

THE MESSENGER'S COMPANIONS

ROMANS 16:21–23

Introduction

It is important for every minister and believer to have close associates who know and are faithful to the Lord. The strength of the associates greatly affects the witness of the minister. This passage gives a glimpse into the lives of a few of Paul's associates.

- I. Timothy: a right-hand man, a fellow worker (v. 21).
- II. Lucius, Jason, Sosipater: relatives who were believers (v. 21).
- III. Tertius: a humble helper (v. 22).
- IV. Gaius: a man of hospitality (v. 23).
- V. Erastus: a civil servant, the city director of public works (v. 23).
- VI. Quartus: a Christian brother (v. 23).

I. Romans 16:21 Timothy, Paul's Right Hand Man

Paul calls Timothy his right hand man, his fellow worker. There is a great deal of information on Timothy throughout the New Testament. There are even two letters which bear his name included in the New Testament. The letters were written to Timothy by Paul himself (1 and 2 Timothy. Also see *Timothy*, Acts 16:1-3; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:18.) Note two facts mentioned about Timothy, facts which should speak to our hearts.

1. His name, Timothy, means *one who honours God*. Both his mother and grandmother were faithful believers who reared Timothy in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). Apparently when Timothy was born, his mother had dedicated him to the Lord after the pattern of the Old Testament believers. She gave him his name knowing perfectly well what it meant. Her hope and prayer was that Christ would take her child and use him to *bring honour* to God's name.

Thought 1. What a dynamic example for parents! We should all commit our children to Christ, rearing them in the Scriptures and constantly praying for Christ to use them to bring honour to God's name.

1 Tim 1:5 *The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

1 Tim 3:15 *If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.*

Deu 6:7 *Impress them [God's word] on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

Prov 22:6 *Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.*

2. Timothy is called Paul's *fellow worker*. Paul places Timothy on an equal par with himself. Paul sees Timothy's call and ministry as being as important as his own. This says several significant things.
 - a. Timothy's mind — his thoughts, imaginations, concepts, ideas, purposes, plans, concerns — was consumed with the very same things as Paul's mind: Christ and His mission and the reaching and caring for people.

Phil 2:20 *I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.*

2 Cor 10:5 *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

Phil 4:8-9 *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

- b. Timothy was faithful in ministering right along with other ministers of the gospel, doing exactly what God had called him to do. Note that he was second to Paul, that is, Paul's assistant. However, this did not bother Timothy, for Timothy knew something: it was God, not man, who had called him to be second and to serve as the assistant. Therefore, he was *faithful*, always serving his Lord and helping the chief minister.

1 Cor 4:17 *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.*

Phil 1:1 *Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:*

Phil 2:22-23 *But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me.*

Heb 13:23 *I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you.*

1 Cor 15:58 *Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

ACTS 16:01–03 TIMOTHY, DISCIPLESHIP

Timothy was just a child when Paul visited Lystra on his first mission (about five or six years before). He was probably somewhere around ten to twelve years old. He was still a young man when Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:12). All

this means Timothy was somewhere around eighteen years old when Paul met him on his second mission to Lystra.

It is also possible that Paul led Timothy to the Lord on his first mission tour, but it is more probable that Timothy's mother and grandmother led him to the Lord.

The present passage seems to read as though Paul did not know or remember Timothy from his first mission. In either case, his spiritual maturity at this point was strong enough for Paul to challenge him to join his mission corps. The facts of his life seem to be as follows.

Timothy's father was a Greek and an unbeliever, but his mother was a Jew and a believer. Her name was Eunice and his grandmother's name was Lois (2 Tim. 1:5). Timothy was not circumcised; hence it would seem that he was educated in Greek ways and customs (Acts 16:3). When Paul met Timothy, Timothy was already a Christian believer with a strong testimony, so strong in fact that Paul arranged for him to become his missionary partner (Acts 16:1f). Timothy's maturity and importance are seen by the word "he" of verse one being changed very rapidly to "they" of verse four. Timothy became a son to Paul (1 Cor. 4:17). He was esteemed so highly and loved so deeply by Paul that Paul said he was the one man whose mind was at one with his own (Phil. 2:19). He was probably chosen by Paul to become Paul's successor (see Phil. 1:1). From this point on, he was seen either ministering with Paul or else being sent out by Paul to minister to certain churches. He was with Paul in Paul's first imprisonment (Col. 1:1; Phile. 1). Apparently, Paul was released from prison and Timothy began to travel with him again (see *1 Timothy*, Introduction, Date). On this journey Paul left him in Ephesus to correct some errors that had arisen, while Paul himself travelled on into Macedonia to visit the churches there. Soon thereafter Paul was arrested and imprisoned in Rome a second time. As soon as possible Timothy joined him (2 Tim. 4:11, 21), but this time Timothy was imprisoned also. However, Timothy was later released (Heb. 13:23), while Paul was either beheaded or released and began a mission tour into Spain. (See *Timothy*, Phil. 2:22-24.) □

II. *Romans 16:21 Lucius, Jason and Sosipater*

These men were apparently relatives of Paul. It should be noted, however, that the word "relatives" is thought by some to mean fellow countrymen. This is unlikely, for Paul often mentions others who are fellow Jews and he does not refer to them as relatives. Apparently, Paul had a family tree just like most of us have: branches that just keep on running out from our aunts and uncles and their children who are our cousins. Just who these men were we cannot be sure, but note what is said in this passage.

1. They were relatives of Paul who had trusted Christ as their Saviour and surrendered to His Lordship. Who was converted first, Paul or his three relatives? We do not know; but this much is known. Genuine believers pray, and they diligently pray for

relatives, believing that it is their responsibility to reach their own families first. For this reason. Paul's family saw quite a few of its members give their lives to Christ (cp. Rom. 16:7).

Mat 5:16 *"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*

Mat 9:6-7 *"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home." And the man got up and went home.*

Luke 8:39 *"Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.*

John 1:41 *The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).*

John 4:53 *Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and all his household believed.*

Acts 16:15 *When she and the members of her household were baptised, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.*

Acts 16:30-31 *He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household."*

1 Tim 5:4 *But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.*

2. They were serving the Lord with Paul. Any person serving with Paul was bound to be committed to Christ and to be fully committed, for if any man has ever been committed to Christ, it was Paul. Without question, these three men had given all they were and had to the Lord. They were bound to be gripped with the needs of masses suffering under the weight of starvation, disease, poverty, sin and death, and with the urgent need to get the gospel of salvation to them. The very fact that they were serving with Paul tells us that this was the heartbeat of their lives.

Luke 9:23 *Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*

Mat 20:28 *"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

John 20:21 *Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."*

III. *Romans 16:22 Tertius, A Humble Helper*

This believer was a humble helper. Note two significant facts about Tertius.

1. He helped Paul in a most significant but humble way. Apparently he was not a preacher, but he served as the personal secretary to Paul, writing this letter to the Romans for Paul.

Thought 1. The need for dedicated people who are gifted in handling details is desperately needed in the service of Christ! Very little if anything can be done effectively without what may be called the *Service Ministries*. May God stir and arouse men and women to give their lives as Tertius did: to reach out in the *service ministries* of the Lord.

2. He personally knew the Lord and was bold in proclaiming his testimony. Glance at the verse again: “I Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you *in the Lord*” (v. 22). Paul does not send the greeting for Tertius; Tertius takes it upon himself to send his own greeting. He is a fellow believer with the Roman Christians, and he wants to greet them in the name of Christ, proclaiming his own faith and his own ministry in the Lord. Men of the world may consider him and his work as secretary of little importance. But he does not: his faith and ministry are the most important things in the world to him. Therefore, he proclaims that he too is “in the Lord” and that he is the secretary who wrote the letter for Paul.

Thought 1. Just imagine how few letters, books, articles and papers would be written for Christ without the dear saintly servants who labour ever so diligently as the secretaries for God's ministers. Think about all the *service ministries* and how much would never get done without the commitment of God's *detail servants*.

Luke 22:26 “But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.”

Rom 12:3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Rom 12:10-11 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.

Phil 2:5-7 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Thought 2. Something we must always remember and proclaim: no work and no service done for God is small. Men may rank work and labour, but God does not. God ranks and judges only faithfulness.

Luke 16:10 “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.”

Luke 19:17 “‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’”

IV. Romans 16:23 Gaius, A Man of Hospitality

This believer was a man of unusual hospitality. Apparently, Gaius was a wealthy man with a home large enough to entertain the whole church and to house God’s servants over a long period of time. The point to note is this: he was faithful in using his money, wealth and estate for the Lord.

Mat 6:19-20 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”

Rom 12:13 Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

1 Tim 6:17-19 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Titus 1:8 Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.

Heb 13:2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

1 Pet 4:9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

V. Romans 16:23 Erastus, A Civil Servant

This believer was a civil servant, the city director of public works for the great city of Corinth. This tells us that he was...

- a man highly respected both among believers and the world.
- a man of extreme responsibility who could be greatly trusted to look after his responsibility.
- a man of courage who stood up for his convictions and did not let political office nor friends and associates in high places keep him from confessing Christ.

It is interesting to note that Erastus was apparently called to preach the gospel, and eventually he resigned or was removed from political office. He is seen on a mission tour

with Timothy (Acts 19:22) and is mentioned as still being faithful in the latter months of Paul's life (2 Tim. 4:20).

Mat 10:32-33 *“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”*

Luke 12:8 *“I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God.”*

1 John 2:15-16 *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.*

VI. Romans 16:23 Quartus, A Brother

This believer is very simply called “our brother.” This is significant, for it means...

- that he had made a genuine commitment to Christ and that he was serving mankind as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- That he had a brotherly heart and love, helping and standing with other believers as a brother in the Lord.

John 13:34-35 *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

John 15:12 *My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.*

Rom 12:9 *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.*

1 Pet 1:22 *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. ■*