

The Books of 1 and 2 Timothy

Lesson 13: Final Charge and Faithfulness to the End -- 2 Timothy 4:9-22

Letters often save their most tender moments for the end, when the formal business is finished and the heart speaks plainly. So it is here. Paul has given his great charge to preach the word and declared his confidence in the crown that awaits him. Now, in these closing lines, the apostle becomes simply a man, lonely and aging, writing to a friend he loves: "Do your best to come to me soon" (v. 9). You can hear the ache in it. The mighty missionary who crossed seas and planted churches now longs for a familiar face and asks his son in the faith to hurry.

And then a painful sentence: "Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica" (v. 10). Demas had been a co-worker, named alongside Luke in earlier letters, a man who once stood with Paul. But the love of this present world crept in and pulled him away. It is one of the saddest single lines in the New Testament, and it stands as a sober warning that anyone, even a trusted helper, can drift. Others are scattered too, some sent out on mission, and Paul writes the quiet words, "Luke alone is with me" (v. 11).

Yet the passage is not all loss. Paul asks Timothy to bring Mark, "for he is very useful to me for ministry" (v. 11), the same Mark who had once abandoned Paul on an earlier journey and caused a sharp disagreement. Here he is, restored and useful, a living picture of grace and second chances in the Lord's work. Paul asks for his cloak against the cold, and for the books, "especially the parchments" (v. 13). Even at the end, facing death, he wants God's word near him. And when he recalls that at his first defense "no one came to stand by me," he does not grow bitter; he says, "But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me" (vv. 16-17).

This is where the whole study of First and Second Timothy comes to rest: in the faithfulness of God to a faithful man at the very end. Paul is sure of it: "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom" (v. 18). Surrounded by greetings to ordinary saints, Prisca and Aquila, the household of Onesiphorus, the letter closes with a benediction as warm as a hand on the shoulder: "The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you" (v. 22). As we study these final verses, and as we finish this whole journey through Paul's letters to Timothy, let us learn what it means to be faithful to the end, and to trust the Lord who stands by us even when others fall away.

Group Discussion: Paul writes that "Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me" (v. 10), yet in the same passage Mark, who had once failed Paul, is now "very useful" for ministry (v. 11). What do these two men, side by side, teach us about the dangers of loving the world and the hope of being restored to usefulness in the Lord's work?

Personal Reflection: Paul could say that even when "no one came to stand by me... the Lord stood by me and strengthened me" (vv. 16-17). Think of a time you felt deserted or alone in

following Christ. How did you experience, or how do you need to experience, the Lord standing by you?

Read 2 Timothy 4:9-22

Study Questions

1. Paul records that “Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica” (v. 10). Demas had been a trusted co-worker (Colossians 4:14). What does his desertion teach us about the danger of loving the world, and about whether a Christian who has served faithfully can still fall away?
2. Paul, near the end, simply asks, “Do your best to come to me soon” (v. 9), and notes that “Luke alone is with me” (v. 11). When have you felt the loneliness that can come with following Christ faithfully, and how do you respond to the longing for companionship in the faith?
3. Paul asks Timothy to bring Mark, “for he is very useful to me for ministry” (v. 11), the same Mark who had earlier deserted him (Acts 15:36-39). What does Mark’s restoration teach us about grace, second chances, and the way the Lord makes ordinary, even failed, servants useful again?
4. Even facing death, Paul asks for his cloak and for the books, “especially the parchments” (v. 13). What does this small, human request reveal about Paul, and where do you sense the Lord inviting you to keep His word near and your heart engaged, even in difficult seasons?
5. Paul warns, “Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm... Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message” (vv. 14-15), yet entrusts the matter to God: “the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.” What does this teach us about how to respond to those who oppose the truth and harm us, without taking vengeance into our own hands?
6. Paul says that at his first defense “all deserted me,” yet adds, “May it not be charged against them” (v. 16). Where in your life is God calling you to forgive those who failed or abandoned you, and what makes that kind of release so hard and so freeing?
7. Paul testifies, “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” (v. 17). What does this teach about the Lord’s faithful presence with His servants and His purpose to spread the gospel even through our weakness and abandonment?
8. Paul closes with greetings to ordinary saints, Prisca and Aquila, the household of Onesiphorus, Erastus, Trophimus (vv. 19-21). What do these named, ordinary believers tell you about your own place in the Lord’s church, and where might God be calling you to be quietly faithful and useful?
9. Paul’s confidence rests in this: “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” (v. 18). What does this passage teach about the Lord’s faithfulness when people desert us, about the heavenly kingdom as the believer’s true destination, and about how Demas’s fall warns us against presuming that salvation cannot be lost?

10. Look back not only over these final verses but over the whole journey through First and Second Timothy. Name one specific way Jesus has been forming you through this study, and one concrete step you will take to remain faithful to the end, trusting the Lord who stands by you.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: 1 John 2:15-17, do not love the world or the things in the world; Acts 15:36-39, the earlier falling out over Mark; Colossians 4:14, Demas and Luke once serving together; Philippians 4:11-13, contentment and strength through Christ in every situation; 2 Timothy 1:16-18, the faithful service of the household of Onesiphorus.