

THE FINAL FAREWELL OF PAUL TO THE WORLD 2 TIMOTHY 04:09–22

Introduction

Since Second Timothy is Paul's last writing (so far as we know), this is his final message to the outside world.

- I. A personal message — needing help (vv. 9-18).
- II. A personal greeting — showing personal interest (vv. 19-22).

I. 2 Timothy 04:09–18 Ministering — Paul

There are times when every believer needs help. Even the apostle Paul faced such times — times when he desperately needed the help of other believers. His present situation was one of those times. He was in prison waiting to face his final trial on the charges of being an insurrectionist and trouble-maker for Rome. He was to appear before the emperor Nero, and he was expecting to be executed. Whatever weight and pressure hangs over a man's head — whatever needs are created by being imprisoned and facing execution — all this and much more pressed ever so heavily upon Paul. The present passage gives a glimpse into the heart of Paul as he faced such a terrible trial. It shows what kind of help he needed and how his needs were to be met. The lesson for us to note is this: there are times when we all need help. When those times come, we should not hesitate to ask for help, nor should we hesitate to reach out and help a person who cries for our help.

1. There are some special times when believers need help. Note that Paul asks Timothy to do everything he can to come and visit him. Paul needed Timothy's presence and encouragement in his final hours. Of all the people on earth, Timothy was the dearest to Paul's heart. Facing his final days upon earth, Paul needed and wanted the company of his dear friend. However, there were some very specific reasons why Paul needed Timothy. Only one person was still with Paul — that person was Luke. Looking at why everyone had left Paul gives us a picture into what it is that creates some of the needs in our lives as believers.
 - a. Help is needed when a loved one has deserted us (v. 10). Note the name Demas. Demas had been a faithful believer and a fellow worker to Paul (Phile. 24). He had even been in Rome with Paul for some time. Imagine! He had even served with Paul in some of Paul's most trying moments — while Paul was a prisoner in Rome. What happened? He began to *love this world*. What does this mean?
=> Does it mean that he began to love the life of this world more than the promise of life in heaven? That he began to fear that he might be persecuted because he, too, professed Christ? That he might be arrested and imprisoned because of his association with Paul?
-

=> Does it mean that he began to love the pleasures and comfort, possessions and things of this world more than the sacrifice demanded by Christ?

Herbert Lockyer gives an excellent picture of what could have happened to Demas:

“Under the strong influence of Paul’s personality, Demas was [converted]... Becoming a disciple, he was carried away by the enthusiasm of sacrifice. He wanted to live with Paul and die with him, and have a throne and a halo among the martyred saints.

“But when Demas came up to the great capital of the then known world in company with the Lord’s prisoners, Paul and Epaphras, it was a different story. He was not a prisoner, and gradually the contrast between the cell and the outer world became intolerable to him. He saw the magnificent halls of the Caesars, the gorgeous homes of the rich and the glitter of a world of music, venal loves, jest and wine. Such a gay world cast its glamour over Demas, and he yielded to its charms. The prison where his friends were languishing seemed wretched alongside the music-haunted, scented, dazzling halls of Rome. Thus Paul had to write one of the most heartbreaking lines in his letters:

“‘Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.’ This man of wavering impulse who surrendered the passion of sacrifice and sank in the swirling waters of the world, is a true reflection of the thought that where our love is, there we finally are” (All the Men of the Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1958, p. 91f).

The point is this: when Demas forsook Paul, it cut Paul to the core. It left a vacuum in his heart, and that emptiness needed to be filled by someone else. Paul was facing the darkest hour of his life; therefore, some other believer needed to step in and be a companion to Paul. Paul needed Timothy.

- b. Help is needed when loved ones have to move on to their own ministries and we are left alone. Note that both Crescens and Titus had been with Paul, but they had to return to their own ministries. Nothing else is known about Crescens. This is the only reference to him in the Bible. However, tradition does say that he was one of the seventy sent forth to minister by Christ and that he became the bishop of Chalcedon (Herbert Lockyer. *All the Men of the Bible*, p. 86).

Titus was a constant companion of Paul during the last fifteen years or more of Paul’s life, (see Introduction, Titus). He had been sent by Paul to Dalmatia or what was once known as Yugoslavia or Serbia.

The absence of these two dear servants left a deep sense of loneliness in Paul. They needed to return to their own ministries, for the churches and God’s dear people needed their ministry. But their departure left an emptiness within Paul’s heart. He needed companionship, the encouragement of believers as he faced death.

- c. Help is needed when we have a ministry to carry on for the Lord. Note that only Luke was left with Paul. And note that Paul tells Timothy to bring Mark with him. Why? Because Paul needs him to help with the ministry which Paul was carrying on in prison. This is significant, for it tells us that Paul ministered wherever he was, even when he was in prison. His faithfulness is a dynamic example to us. We should minister wherever we are, no matter the circumstances.

The point is this: when we faithfully minister, we need help. We cannot do the work of the ministry alone. We must seek and ask for the help of other believers. (See *Luke*, Col. 4:14; *Mark*, Col. 4:10.)

- d. Help is needed when a fellow-labourer has to be sent to his own ministry. Note that Paul was the one who sent Tychicus to minister in Ephesus (see *Tychicus*, Eph. 6:21-22). When he sent him, it meant that only Luke would remain with Paul. What courage! What a focus upon Christ and the ministry! Imagine facing death and being so focused upon the ministry that you begin to send all your companions off to take care of the needs of others. That was the heart and focus of Paul. Yet he himself had need as he faced death — the need for the companionship of believers.
- e. Help is needed when personal items are lacking. Paul needed three things. The prison dungeon was no doubt dark and cold and damp, and Paul needed more clothing (cp. v. 21). He also needed “my scrolls especially the parchments.” William Barclay suggests that the scrolls were the gospels (*Biblia*), and the parchments either his legal documents, perhaps proving his Roman citizenship, or else the Hebrew Scriptures. He leans toward the parchments being the Hebrew Scriptures because the Hebrews had written their sacred Scriptures on parchment made from animal skins. As he says, “It was the word of Jesus and the word of God that Paul wanted most of all when he lay in prison awaiting death” (*The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p. 252).

Thought 1. The point is this: we all have practical needs, needs that we sometimes cannot provide for ourselves due to illness, poverty, age, lack of access, lack of know-how or a host of other reasons. As believers, we need to ask for the help of other believers; and as believers, we need to help when others have need.

- f. Help is needed when others actively oppose and do evil and cause trouble for us. In looking at Alexander the metalworker, Barclay’s comments are suggestive.

“We do not know what Alexander had done; but perhaps we can deduce what harm he did. The word that Paul uses for did me much evil is the Greek verb endeiknumi. That verb literally means to display; and it was in fact often used for the laying of information against a man. Informers were one of the great curses of Rome at this time. They sought to curry favour for themselves and to receive rewards by laying information. And it may well be that Alexander was a renegade Christian, who went to the magistrates with false and slanderous information

against Paul. It may be that Alexander turned against Paul and sought to ruin him in the most dishonourable way “ (The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, p. 252).

How many believers turn against other believers? Begin to criticize, gossip, murmur, grumble and oppose others? — all to gain their own way? How many seek the favour of others by tearing someone else down? Paul needed the help of some courageous believer who would stand with him. He needed someone who would stand by his side and stand against the evil and false charges of Alexander.

- g. Help is needed when we are forsaken by all others. Remember: Paul was facing a capital charge, the charge of being a trouble-maker or insurrectionist against Rome. He was appearing before Nero, the Emperor himself, which was the *Supreme Court of Rome*. Two trials were necessary: the preliminary trial or examination where the charges were laid out and briefly examined, and then the trial itself where the defendant was either found guilty or not guilty.

Paul had already faced the preliminary trial, and it is this trial to which he refers. Unbelievably and tragically, the very same thing that had happened to Christ happened to Paul. Not a single person — not one believer and not one friend — attended court with Paul. No one stood with Paul.

When a believer faces such a terrible trial, he needs help. He needs courageous believers standing with him. What an indictment! What a challenge for us to be courageous and faithful to each other in the dark hours of trial and need!

2. There is the experience of God helping the believer. Even when others do not help us, God will be with us. No greater declaration could be made: “But the Lord stood at my side.” Men may not stand with us, but the Lord will. He will never desert us no matter how grave and threatening the situation may be. He will stand right by our side. But note a critical fact: we must be faithful. Christ will stand with us just as we stand with Him. Paul declares that Christ was with him because he was not ashamed of Christ. He continued to preach Christ and His mission of eternal life for all men, even to the Roman Supreme Court, to Nero himself. The result: Paul “was delivered from the lion’s mouth” (Nero and the devil).
3. There is the assurance of God’s eternal deliverance — of being rescued from death and transported into the Lord’s heavenly kingdom. Humanly, the situation seemed bleak for Paul. He was not guilty, yet he was being condemned to death on false charges because the civil and state religious leaders were set on stamping out Christ and His church. Paul was doomed to death in the eyes of the world. But note the glorious truth: not in the eyes of Paul. In the eyes of Paul, he was going to his *coronation*. The Lord Jesus Christ was going to preserve him and transport him into the kingdom of God, the kingdom that is gloriously perfected and that lasts forever. Paul has only one final statement about the matter: “To him [Christ] be glory forever and ever.”

Mat 28:20 *“And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

2 Cor 1:10 *He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us.*

Heb 2:14-15 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

Heb 13:5-6 *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”*

2 Pet 2:9 *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

Exo 33:14 *The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”*

Psa 28:7 *The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.*

Psa 40:17 *Yet I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; O my God, do not delay.*

Isa 41:10 *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Isa 43:2 *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.*

Isa 46:4 *Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.*

Jer 1:8 *“Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord.*

2 TIMOTHY 04: 18
DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH: ETERNAL LIFE

“The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

2 Timothy 04:18

The phrase “will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom” is a picture of God transporting Paul right through this world into the next world. It is the picture of time — of unbroken time. God preserves Paul right through time into eternity. In one moment of time, Paul is living in this world, conscious and aware; but within the same moment — in a split second — he is transported into God’s heavenly kingdom. That one moment of time happens quicker than the blinking of an eye (11/100 of a second). Just imagine! There is no loss of consciousness, no experience or awareness of death. One moment Paul is a citizen of this world, and within the same split moment he stands before the Lord as a citizen of His kingdom (2 Cor. 5:6-8). It is the beautiful picture of the believer never having to taste death. (See Col. 3:1-4; Heb. 2:9; cp. 2 Cor. 5:5-8.) □

II. 2 Timothy 04:19–22 Paul — Believers, Hall of Fame

Believers need to always show personal interest in each other. This is a lesson that can be learned from the closings of Paul’s letters to the churches. He always sent greetings from believers who were with him as well as greeting believers in the churches to which he was writing. Remember these were the very last words that Paul ever wrote.

1. Paul greeted other believers. There was no sense of competitiveness or jealousy whatsoever in him. He loved and cared for all.

⇒ Prisca and Aquila (see *Prisca and Aquila*, Acts 18:2).

⇒ Onesiphorous (see 2 Tim. 1: 16-18).

2. Paul supplied information about others. He was concerned for those who longed for information about other ministers. Again, note how he lifts others up, sharing whatever he can about other dear believers.

⇒ Erastus (see Rom. 16:23).

⇒ Trophimus (see Acts 20:4-6).

3. Paul requested help for himself. He needed Timothy’s presence and encouragement (see note, 2 Tim. 4:9-18).

4. Paul passed on the greetings of others. Who were these? Paul had just said that Luke alone was with him. They were probably believers who lived in Rome and who occasionally visited Paul, but who did not visit him too often nor really minister to his needs.

⇒ Eubulus and Pudens and Claudia: this is the only mention of these in the New Testament. However, they and Timothy must have known each other for them to be sending greetings to Timothy.

⇒ Linus: this, too, is the only mention of him in the New Testament. However, early Christian writers say that he was the first bishop of Rome and that he served as bishop for about twelve years (Herbert Lockyer. *All the Men of the Bible*, p. 218).

5. Paul gave the benediction of Christ and of grace. These are the last words ever written by God's dear servant, the servant who loved the Lord and people so much, yet who suffered so much at the hands of people. He loved everyone and he loved everyone deeply. All he wanted for men was two simple but glorious things:

=> that the Lord Jesus Christ, God's own dear Son, might be with their spirit.

=> that the grace of God — His favour and blessings — be with all.

Acts 15:11 "No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

Rom 3:24 And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Eph 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

Eph 2:7-9 In order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.

Phil 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Titus 3:7 So that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. ■