

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Friends and Foes

Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:9-22

Code: 55-27

It's time for us now to come to the study of God's precious truth and I would like you to open your Bible, if you will, to 2 Timothy chapter 4. We come to our last lesson in this rich epistle, looking today at verses 9 through 22. And in this particular section at first glance, it appears as though it's a bit of odds and ends at the end of an epistle, at the end of a chapter, at the end of a letter, at the end of a life, really, because this is the last writing that Paul ever did under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And perhaps it is often ignored and overlooked because it seems to be rather mundane and of little consequence. And yet for the faithful student of God's Word, everything that is God's Word is rich and deep and profound and moving and compelling and I trust that you shall find these verses to be just that.

As Paul faces the last days of his life, as he closes out his last epistle, last chapter, writes his last paragraph, people are on his mind, people who made up his life, people who shared his ministry, people who were crucial and vital and critical and essential to everything that he did. And what we have in these verses from 9 through 22 is Paul's...to put it in modern terms...network of people. And we are reminded in this particular passage that none of us who would minister for Christ can do so alone. We are not islands. The better able we are to be dependent, the better able we are to delegate, the better able we are to understand how critical it is for us to work with and alongside people the more effective we'll be in the Lord's service.

The modern business world tells us that networking is vital to success. And they have very sophisticated networks involving suppliers, customers, government agencies, stockholders, employees and management. The human body is perhaps the most graphic visual and intimate demonstration of networking as we live and move in an incredible network of organs and muscle and tissue and blood and flesh that functions in such perfect harmony.

Paul had a network. He had a team. He had people who were his life, people on whom he depended, people to whom he delegated responsibility, people in whom he trusted, people who were faithful, people who were unfaithful, people who were friends, people who were enemies, people who were old friends in his life, people who were new friends, people who were consistent, people who were inconsistent, people who were always ready to volunteer, people who were never ready to volunteer. They were all a part of his life.

And as he faces the axe that will cut off his head and knows his life is about to end, those people are on his mind. Remember he's writing this epistle as well as 1 Timothy to pass the mantle of church leadership to Timothy. And part of his passing that mantle is to inform Timothy about what's going on with all the people on the team. He's like an old coach turning over his team to a young coach who wants the young coach to know where everybody plays so he can step in as the team leader with a minimum of trauma and difficulty.

Some of the people he mentions here he wants to come and be with him in his last days for comfort and to assist him in the ministry he continues to do. They are namely Timothy, Luke and Mark. Some of them whom he mentions he just wants to greet and share his love and his concern because they're his friends, Prisca, Aquila, the family of Onesiphorus. Some of them he sent to serve in strategic places to keep the work strong, Crescens, Titus, Tychicus, Erastus and Trophimus. Some of them he mentions as sending greeting along to Timothy, believers in the Roman church, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia and others. And some of them he mentions because of the grief they brought him, Demas, Alexander and a whole group of anonymous deserters.

And so as he writes from prison what is his final words, he thinks of his people. He thinks of the network, the team that made up so much of his life. And we learn so much from this. We are almost here seeing living illustrations of the principle of the function of the body described in 1 Corinthians 12:13 through 37, how that the body works in perfect harmony, so does the body of Christ and here we see that working going on. It's less than perfect in the sense that the network is always, always the victim of unfaithful people. But it's as close as we're going to get to an illustration of how we are to do mutual ministry, depending and delegating and working together.

And I believe it was so important that the Holy Spirit put it here and not just incidentally but instructively. He wants us to get a look at the people in Paul's life. He wants us to get a look at what's on his mind as he faces death and what's on his mind is not programs but people because they are the vitality of ministry. People are the most precious treasure we have. They are the most valuable commodity there is. They are our greatest resource. And Paul had the happy privilege of knowing the fulfillment of 1 Samuel 10:26 where it says about Saul, "There went with him a band of men whose hearts God had touched."

Paul had a band of men whose hearts God had touched, too. They labored together. If there's been any one joy in my ministry, this has been my joy, to have had a band of men whose hearts God has touched, who are my own team of friends, co-laborers, each playing a vital part in life and ministry.

So Paul wants us to meet his team. He wants Timothy to know who they are and where they are and what they're doing as he takes over. Let's begin at the beginning in verse 9.

Now when I was in seminary they told us that basically if you want to be homiletical and you want to really stick within the confines of proper oratory, you have three points and a poem. I want you to know I have 13 points and no poem. This is a very difficult passage to outline. But we're going to see the friends of Paul and some foes anyway.

First of all, we meet the faithful son Timothy in verse 9, and though not mentioned, obviously, the statement is directed to him, "Make every effort to come to me soon." Timothy is the object of the letter as he was 1 Timothy. He is Paul's true son, Paul's reproduction, Paul said of him that he was his true child in the faith. He identifies him as his son in both the first and second of these epistles.

In writing to the Corinthians of his tremendous concern for them in all of their sin, he said to them in 1 Corinthians 4:17, "For this reason I have sent to you Timothy who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church." I'm sending you Timothy, he's a clone, he's a reproduction, he's a carbon copy, he'll remind you of my ways and of everything I teach.

In writing to the Philippians and unbearing his heart, chapter 2 verse 19 he said, "I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition for I have no one else of kindred spirit." He had the heart of Paul. He had the habits of Paul. He had the theology of Paul. He was Paul reproduced, the faithful son.

And as Paul sits in a cold dark dungeon, he longs to see his dear friend, his beloved son in the faith, Timothy. He says in chapter 1 of this epistle, verse 4, "Longing to see you even as I recall your tears so that I may be filled with joy, I want you just because I love you, I want you because I enjoy you. I remember your tears, I know you love me. I remember your compassion. I want you here." And surely there was some work to do as well. And surely there was so much more to say to Timothy who would take up the mantle of leadership in the church and Paul knew he was facing death, wanted so much Timothy to come.

Oh there were some Roman Christians in the city but that wasn't like Timothy. And Luke was there but Luke could never take the place of Timothy, nobody can take the place of anybody else in a person's heart. And he wants to see Timothy once before he dies, at least to pass on the mantle, the baton. He knows, according to verse 6, that the time of his departure is at hand, it is imminent. He will not live long and if Timothy doesn't come now they'll never see each other this side of heaven. So he urges his faithful son to come.

He says, "Hasten," the verb means to make every effort, to be quick, to be in a hurry, to be fast. He uses the word "soon," speedily, be in a hurry, be fast, get here quickly. There's an urgency in this because time is of the essence. Paul doesn't have much time before he'll die. Timothy doesn't have much time before winter, as we will note in verse 21. And when winter comes he can't make the

journey because the seas are too rough. And there's so much to say and so much to share. Paul wants Timothy by his side.

Most...most great men in the ministry are linked to a mentor. They're linked to somebody either afar or near whose heart they desire to emulate. For Timothy it was Paul. For Paul his child in the faith was Timothy. And mutually they had pulled their lives together by God's wonderful grace and been a strength to each other. It is one of the richest things that we will ever know in ministry when God gives us the privilege of raising up Timothys, those who desire not only to hear what we say but to emulate our heart's desire. Timothy turned out, by the way, to be a faithful product of Timothy, a faithful son who himself, according to Hebrews 13:22 was in prison for his faithfulness. And you and I can thank God if He in His grace has given to us young men who are Timothys, who are reproductions hopefully better than we were, more devoted than we were, more godly than we were, but who catch the vision of our heart and who make the commitment to live to the glory of God and carry on the work which was so much a part of our lives. And so we meet the first person in his network that he mentions, Timothy, the faithful son.

Secondly, we meet the unfaithful deserter in verse 10. We go from the most faithful to the most unfaithful. Verse 10 says, "For Demas having loved this present world has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica." Why is it that the verse begins with the word "for"? That's an interesting statement, "For Demas," it's as if Paul is saying...Would you please come soon because Demas is gone. Could it be that Demas was of strategic use in ministry that his place needed to be taken by Timothy? The implication here is that Timothy was coming not only for the sake of the heart of Paul but for the sake of the work of Paul which heretofore was being done by Demas.

We don't know much about Demas. The first time he is mentioned is in Colossians 4:14 where he is mentioned as one of the esteemed and intimate companions of Paul. While Paul was writing the Colossian epistle from prison in Rome, Demas was there. Probably Paul wrote Philemon within the same few day period and he was there as well, Demas was, when Paul wrote Philemon and is thus mentioned in Philemon verse 24. So he was intimately acquainted with Paul, had been for some years, was there during that time of that first imprisonment in Rome. Must have had some kind of outward ministry of importance, he is called...by the way...in Philemon a fellow worker of Paul. He was a partner in suffering to some degree, must have been a partner in prayer, must have been a partner in some kind of ministry.

He was a man in whom Paul had invested much. He surely knew much. And when he deserted Paul, there was a void. And just the fact that it says, "For Demas having loved this present world has deserted me," indicates that Timothy was going to step in to something Demas had been doing which gives you an idea that Demas was a pretty strategic person and at least on the outside was carrying on a ministry.

The verb "has deserted me" needs our attention for a moment. It is a very strong verb. It starts with a root verb meaning to leave and then it compounds it by adding two prepositions at the beginning of the word which makes it doubly intense so that it has been translated in sort of an American slang "leaving me in the lurch." And it is the idea not just of leaving but deserting in the midst of a dire situation, leaving at a most inappropriate time. Perhaps the deprivation had gotten to Demas, perhaps the difficulty, the suffering, perhaps he could see the handwriting on the wall, Paul was going to lose his life and he wasn't about to lose his for that cause. He wasn't that committed. Maybe he was caught up with Paul because of the noble cause, because of his emotion, his feeling, but never really counted the cost. He may well be one of those seeds that fall on rocky soil and pops up for a little while but when tribulation comes, dies. He may be a little bit like the weedy ground where there is a sprouting initially and then the love of the world or the cares of the present age choke out the life before any fruit can come. It would seem to me that he probably was no true Christian at all because it says "having loved this present, ion, age, world, world system, all the aims, ideals, opinions, values, motives, morals, impulses of the present passing age," they were the things that he loved.

He's much like Judas. He fell in love with the world and apparently never genuinely had a love for Christ and the cause of Christ through Paul. On the outside he ministered, but Judas did, too. But on the inside there was not the commitment. And he, like Judas, deserted Paul. Jesus had a deserter, Paul had a deserter. In a sense, it's kind of comforting, isn't it? To know that there will be those who will labor alongside us until the time when they decide they've had enough and they are gone. Having loved the present age, it says he left and went to Thessalonica.

Why did he go there? We don't know. We can surmise that that probably was his home. He is listed in Philemon verse 24 with Aristarchus who according to Acts 20 verse 4 was a Thessalonian. So maybe they were kind of a duo from Thessalonica and he was going home. But the point here is not so much where he went as why he went and why he went was because he loved the world more than he loved the things of God. And 1 John says if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not...what?...is not in him.

I received a letter this last week from a man who used to work alongside me and who loved the present world and departed and wrote me to tell me in the letter of the disaster of his life, the devastation of his personal life, the destruction of his marriage as a result of that. You will have in your life a Demas or two or three or more. Somebody you pour your life into, somebody you think is on the team, somebody outwardly doing ministry, who brings you deep hurt and deep pain and sometimes deep confusion because all of a sudden it becomes apparent that they love the present world and they leave. Demas is a part of your network, too, and mine.

Thirdly, and the next person we come to is the faithful unknown...we'll call him the faithful unknown. Verse 10, "Crescens has gone to Galatia." Now we know absolutely nothing about Crescens.

However, in spite of that I have a few things I'd like to say. Evidently Crescens was a fairly capable man. And I say that because Paul sent him to Galatia. Now Galatia was an area in which Paul had labored extensively. He went there on his first missionary journey, his second missionary journey and on the third one as well. Each time going back to Galatia, evangelizing, founding churches, building leaders. The fact that Crescens was sent to Galatia could indicate that he had the capability to work with a strong church, that he himself therefore must have been a man of some kind of strength, of some kind of spiritual experience in order to be sent to strong churches with strong leaders to work along with them. Yet he is absolutely unknown.

We know nothing about him. This is the only time his name is ever mentioned. And so he represents what we call the faithful unknown who make up the ranks of everybody's network, behind the scenes, no one knows they even exist, no one knows their names but God knows and somewhere in His own knowledge there is a fullness of reward for that person. The quiet unknown hero who comes along in spiritual maturity and spiritual strength to stand behind someone and do the work unseen. Thank the Lord for the faithful unknown who are gifted, who are called and who in doing their duty are content to be unknown. God bless them, we are all indebted to them. They're all around us.

And then there is the faithful well known in verse 10, the faithful well known. He mentions Titus has gone to Dalmatia. Titus appears 13 times in the New Testament. Even has a letter written to him, the epistle of Paul to Titus which, by the way, was written between first and second Timothy. He seemed to be able to flourish in the area of a new challenge. When Paul would go and evangelize an area, Titus was the kind of person who could go in and get the church built and build the leaders and strengthen off of that evangelistic effort. In fact, when Paul wrote the epistle to Titus, Titus was on the island of Crete where Paul, by the way, had preached. And he says here, "To Titus, my true child in a common faith," Titus 1:4. Then in verse 5, "For this reason I left you in Crete that you might set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I direct you." Apparently he was an equipper. He was a leader builder. He could go in and take sort of what was there and frame it and shape it and mold it and build it into strong churches.

He had been with Paul, by the way, for years. He was in close and intimate work and fellowship. No doubt he had left Crete where he was when Paul wrote the letter of Titus. He left just before this and was now headed for Dalmatia. Now the only thing we know about Dalmatia is there are dogs that came from there, or got named by that name. But Dalmatia was on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea, north of Macedonia. Paul had preached in Dalmatia, according to Romans 15:19, so the gospel had sort of dusted that area, too. And that's a perfect setting for Titus to go in again and pull it all together, strengthen the church, build the leaders.

Titus 3:12 indicates that he came and met Paul at Nicopolis and left from there for Dalmatia while Paul was taken to Rome. He apparently was excellent at building leaders. He was the faithful well known or the faithful equipper. And we thank God for those who come alongside of us who are very

gifted builders and leaders and equippers. Every person in spiritual service needs not only the quiet, behind-the-scene unknown but those who can take a forward place who are strong, who are builders of men and women, who are leaders. He was such. He came behind Paul to pour his life into men and women who would lead the church.

And then fifthly we come to Luke the faithful companion...Luke the faithful companion. In verse 11 he says, "Only Luke is with me." Now some have suggested that in such a statement he's sort of depreciating the character of Luke. "Please, Timothy, hurry up and get here, only Luke is here...implied...and you can imagine what that's like." But we don't want to express ourselves in that way, that wouldn't be fair to dear Luke. Luke is a unique person and I want to just mention to you that he is only spoken of two other times in the New Testament...Colossians 4:14 he is named and called the beloved physician...Philemon 24, he is a fellow worker of Paul, beloved physician, fellow worker.

But though only three passages name this man, he is a dominant character in the New Testament. He wrote the gospel of Luke which is the longest of all four gospels...though it only has 24 chapters and Matthew has 28, it has more verses and more words than Matthew. And then he wrote 28 chapters of Acts, 52 chapters of the New Testament were penned by the beloved physician, fellow worker of Paul who was an able historian. He chronicled the life of Christ under the inspiration of the Spirit and then he chronicled the life of the early church under the Spirit's inspiration.

But he was humble and he was content to come alongside a great Apostle. He was a constant companion to Paul, faithfully at his side. He was with Paul on missionary journey number two at Troas and Philippi. He joined Paul at the end of missionary journey number three and went with him to Jerusalem. He was with Paul on the ship that crossed the sea and was wrecked, according to Acts 27. He was with Paul in both of his imprisonments. And you read in the book of Acts periodically the pronoun "we...we...we," we call them the "we" passages of Acts and the "we" is Luke including himself in the travels of Paul.

But while he doesn't want any prominence and he doesn't necessarily want to be well known, he was Paul's servant. His heart was to come alongside Paul and serve his personal needs. And if anybody ever needed a personal physician, Paul did. Beaten with rods, stoned, whipped, shipwrecked, thorn in the flesh, all that he suffered, he needed a first...a first-class personal intimate friend. And the fact that he was a physician was of tremendous use...tremendous use.

He wasn't a preacher. We don't ever hear him preach. We don't hear him teach. He doesn't appear to have been a theologian. He was a friend who acted, perhaps, as a secretary to Paul and certainly as a historian to the Holy Spirit. The fact that he says "only Luke" does not depreciate his value but simply means the only person I have here is my personal attendant and my personal servant and I can't do the work that needs to be done. He needed someone in addition to Luke to get the work done. Paul was not sitting in the corner of a dungeon waiting to die, he was still at it. William

Hendrickson writes, "There were not enough reapers, perhaps not even a sufficient number to provide adequately for the spiritual needs of those believers who were still in Rome," end quote. And, of course, many of them had left Rome because of the Nero persecution.

Beloved, I suggest to you that ministry is greatly enriched by a personal confidant. I don't think there would probably be anything in Paul's life that Luke didn't know. I don't think there would be anything in his life that he didn't know. He nursed him when he was ill. He was with him all the time. He saw him in every kind of response. It wasn't a nine-to-five association, they lived together for years, day and night. And he was his companion and he was his friend. And he ministered to him the simplest of needs though he was an articulate and godly educated gifted man. He was content to come alongside the great Apostle and give his life in service to his personal needs. The faithful companion.

Let's look sixthly at the unfaithful companion...the unfaithful companion. "Pick up Mark and bring him with you for he's useful to me for service." Mark, John Mark. His home, Jerusalem, Acts 12:12 tells us. The church in Jerusalem no doubt met in his house. He had accompanied Paul and Barnabas, he was selected as one of the bright young lights in the Jerusalem church. And he was accompanying Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. But Acts 13:13 says as they started on a difficult part, he abandoned them. It was too much for him. He didn't have the courage for it. He didn't have the character for it. He didn't have the commitment for it. And Paul had no stomach for weak men. And he had no stomach for cowardly men. And he had no stomach for uncommitted men. And he didn't want to saddle his life with a lot of unnecessary baggage that he would have to keep pushing along and pushing along. If you couldn't stand it, he really didn't want you around. And so it registered in his mind when John Mark left that he didn't want him back again.

And approximately, according to some calculations, about seven years later Paul and Barnabas were about to set out on another journey and Barnabas said to Paul, "Let's take Mark," and Paul said, "Absolutely not." Acts 15:36 and following discusses the argument between Paul and Barnabas over Mark and because of the unresolved argument, they split and Barnabas took Mark and Paul took Silas. And the parting of the ways between Paul and Barnabas was over Mark. Barnabas thought he had been rehabilitated, Paul didn't want to take a chance. Mark had failed and in Paul's eyes even though it may have been seven years later, he had proven himself to be unworthy of the difficult rigors of ministry and he wanted no partnership with a weak man.

About a dozen years later we find Paul in prison in Rome. And guess who is with him? Mark. Many years have passed now. And apparently Mark has proven himself and he's back with Paul. And while in his first imprisonment Paul wrote Colossians and in Colossians 4:10 he refers to Mark, and he wrote Philemon and in Philemon that same verse, 24, he refers to Mark again. And so after all of those years, Mark was back in the good graces of Paul...an unfaithful companion restored.

After that, by the way, according to 1 Peter 5:13, Mark spent some time with Peter. And at the request of the Romans he wrote his gospel which meant many believe to be a gospel which reflects the testimony of Peter more than the others. After Peter's death, Mark was back with Paul and served him well and probably even assisted Timothy so that he was well known to Timothy also. So 20 years have passed and Mark is faithful and loyal and Paul says, "Pick up Mark and bring him, for he's useful to me for service." Literally, very useful, for diakonia, the word from which we get deacon, service.

Well what use was he? Well he had been in Rome. He knew the Roman church. He was acquainted with the people. He could be of great help. I think that's one of the great joys in Christian ministry, by the way, to see an unfaithful person restored. And sometimes it takes a long, long time...a long time. But the Lord does build the weak up again and make them strong.

All kinds of people are part of the network, aren't they? Faithful sons and unfaithful deserters, the faithful unknown and the faithful well known, faithful companions and unfaithful companions, in this case restored. Let's look at a couple of others.

Number seven, the faithful messenger, Tychicus. Verse 12 says, "But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus." He, by the way, is mentioned four other times in Scripture...Acts chapter 20 verse 4 tells us that he was an Asian from Asia Minor who accompanied Paul to Jerusalem with the offering for the poor saints there. He is a faithful associate of Paul. He is mentioned in Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7, Titus 3:12 and here. And his special task seems to be to deliver the letters that Paul wrote. He took Ephesians to Ephesus. He took Colossians to Colossae for Paul. And I believe it's best to assume that he probably is taking 2 Timothy to Ephesus to give to Timothy. So he was Paul's messenger, Paul's delivery service.

Perhaps we could identify the statement, "I sent," or "I have sent," as what is called an epistolary aorist which means I am sending. And very likely he was sending him to Ephesus where Timothy was with this letter. He was a faithful man to deliver the Word of God.

How vital was this letter? It was vital because Timothy had to know what Paul was saying if he was going to set the church right. How vital was this letter? Timothy had to know what God expected him to be. How vital was this letter? Timothy had to get the letter and read that Paul wanted him to come and come immediately before winter. So that he had a very important task, did Tychicus, to get the letter there. He must have been a man of great responsibility. Maybe not a teacher, maybe not an articulator of truth, but a messenger with the truth. And we have those kinds of people in our network. I thank God for the people around me who facilitate the Word getting out, whether it's in the printed page or through letters or through tapes. Whatever it is. Faithful messengers who go, take the Word.

I think of that every time I see those precious ladies who box those little tapes and send them out, those young men who package the Word of God and mail it all over the world. The Tychicus of the network of any servant of God, those who take the Word.

And then there's Carpus, number eight. While Tychicus was the faithful one who went, Carpus is the faithful one who stayed. You say, "Where did he stay?" He probably stayed home, just a conjecture, in a sense, from verse 13, he says, "When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus and the books, especially the parchments."

Apparently Carpus, we don't know anything about him at all, but he lived obviously in Troas and perhaps that's where Paul stayed. In fact, likely he did stay there. And what he is saying to Timothy is, "Look, pick up Mark on your way with you and when you come, go through Troas and get my cloak and my books and parchments." He would go from Ephesus to Troas overland, across the top there down in to Macedonia, across Macedonia to the sea and then he would catch the ship that would go to the city of Brundisium on Italy's east coast and then overland to Rome. That would be the path he would take. And so he says, go north, go through Troas, come across the top and down into what we know as Greece and then across the sea to Italy. And when you get to Troas on your way, pick up my cloak and the books and parchments because I left them at the house of Carpus.

Some have suggested that may have been the place where the church met. We don't know. Surely that's the place where Paul stayed. He was one who stayed home to receive the ones that the Lord sent. So you have those part of your network who are sent, and those part that were there to take care of the ones who were sent. That was Carpus.

You say, "Why did Paul want his cloak?" Well, winter was coming. That will tell you a little bit about his economic condition and maybe about the economic condition of the church. You would think that they wouldn't have to trek half way across Europe with a coat. If he needed one that bad, couldn't they go down to the local store and buy him one? But economic conditions were quite different than they were today. He had one of those and it had to be sent from one part of the world to another part of the world when he got cold. A far cry from our life style.

It was a heavy blanket-like garment made out of wool with a hole in it like a huge blanket, you just put it over your head and it kept off the rain and kept out the cold. And you could even use it like a bed. You just fold yourself in it, almost like a sleeping bag. And winter was coming and the dungeon was dark and cold and he needed his cloak.

Why had he left it there? Maybe he didn't want to carry it in the summer. On the other hand, some have even suggested that he was arrested at Troas and hauled off before he could take any of his belongings and that's why his cloak was still there and that's why his books were still there and his parchments were still there which you can't imagine he would leave. And that's why when he finally

got to Rome, he was whisked off by the soldiers, put on trial before any of his friends could come to his aid and that's why he says in verse 16, "At my defense there wasn't anybody there to stand beside me." Maybe they didn't even come till later because he had been taken away from Troas. We don't know that, it's possible.

So, he says stop by the house of Carpus and get my cloak. And then he says also, would you pick up my books and parchments. And the books and parchments, what were they? Well, parchments probably refers to animal skin scrolls. Books, some feel refers to papyrus scrolls. It may have been that some of them would have been the Old Testament books, whatever ones of them he had. Some of them may have been his own letters, copies of which he kept. Some of them may have been blanks on which he was about to write other things. The point is, he wasn't finished reading and he wasn't finished writing, and he wasn't finished studying and he wanted his books and his papers. And all of it was at the house of Carpus in Troas where Paul had been on numerous occasions. And this man may well have been a host for Paul many times.

In his network he had people who cared for his physical need, who gave him a place to stay, who took care of his coat and took care of his belongings. And those people are so important, too. Paul had depend on folks for those basic things in life. Thank God for the messengers who go and thank God for the people who receive those messengers into their homes, show hospitality, kindness. They're all a part of the network, too.

And then number nine, we meet a man named Alexander, let's call him the faithless enemy...the faithless enemy. "Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm, the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Be on guard against him yourself for he vigorously opposed our teaching."

Alexander is a very very common name in the ancient world. We do not need to assume that this Alexander is the same as the one in 1 Timothy 1:20 who was a leader in the church at Ephesus who was a false teacher. Nor do we need to assume that this is the same Alexander as in Acts 19:33. All we know about this one and probably to set him apart from those others is that he is called Alexander the coppersmith, so we know it's not the other Alexanders. That word means a metal worker, he worked in metal. Maybe he made idols in Ephesus, like Dimetrius did out of silver. Maybe he too was an idol maker whose trade had been interrupted by Paul's preaching in Ephesus. It's likely that he was in Ephesus, he did Paul much harm perhaps not only in Ephesus but maybe elsewhere, we don't know. Timothy needed to be on guard against him and Timothy at this time was in Ephesus.

On the other hand, some have suggested that this guy was in Rome and that he had harmed Paul in Rome by opposing him at his trial. And that Timothy needed to be on guard against him when he got to Rome because he was liable to run into him. We can't be dogmatic about either because it doesn't say, but I would tend to think that he was Alexander of Ephesus and that he had done Paul much harm in the past and Timothy needed to guard himself and the church against him because he was

right there in Ephesus. And it's not without reason to assume that as a metal worker he had indeed made idols and that those idols, of course, represented everything opposite the truth of God. And so he hated Paul and set himself against him.

He says he did me much harm, you'll note that in verse 14. Then he describes the harm in verse 15, "He opposed our teaching, he vigorously opposed our teaching." He showed me much ill treatment but not in a physical way, in a mental way, he opposed the truth. He stood against the truth, the gospel.

And then in a simple future prediction, a prophetic statement, Paul says in verse 14, "The Lord will repay him according to his deeds." No sinner will ever get away with his sin. No person who opposes the gospel of Jesus Christ will ever ultimately succeed. If you take your approach against the things of God, God will repay you for what you've done. In Deuteronomy 32 the principle was laid down, "Vengeance is Mine, for the Lord will vindicate His people," verses 25 and 26. Romans 12:19, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord." Paul didn't carry a grudge. It's so wonderful. Paul didn't carry bitterness. Paul didn't feel he had to attack back all of his enemies. He like Christ when reviled reviled not again, when threatened did not threaten in return but committed himself to God.

Paul will leave the retribution to God, the punishment to God against whom all sin first and foremost is committed. So future retribution belongs to God. Present watchfulness belongs to us. So he says in verse 15, "Be on your guard against him yourself. Keep your eye open." This must have been a relentless enemy. And may I suggest to you that everyone in ministry has these people in their network too? We all have our enemies. We all have those who stand against the truth of God, who detract the truth of God, who want to stop the gospel. There are always those who attack us, who try to undo what we do, oppose our teaching, who want to make us appear as fools, liars, faithless enemies. They're part of the network.

It's comforting to know that, isn't it? We're not alone. Paul had them.

Number ten, we come to the unfaithful anonymous...the unfaithful anonymous. You've met this group, you may not know it, but you've met them, I'll show you. Verse 16, "At my first defense no one supported me but all deserted me, may it not be counted against them." This is the unfaithful anonymous. Who were they? I don't know. They never showed up, they weren't there. We couldn't ask them their names because they never came. We couldn't find out what ministry they'd like to do because they never volunteered. They're sort of the "Hall of Shame" in a sense. He says, "At my first defense, no one supported me." What does he mean his first defense? Apologia from which we get apologetics. It means a speech in defense of. It was used in a courtroom.

When Paul was taken prisoner, no doubt he was taken to Rome and he immediately went to the first of two hearings. In the Roman jurisprudence system there was prima actio(?) and secunda actio(?),

first act, second act of a trial. The first was a preliminary assessment in the investigation of the criminal being charged. And Paul, of course, was captured as a prisoner because he was in violation of Roman law, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. He had been captured and hauled off to Rome, if perhaps at Troas, whisked away without any of his friends. Some commentators feel that because he was such an important person, because he was known as the major spokesman of Christianity, Nero probably sat on the throne, if not one of his presiding judges of stature would have been there.

So here he comes to Rome as a prisoner and there is initially a hearing which probably occurred not too long before 2 Timothy was written. And on the occasion of hearing phase one, he says, "No one supported me, no one supported me." The verb can be used as a technical term for a witness or an advocate who comes forward in a courtroom in order to defend a person or speak on his behalf. The verb literally means to be beside me, no one was beside me, he says.

You say, "Where was Luke?" Well, if Paul got whisked off as a prisoner, maybe Luke hadn't arrived. "What about Onesiphorus, doesn't it say in chapter one that Onesiphorus often came and refreshed him? Where was he?" Probably hadn't arrived. Maybe he had just gotten there and as soon as he was there they immediately went for this first hearing.

But it's more than that, it's more of the fact that Luke wasn't there and Onesiphorus hadn't arrived, the people, he says, who were here all deserted me. And he uses the same verb that was used of Demas in verse 10...they all left me in the lurch. They all abandoned me at a crucial point. They weren't there. They forsook me at my trial, embarrassed, afraid to be identified with me because of the persecution. What an incredible incredible neglect.

Only a few years before this Rome had been burned and the Christians were blamed. And some were taken by Nero and sown in animal skins and then attacked by wild dogs who ripped and shredded them. Some were wrapped in pitch and set afire in the garden of Nero to light his garden parties. And if you were to step forward and defend the greatest defender of Christianity, it could be fatal. So they never showed up...the no-shows, the unfaithful anonymous.

We all have them in our network. All servants of God have them. They're the anonymous unfaithful who keep their distance. They're motivated by comfort, cowardice, apathy, indifference. Oh, they would like to watch you face the enemy but they don't want to get involved and they certainly don't want the enemy to think they belong to you. Churches have them. These pile up on the edge, never get very close to the real battle.

Paul's attitude was so good. "May it not be counted against them." Isn't that wonderful? He knew they were weak hearted, not false hearted, as Fairbarren(?) said it years ago. They were weak hearted, not false hearted. And he had the spirit of Stephen because he was there when Stephen said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," Acts 7:60, he was there. And maybe he remembered the

words of Jesus in Luke 23:34 recorded, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," which is what He said to His crucifiers.

Let me tell you something. The unfaithful anonymous can destroy you if you don't learn to treat them with the same kind of spirit of forgiveness that Paul did. We all have them. They hide in the gray twilight of apathy. They never stick their head out. They leave us alone to carry the battle without their help, but often with their criticism. And they're part of the network. Paul had them and you'll have them.

But in contrast to them we come to the apex of the whole passage, the faithful Lord, verses 17 and 18. I love this. "But the Lord stood with me." Isn't that good? "But the Lord stood with me." Nobody else was there, nobody, they all deserted me. But the Lord stood with me...the friend who sticks closer than a brother, the one who said, "I'll never leave you or forsake you." In contrast to the failure of his anonymous unfaithful, he triumphantly affirms the faithfulness of His Lord and in the Roman court the Lord was there.

Lenski wants to describe the scene and he demonstrates that there would be a large basilica in the city of Rome where a trial like this would take place. At one end of the nave was the tribune, that's the long part, the apse is the cross piece, they were shaped in the form of a cross. At one end was the tribune, the center of which was placed the magistrate's curule chair of ivory on a platform called the tribunal. Here also sat the council of assessors who advised the prefect upon the law though they had no voice in the judgment. On the sides of the tribune were seats for distinguished persons as well as for parties engaged in the proceedings. Fronting the presiding magistrate stood the prisoner with his accusers and his advocates. The public was admitted into the remainder of the nave and the aisles which were railed off from the portion devoted to the judicial proceedings. And there were also galleries along the whole length of the side aisles, one for men and the other for women. The aisles were roofed over as was the tribune. The nave was originally left open to the sky. The basilicas were buildings of great size so that a vast multitude of spectators was always present at any trial which excited public interest. Before such an audience it was that Paul was now called to speak in his defense.

So you have a place just teeming with people who have crushed in to hear the defense of this well-known representative of Christianity. And he stands in there and he has no advocate, there is no one coming alongside in the judicial process to defend him. He has no one to witness on his behalf. He is absolutely alone in front of this mass of hostile humanity who have control of his life from a human viewpoint.

And he said, "The Lord stood with me." And then he says, "And strengthened me." I love that. The Greek verb is the idea of infusing with power. He began to feel the power infused in his spirit, "In order that," a hina purpose clause, "He infused me with power in order that through me as the human

instrument the kerugma, the gospel proclamation might be fully accomplished, or fully given."

Get the picture. He's on trial for his life, persecution of Christians has already broken out. He stands before the Roman tribunal and perhaps before Nero himself. The place is jammed with people who are spectators. No one is there but Paul, no one to come to his side and he says, "The...the power of the Lord began to strengthen me for the purpose of proclaiming the full gospel."

By the way, Paul was the first member of the Full Gospel Association. That's what that term means, to fully give the kerugma, the proclamation, the gospel. What an opportunity. I've always wished that they had recorded what he said. I just...I just have so much admiration for that man and for the power of God to stand in that environment and fully preach the whole gospel. Tremendous courage...tremendous power.

"And that all the Gentiles might hear," I think he preached with loudness and authority. That was a Gentile audience. That was a cosmopolitan paganism, people from all over everywhere who were living in Rome, all this cosmopolitan paganism jammed in there and perhaps Nero right on the bench, and if he was he heard the full gospel. And God so moved through Paul, he says, "And I was delivered out of the lion's mouth." What does that mean? Well that's just a proverb like saying I was delivered out of the jaws of death. It's used in Psalm 22:21, Psalm 35:17 and I daresay in Paul's case it probably goes back to one wonderful Old Testament prophet of whom that could be said literally, namely Daniel. I was delivered out of the lion's mouth. That must have been a wonderful, exhilarating thrilling moment for Paul.

I'll tell you one thing, he leaned on the power of God and the power of God was there and he was delivered. And it gave him hope for the future. Look at verse 18, "The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed and will bring me safely to His heavenly Kingdom." Boy, that was confidence, wasn't it? On the basis of the Lord's present work, he had hope for the Lord's future work. The Lord will deliver me from all evil deeds, all sin, all temptation, all plots against my life. And the rescue of a few days before gave him confidence for rescues in the days ahead. He was rescued from the lion's mouth.

There's a sense in which you kind of...you kind of think about what Peter said that Satan goes around as a...what?...roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. And although I don't think that's necessarily an interpretive passage for this because I think this is a general proverbial statement, certainly we could agree that Satan is a lion who would wish to have devoured Paul before his time...which would have been before he wrote 2 Timothy and the world would have been poorer for that. And God would not allow it. God spared him to write this letter and to do what other things God had for him to do.

And he says, "The Lord delivered me and the Lord will deliver me and will bring me safely to His heavenly Kingdom." I love that. Literally the verb here is sozo, save me, He will save me. He's

speaking of ultimate salvation of which he spoke in Romans 11...Romans 13:11 where he said, "Now is your salvation nearer than when you believed." He's speaking of departing and being with Christ, Philipians 1:21 to 23. He's speaking as he did in 2 Corinthians 5 of that wanting to be absent from the body and be present with the Lord. The Lord will bring me to His heavenly Kingdom, that means eternal glory. In spite of all my difficulties, in spite of loneliness, in spite of deprivation, in spite of pain, the Lord will bring me to His Kingdom. The Lord will never allow any evil deed to take my life to change my eternity. Only in His good time and then He'll bring me into His heavenly presence.

Well that gets him so excited he lapses into praise. "To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen." He just can't stand it it's getting so good.

You say, "Well where was he?" He was in a stinking rotten wretched smelly filthy gross dungeon probably with 20-30 men, it's a hole in the ground. I've been in the one at the Mamertine Prison, they say is the place where he was. Stench would be inconceivable. No sanitation, no nothing, city sewage system running by, only a door separating it which would leak the sewage of the city in there. Filthy, vile, wretched place...cold, dark, damp and here he is praising God who is going to deliver him from every evil deed and bring him safely to the heavenly Kingdom. And when he starts to think about heaven, he just waxes eloquent and in a paean of praise lifts the glory forever and ever to Jesus Christ. And then says, "Amen." So let it be...the punctuation, the seal of assurance. All this came to him from his faithful Lord, his faithful Lord.

Then he closes. And very briefly, he closes by mentioning the next to the last group, faithful old friends. Number twelve in our list...faithful old friends. Verse 19, "Greet Prisca and Aquila, or Priscilla and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus remained at Corinth but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus."

Prisca or Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned six times in the New Testament. Paul met them in Corinth in Acts 18, lived with them, worked with them in the same trade. They left Corinth and...with Paul and went to Ephesus, according to Acts 18:18, having learned from Paul they taught Apollos, Acts 18:26 says. When Paul wrote Romans about six years later, they were living in Rome, according to Romans 16:3, but they left under persecution of the Jews by Emperor Claudius and when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, likely from Ephesus, they had a church there in their house, 1 Corinthians 16:8 and 9. Now they're living in Ephesus, perhaps due to the persecution of believers.

So here's a couple, they've been all over the place. Wherever the church needed them, wherever God wanted them to go, they've been very available, dear old friends...fellow workers. And then there's the household of Onesiphorus. We already mentioned him in chapter 1 verse 16, he came to Rome and when he found Paul was in prison he came and saw him and often refreshed him. And Paul just wants Timothy to greet the dear family of Onesiphorus. Precious people to him. People who cared about him, who would be rewarded in glory for their friendship. So you have a faithful

couple and a faithful family.

And then in verse 20 he mentions Erastus, not the one in Romans 16:23 but perhaps the one in Acts 19:22, the same ERastus. He ministered to Paul along with Timothy in the former years as well as now. He's been around a while. He'd been sent by Paul into Macedonia to minister. He's kind of an old pal of Paul and Timothy, an old friend. He's now following up the work in Corinth. Corinth was a hard place, by the way. He must have been a good man.

And then Trophimus, he was an Asian according to Acts 20 verse 4, that is in Asia Minor. He was an Ephesian from the city of Ephesus, Acts 21:29. He worked alongside Paul. He helped carry the Gentile offering to the poor Christians in Jerusalem. He had been at Troas with the Apostle, he was there when Eutychus fell out of the window and was resurrected. He was the unwilling cause of Paul's arrest in Jerusalem, according to Acts 21. He too was a good friend, beloved old friend. He was sick now. He was sick at Miletus which was tough cause his home was Ephesus. He was 36 miles from home, probably too sick to get there. And you can believe that Paul would have healed him if he could but here is a classic illustration of the fact that the sign gifts were ceasing. Paul would have healed him if he could have healed him, but he couldn't. That was not God's plan.

As the apostolic era came to a close, and the Scripture began to be pulled together, the sign gifts began to cease and the beloved Apostle Paul who had such great healing power all of a sudden couldn't heal his own dear friend. Because those things were ceasing. They were passing away. The signs of an apostle were ending with the ending of an Apostle. And even in Paul's later years they disappear. You study the book of Acts, you see many miracles in the beginning and they're gone at the end as that part of God's redemptive history ceases.

So he left his dear friend sick at Miletus. No longer was it within his power to heal, that was not God's plan. The sum of his situation then, here's where he is. He's in a stinking, smelly, rotten hole in the ground, the Mamertine Prison in Rome. Demas is gone. Crescens is gone. Titus is gone. Tychicus is gone. Priscilla, Aquila, Onesiphorus family, Erastus, Trophimus are all somewhere else. Only Luke is with him. And so he says in verse 21, "Make every effort to come before winter." Again the pathos, the melancholy, "I want you to be here, Timothy. If you wait beyond October, it's too late because it's too dangerous to travel, please come soon." And then he knew the day of his departure was at hand and if Timothy delayed they'd never see each other face to face and he couldn't say all that was in his heart to say.

And then he closes with a last group, thirteenth in our list, the faithful new friends. Verse 21, "Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus," those are three Latin names which indicate they were Roman Christians, part of the church in Rome. And Claudia is a feminine name, a lady is mentioned, and all the brethren.

He sends greeting from the believers in Rome who haven't been scattered in the persecution. These are his new friends. You say, "Where were they in his trial when he needed them?" I don't know. But even if they weren't willing to step forward and take up his cause, he forgave them...we already saw that. But he had some new friends and he wanted Timothy to hear of his friends.

You see, that's network. Our life is made up of these kinds of people...new friends, old friends, faithful people, unfaithful people, friends, enemies. It's part of life. And so in a sense he sets the whole team down in front of Timothy, this is the state, as it were, of the team as you come to take over.

And then he gives them his last words. "The Lord be with your spirit." He wanted his spirit strong. And then he says, "Grace be with you," and it's a plural "you," with you means he assumed the whole church at Ephesus would read the letter. And signed off, that's the last thing he ever said on this earth.

Beloved, team work is crucial. That's what we see here. And it's wonderful to know that the people even like Paul have to deal with the strong and the weak, the faithful and the unfaithful, the friends and the enemies. But without them we can't do the ministry. We are dependent on all those that God brings into our lives. And they all make a contribution, positive/negative, one way or another. And they are the priceless most valuable commodity we have. For God does His work in us through those He brings around us.

Much more to say but our time is gone. Let's bow in prayer.

Father, thank You for opening our eyes to see these great truths. Thank You for reminding us of how important we are to each other, how we all belong together as a body, functioning. Thank You, Lord, even for the discouraging things in Paul's life that encourage us because we identify with him and he with us. Thank You that You've given us people, the richest treasure, to come alongside and carry on Your work alongside of us. Oh what a joy. Give us great love for the folks around us, great commitment to them. Help us to strengthen each other. Help us not to be discouraged when we find a Demas or a John Mark defects or when we have to face the unfaithful anonymous who just never seem to show up. Keep us encouraged that in the midst of all of that the Lord will stand with us and strengthen us. And the gospel will be fully proclaimed. Thank You that we do what we do in Your power, but, Lord, teach us to be dependent and loving and trusting. Teach us how to delegate, how to share so Your work can be done the way that Paul gave us a model for doing it.

Father, we ask that You'll penetrate our hearts personally now with what You would want us to do in response to this, in Christ's name. Amen.

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