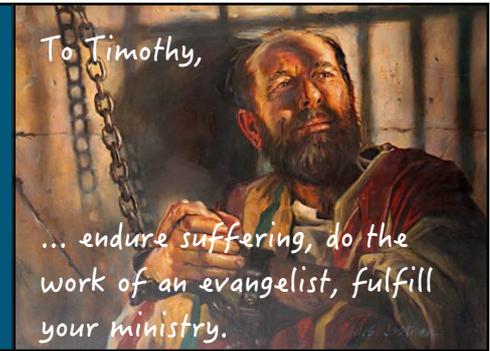


2 Timothy

Fulfill Your Ministry

Lesson 12



In our last lesson we saw that Paul believed his time on earth was drawing toward a close as he sat in prison awaiting execution. He did not write with an attitude of fear or anger, but with faith and the hopeful expectation of his future reward. In the remaining verses Paul will close this letter with some personal requests and observations.

Meeting Needs 4:9-13, 21

In the closing verses of this letter, Paul requests that Timothy come to him in Rome. It is common and usual for one expecting to die to desire the companionship of his family and closest friends. We know nothing of Paul's family, but we do know that few if any people are more dear to him than Timothy, his son in the faith.

We see concern in Paul's writing in verse 9 as he requests Timothy to come as quickly as possible and in verse 21 when he says, "*come before winter.*" Travel across the Mediterranean Sea stopped in the winter months in the first century so Paul knew that if Timothy could not begin his journey soon after receiving this letter, he might be delayed until Spring.

Rome was located just over 2,000 kilometers from Ephesus, so the letter from Paul to Timothy would have taken many weeks to arrive. Timothy had to perform the tasks that Paul requests of him prior to his journey to Rome. We can expect the whole process would have taken several months.

Physical Needs

The humanness of Paul is seen in these verses as he asks for physical needs to be met. Paul's requests are simple, not extravagant, and practical not frivolous. Paul had sacrificially lived a life of poverty in the service of Christ.

Paul requests that Timothy bring him his cloak. This would have been a large, thick overcoat, usually made of wool, but sometimes leather. This garment was often used at night as a blanket. One can easily imagine an aging Paul in a cold Roman dungeon greatly appreciating the warmth of his cloak on the approaching cold winter nights.



We don't know why Paul left his only cloak in Troas with Carpus, but Scripture describes how he left other locations hurriedly while in danger, so it is possible he had been forced to leave his cloak behind during a quick exit.

If Paul had been forewarned of his arrest he may have entrusted his cloak and other belongings to Carpus to protect them from theft. It is also possible that Paul left his cloak during the warm summer months, intending to return, but his arrest made that impossible.

1. What does Paul saw about his previous experience with cold weather? (2 Cor. 11:24-27)

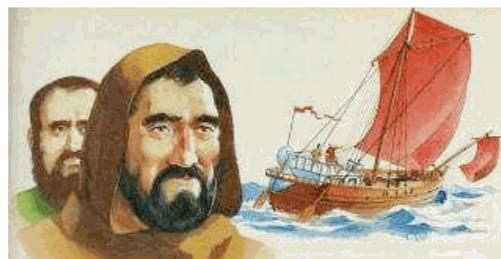
The faithful apostle Paul was not exempt from physical needs, nor was he able to avoid the problems that arise in life. God did not miraculously clothe him or keep him free from the effects of the elements. God did provide Paul with a mind to remember his cloak and friends who could retrieve it.

2. What is providence and how does it differ from a miracle?

Companionship Needs

God created people with the desire and need to love and be in contact with other people. It seems fair to say that Paul must have battled loneliness in prison. For this reason in verse 9 he writes to Timothy, *"do your best to come to me soon."* He wants Timothy there "soon" because he knows his time is short and because he desires the fellowship Timothy can provide.

We cannot be certain whether or not Timothy was able to get to his beloved mentor and fulfill his requests. It would require traveling over 2,000 km. It required he prepare the church in Ephesus for his departure. It required the location of Mark. It required travel to Troas to locate Carpus and to retrieve Paul's cloak, books, and parchments.



3. What are some ways in which helping other Christians can be inconvenient or even costly?

4. Was it a sign of weakness that Paul needed other people? Explain your answer.

5. Why do people need companionship and what consequences may come without companions? (Also see Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

Not only does Paul want Timothy's company, but he wants Mark as well. Paul says that Mark is "very useful to me for ministry." It is unknown how Mark would be useful because the word "ministry" can mean service of any kind.

It has been speculated that Timothy and Mark did make it to Rome before Paul's execution. 1 Peter is written from Rome after 2 Timothy and Mark was with Peter (1 Pet 5:13). Mark probably stayed in Rome following Paul's martyrdom.

6. What problem had Paul faced with Mark some twenty years before (Acts 13:13; 15:37-39) and does this passage along with Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 24 indicate any hard feelings had passed?



Paul had been abandoned by Demas, who went to Thessalonica, because he was "in love with this present world." We don't know anything about Demas except what we read here and in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24 where he is a fellow-worker of Paul. This verse may or may not mean that Demas left the faith. It may be that he left the ministry, but remained a Christian. Whatever the case it hurt Paul and contributed to his loneliness.

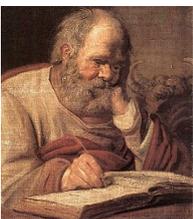
7. What are some reasons why an evangelist might abandon the ministry?

Three other Christian workers named in verses 10-12 are no longer with Paul. Unlike Demas they are still involved in ministry, but located at a great distance from Paul. Crescens has gone to Galatia. We know nothing else about Crescens since he is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. Galatia was located in what is now Turkey.

Titus went to Dalmatia. We know previously from the letter to Titus that he had been located on the island of Crete. Apparently he had completed that ministry and moved on to Dalmatia to labour. This area is in what is now known as Albania and Serbia.

Tychicus was sent by Paul to Ephesus, probably to deliver this letter to Timothy, and perhaps to continue on as an evangelist in the absence of Timothy. This letter could have served as Paul's commendation of Tychicus to the church at Ephesus.

Paul was not completely alone because Luke was with him. Luke had traveled with Paul and became a close companion and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit penned the great historical works of Luke/Acts.



In Colossians 4:15 Paul calls Luke the "beloved physician." Some believe Luke may have become Paul's personal doctor. This might have been necessary if Paul's thorn in the flesh was a physical ailment that needed regular medical attention. It is equally possible that Luke was with Paul because of his devotion to the Lord, the apostle, and his belief that his greatest ability to serve Christ was alongside Paul.

Ministry Needs

The arrival of Mark will meet a ministry need according to Paul. Just what Mark would be doing for the apostle is unknown, but Paul viewed him as a valuable asset in his last days of service to Christ.

8. How can other people assist us in our ministries?

The second and third ministry needs Paul expresses is for his books and parchments. The “*books*” would have been made from papyrus while the parchments were made from the skins of sheep or goats and were much more costly than papyrus.¹ Bible scholars have debated the exact nature and contents of the books and parchments, but since we cannot know, the best we can do is speculate.



The books and parchments may have contained legal documents such as proof of Roman citizenship. Perhaps Paul still thought it remotely possible that he could be legally freed from prison and needed certain documents for his legal challenges.

Some of the books and parchments may have included Paul's previous writings that he wanted to edit or to copy to send to other churches. Some of the books and parchments may have been blank so he could continue to write in his final days. Perhaps some may have contained copies of parts of the Old Testament Scriptures which would assist Paul in his personal devotions with the Father.

We do not know anything about Carpus and this is the only place he is mentioned in the New Testament. We can assume he was a convert and was trusted by Paul to care for the few possessions he valued. God often uses ordinary and unheralded people in his service. Carpus protected Paul's warm cloak and perhaps even Paul's own letters which are now preserved for us in the New Testament.

9. What are some ways that God uses ordinary people, doing what may appear to be unremarkable tasks, to assist in accomplishing great things?

10. What are some lessons we can learn from Paul's insistence on working for Christ to the very end of his life (even while in dire personal circumstances)?

¹ <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/935-was-pauls-reference-to-his-cloak-a-meaningless-triviality>