

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, November 1, 2023 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



“⁹ Be diligent to come to me quickly; ¹⁰ for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. ¹² And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. ¹³ Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments. ¹⁴ Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. ¹⁵ You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words. ¹⁶ At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. ¹⁸ And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen! ¹⁹ Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. ²⁰ Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick. ²¹ Do your utmost to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren. ²² The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.”
– 2 Timothy 4:9-22 (NKJV)

For some 2 Timothy may nothing more than a continuation where 1 Timothy leaves off. But as you can see, it is so much more. The book is the Apostle Paul’s “Swan Song,” his warning shot, his encouragement in the face of great opposition and obstacle. It is so practical and relevant for 21st century Christians and the church... a needed word for what we face in our day.

Fast Facts 2 Timothy

- (1) Author: Paul**
- (2) Recipient: Timothy**
- (3) Date: AD 64-67**
- (4) Place: Written from a prison cell in Rome**

- (5) **Destination: Ephesus** (*Timothy was pastor of the church at Ephesus*)
- (6) **Incident: Paul's imprisonment and pending death**
- (7) **Purpose: To encourage Timothy in the face of persecution and apostasy**

Some Key Characteristics of 2 Timothy:

- (1) **2 Timothy is Paul's last will and testimony** – In our study we are referring to it as Paul's "Swan Song." The deathbed statement of any individual has an importance which is not attached to other remarks. This is what lends significance to 2 Timothy. It is the final communication of Paul. It has a note of sadness which is not detected in his other epistles. Nevertheless, there is the overtone of triumph... *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith,"* written by Paul as his own epitaph (2 Tim. 4:7). Also, because this was his last letter, Paul was very personal. In these four short chapters, there are approximately twenty-five references to individuals.
- (2) **2 Timothy is Paul's warning of coming times of apostasy** - In this little book of 2 Timothy an ominous dark cloud is seen on the horizon. It is the coming apostasy. Today apostasy has broken like a storm, like a Texas tornado, on the world and in the church. What do we mean by apostasy? Webster defines apostasy as "total desertion of the principles of faith." So apostasy is not due to ignorance; it is a heresy. Apostasy is deliberate error. It is intentional departure from the faith. An apostate is one who knows the truths of the gospel and the doctrines of the faith, but has repudiated them.
- (3) **2 Timothy speaks of the ultimate outcome of gospel preaching** - The final fruition will not be the total conversion of mankind, nor will it usher in the Millennium. On the contrary, some will believe and for some there will come about a great turning away, not unlike what we are seeing today... even a watering down, compromise, and total perversion of the gospel. Don't think that what we see going on today has caught God off guard. God wrote about it and warned us about in 2 Timothy.

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and all the brethren. ²² The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.”
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APPLICATION QUESTIONS, QUOTES AND QUIPS:

Suppose that you’re elderly and looking back over your life. How would you like to be able to sum it up in one sentence? Write down that sentence!

“It is crucial to keep commitments to the person of Christ foundational and commitment to His cause secondary.” -Dr. Stephen Cole

- (1) What do you think he means by commitments to the person of Christ?**
- (2) What do you think he means by commitments to the cause of Christ?**
- (3) What is the difference? Do you agree or disagree with the statement? Why or why not?**
- (4) Why is it crucial to keep commitment to the person of Christ foundational and commitment to His cause secondary**
- (5) How can we avoid drifting into reversing these commitments?**

Agree/disagree: Growing Christians are reading Christians. Why/why not?

In what ways might the American concept of retirement be used in furthering God’s kingdom? What pitfalls must be avoided?

I admit it... I get notification, emails, and mail regularly from AARP! One of their recurring themes is, “You’re *not really* getting old! You’re going to live forever!” They feature some old guy who is really way too old to still surf and jog and yet the old guy is doing it... make me sick... or some movie star who just turned “older,” (I’m trying to be careful not to offend anyone here), but is desperately trying to look like he or she is still 30 years old. I have some bad news for all who buy into that mindset... “You’re in denial! You’re going to die!”

Since death is inevitable and since our aging bodies remind us daily that we’re not getting any younger, you would think that everyone would face the facts and prepare for the inevitable. Many try to reassure themselves that it will be okay... “If there is a God, surely He will be nice to me. After all, I’ve done the best that I could do.” But only God’s Word gives us clear, straightforward counsel on how to face the end of our lives.

Our text is one of those sections of Scripture that at first glance makes you wonder why God included it on the inspired page. As Paul concludes his final letter to his beloved son in the faith, he urges Timothy to make every effort to come to him before winter. He shares a

number of personal greetings and some requests for personal items that he wants Timothy to bring. **How does this relate to us?**

But a more careful look at these verses reveals many practical insights into this great man of God (Paul) and what made him who he was.

- On the one hand, he was very human.
- His loneliness cries out of these verses.
- He is wrestling with feelings of abandonment in his time of great need.
- He is disappointed with certain people.
- On the other hand, he is strong and confident in the Lord as he faces execution.
- He triumphantly states in verse 18, ***“¹⁸ And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!”***

So the suggestion of our text is not a simplistic, “follow this advice and facing death will be no problem.” The reality of disappointment with people and struggles with problems is here, but it is offset by a strong confidence in the Lord. Paul shows us how to face life’s winter in the Lord...

To face life’s winter well, establish and maintain the proper commitments

We all make commitments, although sometimes we do so without thinking.

- Some people are committed to television... they spend hours watching all of their favorite programs every week, and plan their lives around those programs
- Others are committed to computer games or sports or making money... every part of their life is consumed (almost
- In light of eternity, none of those are wise commitments and none will help as we approach death.
- No one on his deathbed says, “Man, life has been sweet! I’ve watched some great TV!” “I’ve played some great computer games!” “Boy, life has been sweet, I’ve seen some great football and baseball games... my life is complete!”

Our text reveals four commitments that helped Paul face life’s winter...

4 Commitments That Help Us Face Life’s Winter:

- (1) To face life’s winter well, commit yourself to the living Lord Jesus Christ**
- (2) To face life’s winter well, commit yourself to the cause of Christ**
- (3) To face life’s winter well, commit yourself to the cause of Christ with others**
- (4) To face life’s winter well, commit yourself to personal growth**

TO FACE LIFE'S WINTER WELL, COMMIT YOURSELF TO THE LIVING LORD JESUS CHRIST

This is the most important commitment that undergirds all of the others. Paul was first and foremost committed to the living Lord Jesus, with whom he enjoyed daily fellowship, even in that cold, dark dungeon in Rome. Verses 17, 18, and 22 all begin with, “the Lord.” These verses reveal five things about our Lord...

5 Things About the Lord: (according to 2 Timothy 4:17, 18, 22)

(1) **He is the sovereign Lord** - He was sovereign over Paul’s circumstances, as unpleasant as they were. If the sovereign Lord had chosen to do so, He easily could have rescued Paul from that dungeon and given him more years of effective ministry. After all He (God) had done it before. Some commentators interpret Paul’s words in 4:18, “*18 And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work...*” as referring to his being rescued from personal temptation to sin. While it is true that God does that, I do not think that that fits the context here.

Paul was referring to the evil deeds of wicked men. As it turned out, the Lord did not choose to deliver Paul from such evil deeds, although He did deliver Paul through them.

We see the same thing in Hebrews 11, where the author chronicles how many were delivered from great trials by faith in God. (READ: Hebrews 11:35-37) But without skipping a beat, he also tells how many suffered horrible deaths as they trusted in God (Heb. 11:35-37).

In both cases, God still reigned on high. Even if evil people do terrible things to us, we can trust in the sovereign God, whose plans cannot be thwarted.

(2) **He is the ever-present Lord** - Paul writes in verse 17, “*17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me...*” Also look on down at verse 22, “*22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit...*” Whether the Lord actually appeared to Paul or whether he knew in his spirit that the Lord stood with him, I don’t know. But as Hebrews 13:5 assures us, “*5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’*” No matter how difficult your circumstances, if your trust is in the living Lord Jesus Christ, His promise is, “*I am with you always*” (Matt. 28:20).

(3) **He is the saving Lord** - Verse 18 of our passage says... “*18 And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom...*” Jesus promised in John 6:39, “*39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.*” If by God’s sovereign grace,

you have trusted in Christ to save you from your sins, then His promise to you is sure. He won't lose you on judgment day!

- (4) **He is the glorious Lord** - At the end of **verse 18**, Paul wrote, **"To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!"** As Paul clearly shows in 1 Corinthians 1, you had nothing to do with your salvation. It originated in God's sovereign choice (three times in 1 Cor. 1:27, 28), **"so that no man may boast before God"** (1 Cor. 1:29). Since God ordained your salvation before the foundation of the world, since Christ willingly came to save all that the Father had given Him, and since He promises that He will not lose any of those, all praise and glory go unto Him!
- (5) **He is the gracious Lord** - Paul's final written words in **verse 22** of our passage are, **"Grace be with you."** Here it is in **verse 22**, **"²² The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen."** John Stott (*Guard the Gospel* [IVP], p. 127) says that grace is "the word in which all Paul's theology is distilled." The word "your" in the first half of verse 22 is singular in Greek, but when Paul writes, "Grace be with you," *you* is plural. This means that Paul expected us to read Timothy's mail.

God's grace is for *you*! He saved you by His grace. He wants you to walk daily by His grace. Because salvation is all of grace, He gets all the glory. Concerning 4:22 and 4:18, Stott observes (*ibid.*), "It would be difficult to find a better summary than these two sentences of the apostle's life and ambition. First, he received grace from Christ. Then he returned glory to Christ. 'From Him grace; to Him glory.' In all our Christian life and service we should desire no other philosophy than this."

Since we all face the inevitability of death, it is crucial that you share Paul's commitment to the living Lord Jesus Christ. If He has saved you by His grace, then death will usher you into His glorious presence, where you will glorify Him throughout all eternity!

TO FACE LIFE'S WINTER WELL, COMMIT YOURSELF TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

In our text, we have both positive and negative examples of commitment to the cause of Christ.

2 Examples of Commitment to Christ:

- (1) **Paul is a positive example of commitment to the cause of Christ** - If anyone ever deserved spending his final years in leisure and restful retirement, it was Paul. He had been tireless in abounding in the work of the Lord. You would think that being in this dungeon would have slowed him down. But here he is, still going strong for Christ. Note **verse 11** of our passage. Paul says, **"¹¹ ... Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry."** The NIV puts it, **"he is helpful to me in my ministry."** In your ministry? Paul, don't you ever quit? No!

Look down at verses 16-17, *“¹⁶ At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.”* At Paul’s preliminary hearing, none of the Roman Christians were willing to risk their necks to stand with him. If there was ever a time for a man to think about saving his own skin, this was it.

Surely, Paul would not say anything to endanger his case! Yet here he is, proclaiming the gospel in the Roman court, “that all the Gentiles might hear.” Stott (p. 125) observes, “If ever there was a sermon preached ‘out of season,’ this was it!” God graciously delivered him from death at that hearing (“the lion’s mouth” is probably a general expression for death; Roman citizens were not thrown to the lions in the stadium). We can apply this by realizing that whatever circumstances God puts us in, no matter how difficult, are an opportunity for proclaiming the gospel. As long as we are mentally able, if we end up in the hospital or a nursing home, it’s a new audience to tell about Christ. But, sadly...

(2) Several are negative examples of commitment to the cause of Christ =

3 Negative Examples to the Cause of Christ:

1. The Roman Christians were committed but cowardly to the cause of Christ - Notice it in verse 16, *“¹⁶ At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.”* It was a tense time, when Nero was torturing and killing Christians. To testify in court on Paul’s behalf would have been extremely dangerous, if not deadly. So at his preliminary hearing, no one stood with him. I don’t know where Luke was; perhaps he had not yet arrived at Paul’s side. But Paul is patient with their weakness, graciously echoing the words of Jesus, *“may it not be charged against them.”* I cannot honestly say that I would be willing to step forward as a martyr if I had the chance to hide. It would require God’s special grace to give me such courage. But I know that I will never take such a stand if I am unwilling to be bold for the gospel in situations of lesser consequences. If I don’t speak out for Christ just to save myself a little embarrassment, then I won’t speak out for Him when my life is on the line.
2. Alexander was superficially committed, but in reality opposed to the cause of Christ – Notice verses 14-15, *“¹⁴ Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. ¹⁵ You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.”* Paul warns Timothy about Alexander the coppersmith, who had done him much harm. Perhaps as Timothy traveled to be with Paul, he would be passing through the city where Alexander lived. It may have been Troas, where Paul’s coat and books were left behind, perhaps when he was suddenly arrested. Alexander was a common name, so we don’t know if this is the same man that Paul

had delivered over to Satan (1 Tim. 1:20). But it is likely that he had professed to be a believer, but he had turned against Paul, vigorously opposed his teaching, and had informed the Roman authorities about him, leading to his arrest. The best manuscripts of verse 14 read, “*the Lord will repay him according to his deeds,*” not (as NKJV), “*may the Lord repay him.*” Paul was stating a fact, not calling down a curse on him.

The fact of God’s judgment of the wicked is a source of comfort and even joy for God’s persecuted people (Rev. 18:20). Calvin points out that it was not personal revenge that led Paul to say those words, but rather his love for God’s truth. Alexander had opposed Paul’s teaching, and Paul knew that such opposition to the truth would cause great spiritual damage to many people. There are people who join the church for anticipated benefits. When the truth confronts their sinful motives, they become dangerous enemies, like Alexander, who cause much harm. Beware of a superficial commitment to the cause of Christ, when really your motive is just to get something for yourself!

3. **Demas was formerly committed, but deserted the cause of Christ for the world**

– Look at verses 9-10 or our passage, “*⁹Be diligent to come to me quickly; ¹⁰for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica*” Paul was probably more disappointed over Demas than with any of the others. When he had written to Philemon (v. 24) a few years before, Paul included Demas among his “fellow workers.” He had been a part of Paul’s team (see also, Col. 4:14). But now, when identifying with the apostle may have meant death, Demas had deserted him. Rather than loving the Lord’s appearing (4:8), Demas had loved this present world. Paul was left shivering without even a warm coat, while Demas took off to pursue “the good life.” We don’t know whether Demas later came to his senses and, like Peter after his denials, repented.

I do know that the world’s enticements are strong. I live very comfortably, and yet there are times when I see how the wealthy live and I think, “Wouldn’t it be nice to have all those things!” But as you face death, having the things of this world won’t matter much anymore. If you can join with Paul in saying, “*I have been committed to the cause of Jesus Christ,*” you will also join him in facing life’s winter well. It’s never too late, by the way.

So to face life’s winter well, commit yourself to the living Lord and His eternal cause.

TO FACE LIFE’S WINTER WELL, COMMIT YOURSELF TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST WITH OTHERS

Paul was not a Lone Ranger. These verses brim with the names of Paul’s fellow-workers in the cause of Christ.

Some Significant People Who Helped Paul Face Life's Winter: (and finish well)

- (1) **Timothy** - Timothy is foremost, of course.
- (2) **Crescens** - But also there is Crescens (4:10). This is all that we know of him, but he was faithful enough for Paul to send him to minister in the difficult Galatian region.
- (3) **Titus** - Titus, another faithful man, had finished his assignment on Crete and now was off to Dalmatia (the Balkan area).
- (4) **Luke** - Luke, ever faithful, was by Paul's side, probably taking down this letter.
- (5) **Mark** - Paul asks Timothy to bring Mark with him. Mark had accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but had deserted them and returned home. Later, Barnabas, who was Mark's cousin, wanted to give him another try, but Paul adamantly refused, leading to a split between the two great missionaries. So Barnabas had taken Mark and gone to Cyprus. His patient encouragement with Mark had paid off. Now Paul wants Mark to be with him as he faces the end.
- (6) **Tychius** - Tychicus (4:12) probably delivered this letter to Timothy and stayed on in Ephesus as his replacement ("sent" may be translated, "am sending").
- (7) **Carpus** - Carpus (4:13) was Paul's host in Troas, perhaps where he had been arrested.
- (8) **Prisca and Aquila** - Prisca and Aquila (4:19) were Paul's fellow tentmakers, who often hosted the church in their homes.
- (9) **Onesiphorus** - Paul greets the household of Onesiphorus (see 1:15-18), who either had not yet returned home after visiting Paul in Rome, or who may have lost his life ministering to the apostle in his imprisonment.
- (10) **Erastus** - Erastus (4:20) was the city treasurer of Corinth.
- (11) **Trophimus** - Trophimus (4:20) was a Gentile native of Ephesus. He was with Paul in Jerusalem, when Paul's enemies falsely accused him of bringing a Gentile into the temple, leading to Paul's arrest. The fact that Paul, who had the gift of healing, left Trophimus sick at Miletus, shows either that these supernatural gifts were fading or, at the very least, that it is not always God's will to heal supernaturally.
- (12) **Eubulus** - Paul sends greetings (4:21) from Eubulus...
- (13) **Pudens** - Pudens, Tacitus, the Roman historian, mentions a Roman noble named Pudens who married a British princess named Claudia (William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* [Westminster Press], rev. ed., pp. 222-223).
- (14) **Linus** - Linus, Irenaeus and Eusebius mention a Linus who was the first bishop of Rome after the deaths of Paul and Peter (Stott, p. 118).
- (15) **Claudia** - And Claudia, already mentioned as a British princess who married Pudens. If these are the same people, then we have here a link to British Christianity, from which American Christianity largely came.

Some Significant Reminder to Glean:

- (1) **As Christians/believers we are never alone** -
- (2) **God give us significant others to come alone side us and be a part of us** -
- (3) **We need each other** -

But the point is, Paul was not a loner. He was committed to the cause of Christ with many others, and they labored together. You will be able to face life's winter better if you are part of a body of committed believers, who uphold one another in the great cause of our Savior. But, there's a final commitment:

TO FACE LIFE'S WINTER WELL, COMMIT YOURSELF TO PERSONAL GROWTH

Spurgeon draws six lessons out of Paul's request to bring his coat (!), but I can't go there for lack of time. I want to consider his request to bring "the books, especially the parchments" in verse 13. Spurgeon uses this to chide pastors who think that they can preach without study and preparation. He says of Paul,

"He is inspired, and yet he wants books! He has been preaching at least for thirty years, and yet he wants books! He had seen the Lord, and yet he wants books! He had had a wider experience than most men, and yet he wants books! He had written the major part of the New Testament, and yet he wants books!" (*Spurgeon's Expository Encyclopedia* [Baker], 11:386.)

We don't know what these books contained, although many think that the parchments, which were more valuable than ordinary papyrus scrolls, were probably his copies of the Old Testament. But his words are amazing, in that he has just acknowledged that he is facing imminent execution, yet he wants Timothy to bring his books! This suggests at least three areas for growth, even as we face life's final winter:

3 Areas of Growth Even in Life's Final Winter:

- (1) **Take care to develop your mind** - God saw fit to put His revelation in writing, which implies that we need to use our minds to read and think. First and foremost, we should read and study the Bible. But, also, we should read good books that help us grow intellectually and spiritually. I fear that many modern Christians, sitting in a dungeon awaiting death, would say, "Bring my TV set, and the videos." Good books bring us the best thoughts of the godly men of past centuries. As long as you're able, take care to develop your mind through reading.
- (2) **Take care to develop your soul** - Reading books and especially reading the Bible should help us come to know God better. In other words, reading should not only help us become better Christian thinkers, but also to go deeper in our personal relationship with Christ. With Paul (Phil. 3:8-14), we should press on to know Christ more and more.
- (3) **Take care to develop your character** - Reading the Bible and good Christian books should help us become more Christ-like, more loving, and more humble. If we are filled with pride over how much we know, we have missed the point. In fact, the more you study the Bible and read the lives of the great saints from the past, the more you realize how little you know God and how much you need to grow. Even though you are an aged

saint like Paul, there is still room to grow in godly character. Reading is a major avenue for growth.

CONCLUSION

I read once of Dr. Charles McCoy, a Baptist pastor whose denomination insisted that he retire at age 72. He was a single man, tall (6' 4"), with white hair. He had earned two doctorates over the years. He dreaded the thought of retirement, thinking that surely there was more that he could do for Christ. About that time, a missionary from India invited him to come there and preach. Dr. McCoy had never traveled, even in the U.S., let alone overseas. But the missionary explained that in India they would respect his age.

He tried to put the idea out of his mind, and he gave the Lord all of his excuses. He didn't have any money. But he felt that the Lord wanted him to go, so he decided to sell his car and go. People in his church thought he was losing his mind. The church chairman asked, "What if you should die there?" Dr. McCoy said, "It's just as close to heaven from there as it is from here."

So he went. En route, he lost all of his belongings, including his wallet and passport. His missionary friend who invited him was not there, so he didn't know anyone. But God opened door after door for him to give the gospel to influential groups of people in the government and military. He started a Chinese church in Calcutta. He ended up having an itinerant ministry that lasted for 16 years, until he was 88! He had preached that afternoon and he had another speaking engagement that evening, when the Lord called him home.

Dr. McCoy faced life's winter well because he was committed to the living Lord Jesus Christ and His cause with others. He was committed to keep growing. If you will do the same, you will be able to face life's winter well!