’t live the Christian life on autopilot, you have to stay alert watching for attacks from the devil—sometimes he comes as a roaring lion, sometimes he pretends to be an angel of light. Watch out—**WHICH KIND OF PERSON ARE YOU?**