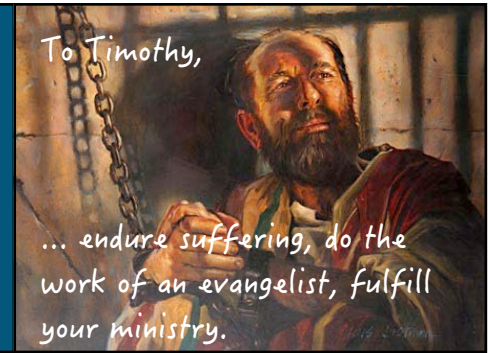


2 Timothy

Fulfill Your Ministry

Lesson 13



Paul has been telling Timothy about his current needs which included the physical need of a warm cloak as winter approached, the need for the companionship of his friends; especially Timothy; and ministry needs which included his books and parchments and the presence of Mark.

Deserted By Men, Strengthened by God 4:14-18

The majority of Christians have never been imprisoned for their faith and even fewer have faced execution. Still some say that since the beginning of the church about 70 million have been martyred with thousands more added to that number each year.¹ Even though Paul was about to be put to death for his faith he seems more troubled that many had deserted him in his time of need.



Before sharing his feeling of abandonment Paul warns Timothy about Alexander the coppersmith who had done Paul a great deal of harm. We cannot identify this Alexander with any certainty though he must have been well known by Timothy. One likely candidate is the Alexander mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:20 where Paul says that he along with Hymenaeus were "*handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*" Another Alexander is mentioned in Acts 19:33-34. Alexander was a common name so it may have been one of these men or someone else.

A coppersmith was a man who worked with metals (not just copper.) Though this man greatly harmed Paul, we don't know any details except that he was a strong opponent of Paul's message (literally words.) His opposition may have been to Paul's preaching or he may have stood against Paul making accusations at his trial. His opposition was verbal not physical. Now Paul viewed Alexander as a threat to Timothy as well.

1. What does Paul mean by the phrase, "the Lord will repay him according to his deeds"? (See also Psalm 62:12; Romans 12:19)

2. Why do people find it hard to allow the Lord to handle the repayment of wrongs?

¹ <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/70.million.christians.martyred.faith.since.jesus.walked.earth/38403.htm>

In verse 16 the Apostle Paul says, *“At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me.”* The first defense Paul is speaking about the beginning of his trial during which evidence is gathered. During these early proceedings while Paul is being falsely charged no one came to defend him. The phrase *“stand by me”* is a technical one which denotes a witness or advocate coming forth on behalf of a prisoner.²

It was customary to have one’s friends stand with them at trial, but Paul’s Christian brothers actually deserted him in his time of need. When Rome burned in July of A.D. 64 the Emperor Nero blamed Christians and it was not safe to be known as a Christian in Rome. This is likely the reason why Paul’s Christian brothers did not stand with him at his hearing. In a similar way Jesus’ own disciples deserted him at his arrest. Matthew 26:56 speaks of Jesus and says, *“Then all the disciples left him and fled.”*

Paul may have been hurt and disappointed, but he was not angry or bitter. He wrote about those who deserted him saying, *“May it not be held against them!”*

3. What makes desertion by one’s friends in times of need so painful?

The apostle Paul knew that he was not alone because the Lord stood by him and strengthened him. Strength from the Lord allowed him to bravely proclaim Christ in Rome to those inside the prison walls and to the judges and officials to whom he must have testified.

4. What does it mean to be “strengthened” by the Lord?

5. At what times do we need to be strengthened today?

Being delivered from the lion’s mouth should be taken figuratively, not literally. While Christians were delivered over to the lions, as a Roman citizen Paul’s execution would have come by beheading. This rescue was physical and temporary.



In verse 18 Paul speaks of another rescue and this rescue is spiritual and eternal. The Romans may have executed Paul, committing an *“evil deed,”* but God *“rescued”* him through death as he transported him safely into the heavenly kingdom.

Christians are already a part of God’s Kingdom and experiencing many blessings as members of the Lord’s church. Still the greatest blessings, and the fullness of Kingdom life, will only be experienced in the future when we are in heaven with the Lord. Looking forward to eternal life in heaven, Paul is moved to enthusiastically praise God writing, *“To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”*

² Smith, James E. *Exhortation Epistles*, Lulu p. 265.

6. What are some of the blessings Christians enjoy today as members of the kingdom?

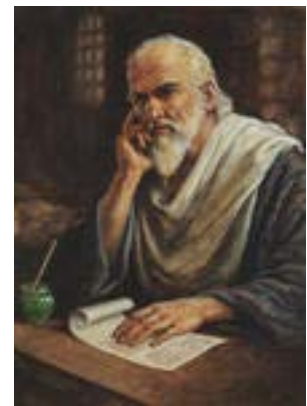
7. What are some of the blessings Christians will enjoy in the eternal kingdom of heaven?

Paul adds the word “*Amen*” at the end of his praise to emphasise the great anticipation he felt at living in the eternal kingdom. The word “*amen*” means “*so be it.*”

Final Words 4:19-22

The close to this letter names nine people specifically along with their physical or church families in some instances. Paul was a people person. He loved people, he prayed for people, he expressed his love and appreciation for people, and he sent greetings when he could.

Prisca is a shortened form of Pricilla, the wife of Aquila. This couple were good friends of Paul and faithful servants of the Lord. Paul probably was able to convert them to Christ in Corinth. Their friendship with the apostle was enhanced because they were tentmakers like Paul.



Oneisphorus was highly regarded by Paul who mentioned him earlier in 1:16. Many believe that Oneisphorus had already died by the time Paul writes 2 Timothy. This may be why his greetings were not specifically to Oneisphorus, but to his household.

Erastus remains at Corinth and is probably the Erastus of Acts 19:22. Timothy would be encouraged to know the whereabouts of a brother and former co-worker.

Trophimus was left ill at Miletus. This man was probably from Ephesus, so he would be well known to Timothy and the Ephesian church. He is mentioned in Acts 20:4 and 21:29. We don't know the nature of the illness of Trophimus, but many have wondered why Paul did not heal him. There are two potentially valid reasons: 1) Divine healing was used as a sign to demonstrate the power of God, not for any personal benefit. 2) Perhaps the gift of supernatural healing had passed away by this time as the church had moved beyond the early days of its infancy.

In our last lesson we saw in verse 21 that Paul urged Timothy to arrive before winter. He needed the warmth of his cloak and he knew that travel across the Mediterranean Sea was halted during the winter months in the first century.

Eubulus as well as Pudens, Linus, and Claudia send greetings along with all the brothers. Since Paul specifically names these four men we can assume they were known to Timothy.

Paul closes his letter in verse 22 with this prayer, *“The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.”* The first part of the prayer is addressed personally to Timothy since the “your” is singular. Paul wanted the Lord to be near the spirit of Timothy so that he would always remain faithful in his life and ministry.

The great apostle then expresses his prayer in the plural “you” as he directed his thoughts toward the entire church in Ephesus. Every Christian needs the blessing of God’s wonderful grace. Paul had started his letter in 1:2 asking for God’s grace to be upon Timothy and now ends with his prayer for God’s grace for all Christians.



Paul ends his final letter thinking of others. He sat in a Roman prison, where he had been deserted in his time of need, but he did not wallow in self-pity or despair for his life. He looked forward to his great hope of heaven and thought of others who loved and served Christ everywhere.

We can only imagine that this letter strengthened and encouraged Timothy and the church at Ephesus in the first century even as it speaks to Christians today. This letter is a call to faithfulness in adversity and for a love for truth in an age of falsehood. This letter is a call for service no matter the cost and a message that God’s word is capable of leading to a righteous life. This letter calls Timothy to preach the word when convenient and when inconvenient and to use it powerfully to reprove, rebuke, and exhort.

It is our prayer that all Christians in all ages might be strengthened by the words of Paul as inspired by God’s Holy Spirit as he writes these powerful words to the evangelist Timothy in Ephesus. May we all do our best to fulfill our ministries whatever they might be.