

2 Timothy 4:9-22 — What Kind Of Person Am I In My Church?

June 20, 2021

Happy Father's Day! If you are a father, I hope you have a great day and feel loved and appreciated, especially by your children.

Just a quick reminder that immediately after first service, at 9:45 a.m., if you are a member, we need you in the worship space for a vote. We are voting to acquire the north section of the north mall in Spencer to be our new Spencer Campus property. It is a \$300,000 purchase.



Thankfully, we have the money. All we need is your approval to purchase the property. Members of both campuses are voting this morning, and we will let you know the results of the vote this afternoon.¹

This morning is only a vote. It is not time for discussion. Last week, we had a time for questions with Pastor Shane about the property between services. Many of you were there. On Monday, we had an open house at the property from 5-7 p.m. Many of you were there, and Pastor Shane also took questions about property at that time. So the vote between services will just be a quick vote. In addition, Vacation Bible School has a program between services for children and their parents. We don't want to take away time from their program.

Open your Bibles to 2 Timothy 4:9. We are studying through verse 22 this morning as we finish this book. This is message No. 19 in this series. You are

¹ The vote was affirmative. CrossWinds did acquire this property for its Spencer Campus.

probably wondering what will happen next week now that we are done with 2 Timothy. Let me give you a thumbnail sketch of the rest of the summer.

Next Sunday begins a new series called "Practical Prayer." It is a short four-week series based on the Lord's Prayer. We will learn why we pray and how to pray. All weeks but one in that series will be taught by the associate pastors on both campuses. Pastor Jordan and I will only preach the last message in August. That is our plan to get a little break. The "Practical Prayer" series will not be taught straight through but it will be interspersed between other teachings during the summer.

What else are we teaching during the summer? Pastor Jordan and I will also preach two short two-week long series. The first is called, "God and Government: Why Politics Can't Save Us." The second is called, "The Dark Side Of Virtual Church: Why God Doesn't Want You To Stay At Home." Jordan and I will each teach one message in those series, then we will teach the same message the following week on the opposite campus. Between switching campuses for those short series and the series on prayer taught by our associates, that will give us a little summer break.

That will bring us to fall when we will begin a study of the book of 1 Samuel. The first message on prayer begins next week with Pastor Andy.

Today, we have a lot of verses to cover as we finish 2 Timothy. Let's read those verses and dive into our study.

Do your best to come to me soon. For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. When you come,

bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus. Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers. The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. 2 Timothy 4:9–22 (ESV)

These verses appear to be a pile of random greetings thrown at the end of the letter. Some pastors ignore these verses because they appear mundane. We are not going to ignore them. We are going to study them because the Bible says that all of God's Word is profitable for teaching, correcting, rebuking, and training in righteousness. That means that God gave us these verses for a reason and God has a message for us in these verses that he wants us to learn.

What would God's message be to us in these verses?

As closed this letter and faces his death, Paul had people he loved on his mind. These were the people that made up Paul's life. These were the people that were part of Paul's team. They made it possible for him to share the gospel with his life. Paul was not a lone ranger. He needed people to help him to reach the world with the good news of Jesus.

It is no different in the church. When it comes to reaching our community with Jesus, it takes more than one person trying to accomplish that task alone. It takes all of us working together to reach our community for Jesus.

There are two simple messages from these verses that God wants us to apply to our lives. The first one is that we all need to work together to reach our community with Jesus. God has made us differently. He has gifted us differently. It is only when all of us are working together and each of us is using our unique God-given abilities that we reach our community for Jesus. That was true for Paul and his team. It is also true for CrossWinds and our team.

In the Corinthian letters, Paul described the church like a body. Some people are eyes. Others are ears. Still others are feet. It is only when the parts of the body realize that they were never created to exist alone and that they can only accomplish God's good plan for their lives when they work together with others that God's body is healthy and strong.

So the first thing we must learn from this passage and apply to our lives is discovering, "What kind of person am I in my church?" Once you can answer that question, you can jump in and begin serving. May we never say, "I attend CrossWinds Church." We don't attend a church, we work together on the CrossWinds team to reach people with Jesus.

The second simple message from these verses is that God does not just care about the faithfulness of our relationship to him. He cares about the faithfulness of our relationships with one another. So, as we go through this list of people in 2 Timothy, we will run across some that did not finish well. They didn't finish well because all they thought was important was their relationship to God. What is also important is our relationships with other people and our faithfulness to them.

Those are the two messages that we will find in these verses.

In seminary, they tell you a good sermon has three points and a poem. I am breaking all the rules this morning. I don't have a poem and I have twelve points. We have a lot to cover so let's begin meeting the different people in this final greeting and see what we can learn from them.

1. Timothy — The Faithful Son

Do your best to come to me soon. 2 Timothy 4:9 (ESV)

When Paul began both 1 and 2 Timothy he called Timothy his true son in the faith. Timothy was the son Paul never had. He was the faithful son Paul always wanted. Remember how Paul spoke about Timothy when writing to the Corinthians.

That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. 1 Corinthians 4:17 (ESV)

Paul dearly loved Timothy. Timothy was humble and teachable. He took time to learn from Paul and was a younger carbon copy of the apostle Paul. Timothy knew Paul's heart. He knew Paul's habits. He knew Paul's thinking. He knew Paul's theology.

As Paul sat in the cold, filthy, dark Mamertine dungeon, with sewage from the city sewer system leaking into his lightless cell, what he wanted more than anything was to see Timothy. Timothy's faithfulness to Jesus brought joy to Paul's heart that couldn't be diminished in his horrid circumstances. Look what Paul said about Timothy.

As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 2 Timothy 1:4 (ESV)

Some of you have been blessed with children like that. As you are in your sunset years, nothing brings more joy to your heart than to watch your children live for Jesus, serve Jesus, and advance the kingdom of Jesus. Nothing brings more joy to your heart than seeing your children carry the gospel well in their generation. If you know that feeling of joy in your heart from watching your adult children do great things for Jesus, then you know what Paul felt while in that hideous pit.

Paul also told Timothy to do his best to come to him soon. Timothy needed to hurry and make a visit. Time was of the essence. This was not just because Paul would be cheered up to see Timothy but because Paul knew he didn't have much time left until he died. Paul also knew there was not much time left until winter and then the seas would be too rough to travel.

Why did Timothy bring such joy to Paul's heart? The truth is that all Christian leaders long for people like Timothy in their lives. Timothys are people who are willing to be taught. They are people who are willing to learn. They are people that are teachable. You can mentor them and joyfully pass the reins of the church into their hands for the next generation.

While all of us want to have people like Timothy in our lives, we cannot guarantee that God will give us a Timothy. What we can do is ask ourselves if we are being a Timothy. Are we being teachable? Are we trying to learn from those who are more spiritually mature than us? Are we being trustworthy and faithful to those in spiritual leadership over us or are we flaky people? Are we rebellious people? Are we people that are bucking those God put in leadership over the

church or are we humbly coming under and being a joy to work with for leaders in the church? While all of us would love to have a Timothy learning from our lives and bringing us joy, we can't control that. We can be Timothys, learning from others that are older than us and bringing them great joy.

So, the first person in Paul's network was Timothy, the faithful son.

2. Demas - The Unfaithful Deserter

[For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. 2 Timothy 4:10 \(ESV\)](#)

We move from the most faithful guy in Paul's life to Demas, the least faithful guy in Paul's life. We don't know much about Demas. He was first mentioned in Colossians 4:14. There he was called one of the respected and intimate companions of Paul along with Luke.

For many years Demas and Paul were close. Colossians 4:14 tell us Demas was with Paul helping him during Paul's first imprisonment. Just as Paul poured into the life of Timothy, preparing him to be a next generation leader, Paul poured into the life of Demas the same way.

In Paul's letter to Philemon, he called Demas a fellow worker. In short, Paul invested a lot into Demas. He loved Demas. They were together for years. After years of life together, Demas walked away from Paul. Demas turned into a deserter.

While what Demas did was not an encouraging thing to do, I found it an encouraging thing to read. In the church, there are people you work with, people you do life with, people you consider good Christian friends, people that seem like future leaders so you entrust them with your heart, but when the road of

church life gets bumpy, they abandon the car and walk away. It breaks your heart. If you have been around the church for any length of time, you know that happens. I have seen people who are elders and Sunday school teachers get frustrated over silly things and walk away from the church. Sometimes they don't just walk away from the church I am pastoring but they walk away from church entirely. It breaks my heart. I am thankful that I am not alone when it comes to deserters. Paul had Demas desert him. We should expect we will have people desert us. That is just the way it works. Not everyone will finish well. Yes, it breaks our hearts.

Why did Demas leave Paul? Paul said it was because he was in love with the present world. Instead of suffering with Paul and providing him with comfort in his final days of life, Demas walked away from him, leaving Paul alone so Demas could find an easier life, a less challenging life. Instead of Demas living with his eyes fixed on his eternal reward, his eyes were fixed on ease, comfort, and pleasure now, not reward later.

Greek scholars point out the interesting wording of the word "desert." It is a very strong verb. It is the Greek word for desert with two intensifying modifiers in front of it. It means super-deserted. It means Demas didn't desert Paul at just any moment but in a time when Demas was most needed --- that is when he failed Paul, he abandoned Paul. He left Paul at absolutely the worst time in absolutely the worst way. Demas did not leave well. This is why he so deeply broke Paul's heart.

Think about this. After Demas spent years of his life traveling with the apostle Paul, after the food he ate for years was paid for by the apostle Paul, in Paul's time of crucial need, Demas walked away because helping Paul was too hard of a thing to do. He wanted something easier to do.

It was not just Paul that had a Demas. It is not just church leaders that have a Demas, but all of us have experienced people like Demas. Remember what life was like before COVID? Now that we are on the back side of COVID, where are all the people? Why did so many walk away from the church? Many of them were people we love, people we considered to be brothers and sisters. Like you, many of us are just scratching our heads wondering what happened. Why did those people act like Demas and just walk away?

The first lesson from this is let us not be Demases. Let us not be people that fall away from the church or fall away from our brothers and sisters in Jesus, especially when they need us and life is tough. May we be faithful people, not deserting people.

The other lesson is to remind ourselves to not fall in love with the comforts of this world. If we are too focused on the comforts of this life, it becomes easy to just look for the comforts of life instead of eternal joy and reward.

May we not be Demases. May we not abandon our brothers and sisters in Christ, especially in their time of need.

3. Crescens — The One Who Was Quiet but Capable

Crescens has gone to Galatia... 2 Timothy 4:10 (ESV)

Crescens was the quiet hero. We know almost nothing about him. What we do know about him leads us to believe he was a very capable man. I say that

because Paul sent him to Galatia. Paul went to Galatia on all three of his missionary journeys. Each time he went there, he founded churches. There were numerous churches in Galatia that were well-established. If we read the opening verses of the Paul's letter to the Galatians, we find these older churches that were settled in their ways were in serious trouble. Paul reserved some of his harshest words in all of Scripture for these churches in the first chapter of Galatians. These churches were leaving Jesus and were destroying salvation itself. Anyone that Paul sent to work with these churches to try to get them back on track needed to be a man of great spiritual strength, wisdom, and character. Apparently Crescens was that kind of man. He must have been especially mature in Christ, wise in leadership, and able to handle a stubborn and difficult church. While Crescens must have been all those things, he was also quiet and comfortable behind the scenes. He didn't need his name in the limelight. While nobody else will know his name in church history other than this one line, God knows his name and will richly reward him for his work.

Is that you? Are you a Crescens? If you are, we need you on the CrossWinds team just like Paul needed a Crescens on his team. We need people who are spiritually mature, wise, good leaders, who will go into problem situations and help navigate people out of the storm. We need people who are comfortable doing this all behind the scenes. We need people who do not feel the need to always be up front teaching others but who are comfortable using their maturity and wisdom behind the scenes guiding others. Are you a Crescens? If so, you have a place at CrossWinds. We need you!

4. Titus - The Organizer and Equipper

...Titus to Dalmatia. 2 Timothy 4:10 (ESV)

Titus appears 13 times in the New Testament. He even has a letter Paul wrote to him in our Bibles. It is the letter of Titus, and it was written between 1 and 2 Timothy. Titus seemed to do well when he had a new challenge. When Paul evangelized an area, Titus was the person who would go into the area with the new church, get the new church organized, and then equip the leaders of the church. We see Titus doing this in Titus 1:5.

This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you. Titus 1:5 (ESV)

I like to think of Titus as an executive pastor. We don't see him up front preaching to people. We see him coming in after Paul started a church in order to organize, mold, and structure the church. So we do not think of Titus as a preacher. We think of him more as an organizer. While Titus organized the new church in Crete, he was then headed to Dalmatia on the eastern shores of the Adriatic Sea to organize the new church in that city. Romans 15 tells us Paul preached in Dalmatia and new churches were birthed there. They then needed Titus to organize them.

As a pastor, I know I need those kinds of people in my relational network. Preaching and relationships take a lot of hard work. It is often too much to do a great job of organizing the church on top of those other tasks. This is why I am so grateful for Pastor Shane, our executive pastor. He doesn't want to preach. He wants to organize CrossWinds. He wants us to be more effective for Christ because we are well-organized. Shane's skills are especially important if we

purchase the Spencer Campus property. There would be no way to preach, teach, shepherd and lead a building renovation of that magnitude.

The importance of organizing churches and people around a mission is just as important today as it was in Paul's day.

Is that you? Has God given you those gifts? Are you someone who does not need to be up front but is biblically wise and gifted for leadership? If so, Paul needed people like Crescens on his team and we need people like you on our team. Maybe that is where God is calling you to serve in the church.

5. Luke - The Faithful and Gifted Friend

Luke alone is with me... 2 Timothy 4:11 (ESV)

As we learned earlier in the message, Paul was in the Mamertine prison. It was a deep, dark pit two stories underground, only accessible by a manhole-sized opening in the ceiling. Paul was in that pit 24 hours a day. It was easy to forget about him. It was easy to stay away from that repulsive place. Unlike Demas, Luke didn't abandon Paul but he stayed with Paul. He was a faithful friend.

Luke is only spoken about two other times in the Bible. In Colossians 4:14, we learn he was a physician and traveling companion of Paul. Philemon 24 also mentions him. Although only three passages in the Bible bear his man name, he is a dominant character in the New Testament. He wrote the Gospel of Luke, which is the longest and most detailed of the four Gospels. He also wrote the book of Acts. He penned 52 chapters of the New Testament, which is more than even the apostle Paul. As a physician, he was a meticulous researcher and detailed writer. He was also the one who wrote the letter of 2 Timothy we are

studying. As Paul called out the words of this letter in the pit, Luke wrote them down as he listened to Paul from above.

What I like about Luke is that while he was brilliant, he was humble. He was a constant friend of the apostle Paul, loved to come alongside Paul, was helpful to Paul and was a faithful friend. He was with Paul on his second missionary journey, and he joined Paul at the end of his third missionary journey.

With Luke's intellect, he could have done almost anything. Luke didn't want notoriety. He was content to be a friend and brilliant helper to Paul as well as his personal physician. He didn't have an ego where he tried to replace Paul. He simply delighted in helping Paul and aiding him in getting the gospel message to more people.

Luke wasn't a public, up-front preacher, and he didn't try to be one. We don't ever hear of him preaching and teaching. He was a faithful friend, a physician with very keen intellect, and a brilliant writer who acted as Paul's secretary.

When Paul said "only Luke is with me," that is a statement of the excellence of Luke's rock-steady character. Unlike Demas, who flaked out and ran away under pressure, Luke was reliable and there to help Paul when his world was falling apart.

Are you a Luke? Are you someone with great intellectual gifts? Are you an excellent writer or editor? Are you someone that delights in being a faithful helper and reliable friend? Are you OK with not being a person that is up front but being a person who works behind the scenes? If that is you, just like Paul needed a

Luke on his team, we need you on our team at CrossWinds. Humble and gifted people are extremely important people when it comes to getting the gospel to our community.

6. Mark - The One Who Failed but was Restored

Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. 2 Timothy 4:11 (ESV)

You may remember Mark from our study of the Gospel of Mark. We studied his life story in the first message of that series. Mark is also known as John Mark in the Bible. Acts 12:12 tells us his home was in Jerusalem. The church in Jerusalem met in his mother's house. As a young man in the church of Jerusalem with incredible potential, he accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. Acts 13:13 tells us that when things started to get difficult, Mark abandoned Paul and Barnabas and literally ran home to mom.

That event hurt Paul. In his mind, Mark was unreliable and couldn't be trusted. Seven years later, when Paul and Barnabas were about to set out on another missionary journey and Barnabas wanted to take Mark, Paul refused to bring him. This led to a significant disagreement between Paul and Barnabas that ended in them parting ways. Barnabas took Mark. Paul took Silas. Barnabas thought Mark had changed over the last seven years, but Paul felt he still couldn't be trusted. What happened to the broken relationship between Paul and Mark? Was it ever healed?

Fast forward about a dozen years and we find Paul in his first Roman imprisonment. Remember 2 Timothy was written during Paul's second Roman imprisonment. Guess who was with Paul during his first stint in a Roman jail?

Mark! When Paul wrote his letter to the Colossians during that first Roman imprisonment, look who was with him and helping him.

Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), Colossians 4:10 (ESV)

Mark and Paul ended up in a restored relationship when they started with a broken relationship. Mark didn't just have his relationship with Paul restored but Paul also said Mark was very useful to him. Mark went on to not just become incredibly useful to Paul but God used Mark to write the first Gospel ever penned, the Gospel of Mark.

Mark was transformed from being a useless man to an incredibly useful man to Paul and to Christ for his kingdom.

Is that you? Are you a Mark in the church? Have you failed God miserably? Have you failed others miserably? Do you feel there is not hope for your future because of what you have done in your past? Maybe your role is to be a Mark. With our God, failure is never final. We have a God who resurrects the dead and gives them a bright future. Look what our God did with the life of Mark. Imagine what God can do with your life when you come back to him. I guarantee you it is far more than you can imagine.

7. Tychicus — The Mailman Who Traveled for the Gospel

Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 2 Timothy 4:12 (ESV)

When I was growing up, I learned the mailman's motto. Have you heard it? Come rain, sleet, snow, or shine, the mail must go through. That was Tychicus. He was Paul's mailman. No matter what opposition he faced, he made sure Paul's letters were delivered to the churches Paul sent them to.

In that day, there wasn't a postal service. You didn't put a stamp on a New Testament letter to send it to a church. You had someone carry the letter for you. It was not a particularly exciting job to be a mailman. It was a job that needed to be done. What was needed was a reliable person to make sure it took place. That was Tychicus.

He is mentioned four times in the Bible. He is mentioned in Acts 20, along with Ephesians, Colossians, and in the letter of Titus. Tychicus delivered Paul's letter to the Ephesians to Ephesus. He delivered Paul's letter of Colossians to the church of Colossae. He also carried Paul's letter of Philemon to Philemon. He is also likely the one who carried the letter of 2 Timothy that we are studying to Timothy.

Tychicus was not a gifted communicator. He was not a brilliant writer and researcher like Luke. He was just an ordinary guy who was trustworthy and reliable. He was willing to work behind the scenes to make sure a difficult job that needed to be done was done and done well.

Paul needed lots of people like Tychicus in his network. At CrossWinds, we need lots of people like Tychicus in the church all working together if we are going to reach our community with Jesus. For example, every Sunday morning there are many people just like Tychicus that go to work. They see a job that needs to take place and they step in to make it happen. We can rely on them. They are trustworthy. Some of these people are in the back running the sound. Others are running the video. Still others are working at the coffee bar to make sure we have coffee. Others are greeting you at the door. Those are all jobs that

need to take place. I'm thankful for the Tychicuses in the church that make things happen.

Is that you? Are you a Tychicus? Are you just an ordinary guy or gal that is good at making sure important tasks get finished? If that is you, we need you at CrossWinds. We have a place for you at CrossWinds. You are needed in your church family. Without you, things don't take place.

8. Carpus — The Man who was Hospitable for the Gospel

When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. 2 Timothy 4:13 (ESV)

Apparently Carpus lived in Troas. It looks like Paul stayed at Carpus' home while in that city. Carpus was a great guy for Paul to have in his network. Everyone needs people who are hospitable. Everyone needs people who are willing to open up their homes and their hearts to other people. That was Carpus. While Tychicus was a mailman always traveling for the gospel, Carpus stayed home and opened up his home and life to provide incredible hospitality for the gospel.

Paul told Timothy, "On your way to see me in this Roman prison, pick up Mark and bring him with you. Also stop at Carpus' house in Troas and get my cloak, books, and parchments."

Why did Paul need his coat? We know winter was coming. Paul wanted to stay warm. When Paul was arrested and taken to prison by the Romans, he was likely arrested in Troas. The Romans wouldn't have given him a chance to bring his belongings, so he left them behind. That is why Paul's jacket was in another part of the world. The upcoming winter is the reason he desperately needed it.

What were these books and parchments? Parchments were animal skin scrolls. Books usually referred to papyrus scrolls. These were probably copies of Old Testament books. Paul getting close to death, but he still wanted his Bible. He was still reading his Bible. What an encouragement to us to know that Paul was still reading his Bible even though he was close to death.

Are you a Carpus? Are you are person who is gifted in hospitality? Are you a person who loves to open your heart and home? If that is you, we need you at CrossWinds Church. Many people think most spiritual progress takes place on Sunday morning when I am teaching. While spiritual progress does take place while listening to a sermon, some of the best spiritual progress takes place in homes. It takes place around a dinner table or in a living room when people are talking about Jesus and relating about Jesus. Hospitality breaks down walls that keep people away from Jesus. If that is you, and you can open up your home, don't underestimate the immense good you can do for the kingdom. We need you at CrossWinds.

9. Alexander - An Enemy Of Paul and the Gospel

Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. 2 Timothy 4:14–15 (ESV)

So far we have talked about people God raised up to help the church spread the gospel. Here we have someone in Paul's life that was doing the opposite. Alexander was Paul's enemy. He was working against Paul and the gospel. All of us have people like Alexander in our lives as well. They oppose us and the church. All we know about this Alexander is that he was a coppersmith.

He worked in metal. Maybe he was located in Ephesus, where Paul was pastoring, maybe in Troas, where Paul was arrested. I don't know.

In Ephesus, we know Demetrius was a silversmith who made little idols of Artemis, the local god of the city. When the church grew so large that people stopped purchasing his silver Artemis souvenirs, he started a riot against the church. Perhaps Alexander did the same thing when when his copper souvenir shop was being put out of business by the growing church. While we don't know exactly what happened, we do know that Alexander set himself as an enemy of Paul and did great harm to the gospel message.

As I read this, I thought, it is good to know that Paul had people who were enemies of him and the gospel. It should not shock me when I have people who are enemies and who hate the gospel. If it happened to Paul, expect it will happen to me.

How do we handle our enemies? Paul told us how to handle our enemies when he said, "the Lord will repay him according to his deeds." There is great application for us. It is not our job to get even with our enemies. Rambo was about getting even with enemies. We are not about getting even with our enemies. God is the one in charge of dispensing justice. That is not our personal job.

When people hurt us, we must remember that nobody will ever get away with the sin they have done and the hurt that have created. If anyone hasn't trusted Jesus to forgive their sin, they will be judged by Jesus and given a fair and just eternal punishment for their sin for all eternity in the lake of fire. When

our enemies hurt us and try to destroy the gospel they are only increasing the horror of their eternal damnation, which Jesus will administer fairly and justly.

Deuteronomy 32:35-36 tells us that as God's people, we do not take revenge against people, that God will take care of justice. What are we to do with our enemies? We are to watch out for them and to avoid them, just like Paul told Timothy to do when it came to Alexander. In the interest of time, I am not going to read the verses in Deuteronomy that talk about leaving revenge to God but I will read you two verses in the New Testament where these verses from Deuteronomy 32 are quoted.

For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." Hebrews 10:30 (ESV)

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Romans 12:19 (ESV)

Will we have enemies in our lives? Yes, we will. Paul had enemies. We will have enemies. With our enemies, we must not carry a grudge. We must not feel the need to get even. We must leave justice in God's hands. We are to be watchful of our enemies and try to avoid conflict with our enemies.

10. The People that are Missing When You Need Them

At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! 2 Timothy 4:16 (ESV)

Who are these people? I don't know. They never showed up. They just never came when they were needed. Has anybody had that happen to them? Has anyone had people not show up when you were desperate for help?

Let's give you a little background that will make these verses clear. Paul said that at his first defense, no one stood by him, but all deserted him. The word

“defense” in Greek is used to describe a courtroom defense. In Roman law, there were typically two courtroom proceedings. When Paul was arrested in Troas and taken to Rome, right after arriving, he would have faced his first of two courtroom appearances. The first trial was a preliminary trial and was an assessment of the charges made against Paul. Where was Luke at this time? Why was he not there? He probably hadn’t arrived in Rome.

Remember that just a few years before this was the great fire of Rome. Nero blamed the Christians for the fire so there was a lot of hatred toward Christians in Rome at this point in history. Nero was rounding up Christians and killing them.

Paul’s presence and trial in Rome was noteworthy since he was one of the most outspoken Christians in the world. When Paul was put on the stand in his first trial and this famous Christian that led so many to the Lord had no one helping him with his defense, this was heartbreaking. Imagine how abandoned Paul felt in that moment. The entire world was against him and nobody volunteered to come forward and help him.

In some way, this lack of help was understandable. At this time Nero was sewing Christians inside animals skins then letting wild dogs tear them to shreds in the Roman arena. He was taking other Christians, covering them in pitch, putting them on poles and setting them on fire. They served as human torches to light his parties at night. You could see why nobody wanted to step forward to help Paul. Everyone was afraid to be associated with Paul because they didn’t want to be tortured and lose their lives.

Here again was an opportunity for Paul to be bitter. When people fail you, hurt you, and don't show up to help you, it is easy to become bitter against them. Instead of bitterness, Paul modeled forgiveness. He simply said, "May this hurt not be held against them." What incredible forgiveness.

All of us have these no-show people in our lives. We have people who failed us when we needed them most. We need to do one of two things with that hurt. We can keep thinking about it and let it make us into bitter people who are unpleasant around others and have no joy or we can forgive the people who hurt us, just like Jesus forgave those who were crucifying him in Luke 24. Forgiveness, not bitterness, is the only way forward. That is the road Jesus took. It is the road Paul took. It is the road we need to take as well.

While everyone left Paul alone, thankfully Paul was not completely alone. Look what he said next.

But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. 2 Timothy 4:17–18 (ESV)

The Lord stood by Paul. Isn't that good? Everybody else deserted Paul but the Lord stood by him. Jesus is the friend that sticks closer than a brother. Jesus is the one who will never leave us or forsake us. Paul said the Lord stood by him and strengthened him to proclaim the full gospel message so all the Gentiles would hear it.

To understand the significance of that statement, we need a little more history. The Roman courtroom was a large house in the city of Rome. The building was shaped like a large cross. In the center were the judges, the council,

the accused, and the prosecutor with his legal team. The courtroom was not a private building. It was a public building. The four, large, cross-like arms off the main section of the court housed spectators who came to watch what happened in court. This was their ancient version of watching Judge Judy. Remember that Paul was a high-profile criminal. Christians were hated in Roman so people came from everywhere in the city to watch the legal proceedings. There were literally thousands watching Paul's first trial. There he stood, all alone, without legal council, defending himself in that Roman court.

What did Paul do? Did he plead for his life? Absolutely not! He used his time on the witness stand to fully proclaim all of the gospel to the thousands of Gentiles that had come to see Paul's day in court. Instead of trying to save his life, Paul preached the gospel message and tried to turn people to new life. He singlehandedly conducted his own Billy Graham evangelistic crusade while on trial for his life.

How did it go? Amazingly they didn't decide to kill Paul on the spot. That is why Paul said God rescued him from the lion's mouth. Being rescued from the lion's mouth is a figure of speech in the Bible that means rescued from certain death. It is used twice in the Psalms, in Psalm 22:21 and 35:17.

[Save me from the mouth of the lion! You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen! Psalm 22:21 \(ESV\)](#)

So just as Jesus stood by Paul to help him proclaim the gospel when he was all alone, Jesus will stand by us and help us proclaim the gospel to our friends and neighbors, even when we are all alone. Did you know Jesus

promises to help us tell people about Jesus when we step out in faith and bravery and begin telling people about Jesus?

Who else was in Paul's life?

11. Faithful Old Friends

Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus. 2 Timothy 4:19–20 (ESV)

Who are these people? These are simply Paul's old friends who were living in Ephesus. Prisca and Aquila, also known as Priscilla and Aquila, are mentioned six times in the New Testament. They were tentmakers just like Paul. They taught the gospel to a man named Apollos, who was an outspoken communicator of the gospel, just like Paul in that time. Wherever God needed them, that is where Priscilla and Aquila went.

Onesiphorus we met earlier. He came from Ephesus, found Paul in prison and stayed with Paul for a long time to help him, just like Luke.

Erastus was probably not the city treasurer of Rome who became a Christian. This is another Erastus who lived in Ephesus.

According to Acts 20:4, Trophimus was from the city of Ephesus. He was left sick at Miletus, which was 36 miles away from home. Paul left him sick. Here is an interesting thing to notice. If Paul could have healed him, why didn't Paul heal him? It appears that as you get further away from Jesus and the early church, you see less and less miraculous gifts. I am sure Paul would have healed Trophimus if God gave him the power to heal him. That was not God's plan. This is a reminder that the apostles did not heal everyone. The further you go away

from the time of Jesus, the less frequently you see the abundant supernatural miraculous healings like in the days of Jesus.

12. Faithful New Friends

...Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers. The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. 2 Timothy 4:21–22 (ESV)

Who are these folks? We don't know. We just know they have Roman names. It is safe to assume these were Paul's new Christian friends.

Conclusion

So these are the people that made up Paul's life. As he prepared to die, he listed off the team Timothy would take over when Paul was gone.

Remember, there are two overarching lessons we should learn from these verses. First, God gave each of the people on Paul's team different gifts and different roles to play. Everyone needed to faithfully play their positions and use their gifts for the gospel to make progress. In the same way, God gave each of us at CrossWinds different gifts and different roles to play. The only way for the gospel to go forward is for all of us to play our parts. Maybe you are a Timothy who is on your way to be a leader in the next generation. Maybe you are a Mark. You are someone that failed but can be restored. Maybe you are a Luke. You are a very gifted person but you are comfortable to work behind the scenes and use your gifts to help others. Maybe you are a Tychicus. You are an ordinary person who is good at seeing jobs that need to get done and making sure they take place. Maybe you are a Carpus. You are good at hospitality and opening up your heart and home for the gospel.

Whatever your shape, we need you at CrossWinds. Just as it was only when Paul worked with his team that the gospel could spread around the world, it is only when we have a healthy team with everyone involved at CrossWinds that the gospel message of Jesus can reach our friends and neighbors.

The second big message of these verses is God does not just care about the faithfulness of our relationship to him. He also cares about the faithfulness of our relationships with one another. That is the only way to finish well.

My friends, may we be a church that is not just faithful to Jesus, but may we also be faithful to one another until the Lord takes us home. That is the only way for us to be faithful to the end and finish well.



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