

Message #16

II Timothy 4:9-22

In the course of history, there have been some very interesting final words shared by those who were sentenced to die:

Gary Gilmore, who faced a firing squad in 1976 in Utah said, "Let's do it."

James French, who went to the electric chair in Oklahoma in 1966 said, "French Fries."

Vincent Gutierrez, who died by lethal injection in Texas (2007) said, "Where's my stunt double?"

George Appel, who died by electric chair in New York (1928) said, "Well Gentlemen you are about to see a baked Appel."

Thomas Grasso (1995) said, "I want the press to know I did not get my spaghetios, I got spaghetti."

David Matthews, who died by lethal injection in Oklahoma (2011) said, "I think the Governor's phone is broke, he hadn't called yet."

Carl Panzram, who admitted to be a serial killer who killed 21 people, was hanged in 1930 in Kansas. His final words were "Hurry up you Hoosier, I could hang a dozen men while you are fooling around."

When we come to this part of II Timothy, we come to the last known words from Paul, who was about to be executed. These are fascinating words to study but more than that, these are inspired words of God. These are God-breathed words and God wants us to see them and understand them.

Now Paul was not sentenced to die because he had done something evil, like all those we just mentioned; **he was going to be executed for being a man of God, an apostle of God and for preaching the truth about the grace of God.**

There were no news reporters around Paul to record what his final words were, but Paul wrote down the final words we get to see and study and they are intriguing. This is the final personal look God gives us of Paul. Here are the final nine thoughts Paul communicates to Timothy:

FINAL THOUGHT #1 – Come see me soon. 4:9-12

Now Paul said in **verse 6** that he knew he was about to die, and before he died he wanted to see Timothy one final time.

Now the verb "Make every effort" is an imperative, so this is a command. In fact, Paul uses this very command two times in these final words (**4:9, 21**). The verb means to give eager, zealous diligence to go to see Paul and do this very fast (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 414-415). In fact, this very verb carries with it the idea of doing something in a fast time; but to strengthen the point Paul adds the adverb "soon." This is the word which means very quickly or very swiftly. It is the word from which we get our English word "tachometer" (*Ibid.*, pp. 440-441).

So Paul is commanding Timothy to use great speed to leave Ephesus and go to Rome to see him. This is a trip of 1400-1500 miles and Timothy needed to get at this and make it quick. Now the “for” that begins **verse 10** gives Timothy six reasons why Timothy needs to get there fast. It seems to me from assessing these reasons that except for Demas, Paul had said his final good-byes to key men and he saved Timothy for the last of the goodbyes.

Reason #1 - Demas had deserted Paul. **4:10a**

Demas abandoned Paul and probably went back to Colossae (Col. 4:14; Philemon 24). The reason he did that was because he loved this present world, or as the Greek says he loved the “now age.” Either it was a fear of losing his life or a love for the allurements of this world or perhaps a combination of both that caused Demas to “desert” Paul. That word “desert” is a strong Greek word that means to abandon and forsake someone. It carries with it the idea of leaving someone behind who needs help (*Ibid.*, p. 128). Demas was not willing to stick with Paul. He was not willing to pay any price of hardship because he had a love for the world, so he abandoned Paul to live out his days as a lover of the world.

Reason #2 - Crescens had gone to Galatia. **4:10b**

We know nothing about Crescens other than he was apparently someone close to Paul and he went to Galatia. Tradition says that he went to Galatia and founded the churches of Vienne and Mayence near Lyons, and became bishop of Chalcedon. What we do know is that if Paul sent Crescens to Galatia, he was well-grounded and very knowledgeable of Pauline grace.

Reason #3 - Titus had gone to Dalmatia. **4:10c**

Titus had been a very key man on the island of Crete. Titus had gone to Dalmatia, which is modern day Croatia and Bosnia.

Reason #4 - Luke was with Paul. **4:11a**

Dr. Luke was still with Paul and was Paul’s only companion in these final hours. He was doing his best to minister to Paul and help Paul with various needs.

Reason #5 - Timothy was to bring Mark. **4:11b**

Paul wanted to see Mark before he died. They had a major fall out (Acts 13:13) when Paul went to Perga. As a result Paul would not let Mark travel with him again. Well apparently as time transpired, Mark had proved himself to be a faithful man of God and Paul wanted to see him because “he is useful for me for service.” That word “useful” is interesting because it means Paul thought that Mark would be a good useful servant to him and for ministry (*Ibid.*, p. 191).

Reason #6 - Tychicus was sent by Paul to Ephesus. **4:12**

Now Tychicus had been sent by Paul to Ephesus probably for two main purposes:

(Purpose #1) - To take Timothy this final letter.

(Purpose #2) - To relieve Timothy so he could go visit Paul in Rome for a final time.

Now there are four main observations we want to make from these verses:

Observation #1 - As great a man as Paul was, he still needed close friends.

Paul was a great apostle, a great teacher, and the most spiritual man on earth. He was fearless. He wrote inspired Scripture. He planted many churches. He was not afraid of death. But he still needed friends. Great spirituality includes and needs friendships.

Observation #2 - Paul was very selective in those he chose to meet with.

Paul was very selective in who he wanted to see before he died. I find it fascinating that Barnabas is not on this bucket list. Tradition says he was stoned and Mark buried his body. Some claim Barnabas did live many more years and even wrote an Epistle called “The Epistle of Barnabas.” There are some strange things in that epistle, but it does contain a lot of Pauline doctrine. However, there is no mention that Paul was going to meet with him before he died.

Observation #3 - Paul did not just forget about those who abandoned him.

Paul did not take the view let’s just forgive and forget everyone of everything. Demas had done Paul wrong and Paul wants that point known.

Observation #4 - Timothy was the last man Paul wanted to see before he would die.

He had challenged others, now he wanted to give Timothy one final challenge.

FINAL THOUGHT #2 – Bring me three specific tangible items. **4:13**

Now as we look at **verse 13**, keep in mind that you are looking at a man who is about to die. So death really brings things into perspective as far as what you really need. There were three tangible items Paul wanted Timothy to bring to him:

Tangible Item #1 - Bring Paul his cloak. **4:13a**

This is a very rare Greek noun. The word is articular “the cloak” which means Paul had a very specific coat in mind. It was a very warm poncho-type garment. Now we know from **verse 21** that Paul was about to go into winter, so this coat would certainly be that which would give him additional warmth. But the article indicates this was a very specific coat that Paul wanted Timothy to bring.

Tangible Item #2 - Bring Paul the books. **4:13b**

Again the noun “books” is articular “the books.” These were specific books that Paul wanted Timothy to bring to him. Obviously these books were important to Paul studying the Scriptures.

Tangible Item #3 - Bring Paul the parchments. **4:13c**

The noun “parchments” is also articular, referring to the specific books of the Word of God, both Old Testament and New Testament.

Now it is very clear that Paul wanted to spend his final hours on earth carefully studying the Bible. This is a man who had written much of the New Testament, he is a man who had been caught up to the third heaven and what he wanted to do in his final hours of life was to study more of the Scriptures.

If ever there is an illustration of what one should do when in situations that are depressing, it is this one. The best thing one may do when one finds himself depressed is to study the Word of God. Come to church to hear the Word of God taught is one of the best investments of time and one of the best cures for depression.

Now notice what Paul does not ask for. He does not say bring me my savings book so I can look at how much money I have accumulated. He does not ask for a copy of his portfolio so he can look at all the stuff he saved. He wants the Word of God. **When it comes time for us to die, that is what we better want because that is the only thing that will matter.**

FINAL THOUGHT #3 – Guard yourself against Alexander. **4:14-15**

Alexander was a man who lived in Ephesus. Paul mentions him in I Timothy 1:20 as one he had delivered over to Satan. Luke mentions him in Acts 19:33-34. We learn six facts about Alexander in these verses:

Fact #1 - His name was Alexander. **4:14a**

Paul was not some politically correct minister, he would name people. He named Alexander.

Fact #2 - He was a coppersmith. **4:14b**

This is how the man made his money. Probably he made many different idols and coins.

Fact #3 - He did Paul much harm. **4:14c**

The word “harm” means that this man did many evil, wicked, bad, worthless things to Paul personally (*Ibid.*, p. 227).

Fact #4 - God would repay him. **4:14d**

Timothy did not need to retaliate against him because Paul said God will repay him according to his evil works.

Fact #5 - Timothy was to be on guard against him. **4:15a**

The verb “be on guard” means to carefully watch and guard something like a soldier. See it, observe it and guard it like you would stay on the alert against an enemy. Paul never wanted Timothy to view Alexander as his ally and friend. He wanted Timothy to be on guard against him.

Fact #6 - He opposed Paul’s teaching. **4:15b**

The Greek literally means Alexander took a strong stand, an opposite stand against the teaching of Paul (*Ibid.*, p. 475).

Paul said to Timothy, you guard yourself against that guy. He is no good and he is up to no good.

FINAL THOUGHT #4 – Know that at first no one supported Paul. **4:16**

Apparently just like when the disciples abandoned the Lord, so also Paul’s team abandoned him. When Paul first got in trouble in Rome, no one stood with him. We learned from chapter 1 that many from Asia had abandoned Paul (1:15).

But Paul had prayed for these people that the Lord would not count that against them. **There is a judgmental calculation that God makes concerning our loyalty to one who was faithful to God. If a person is disloyal to a faithful servant of God, God does not take that lightly.**

FINAL THOUGHT #5 – Know that God was with Paul. **4:17-18**

This is such a wonderful text because it shows us that even when things are the worst, and even when you have been abandoned by people, God is still with you and does some wonderful things for you:

Benefit #1 - God stood with Paul. **4:17a**

That word “stand” means that the Lord stands with you and beside you. You are not standing alone ever. No matter what the believer faces, he may always count on the Lord.

Benefit #2 - God strengthened Paul. **4:17b**

The Lord will always strengthen his people to be able to cope. Now one reason why he did this was so that Paul could continue to preach God’s Word to the Gentiles.

Benefit #3 - God rescued Paul. **4:17c-18a**

Now carefully read what God rescues his people from—“every evil deed” or “every evil work.” This has application to the fact that God would rescue him from all evil done to him and anything that he would do that could be classified as evil. Every covers everything.

Benefit #4 - God will bring Paul to heaven. **4:18b**

In the end God would take Paul to heaven. He would take him “safely to heaven.” Now why does Paul say that he would be brought “safely” to heaven? Is there any other way one can go to heaven? Well we think the answer lies in Pauline theology.

When one dies, one is presently with the Lord and the life either reflects one of gold, precious metal or silver or wood, hay and stubble. One may face God with confidence or with shame. Paul’s life had been lived for the glory of God and he knew that the Lord would bring him safely into heaven.

FINAL THOUGHT #6 – Greet specific faithful people of God. **4:19-21**

As Paul signs off this final letter, he has some faithful people he wants Timothy to greet and remember:

- 1) Greet Prisca and Aquila- **4:19a** They had a church in their house, great servants. I Cor. 6:19
- 2) Greet Onesiphorus and his house - **4:19b** Stood with Paul in Rome. II Tim. 1:16
- 3) Greet Erastus - He had been a very close friend of Timothy and at one time had been city treasurer of Corinth - **4:20a** - Romans 16:23; Acts 19:22
- 4) Greet Trophimus - **4:20b** He was a very faithful Ephesian believer, loyal to Paul. Acts 21:29
He must have been an elder of the church, whom Paul left in Miletus (Acts 20:17).
- 5) Make every effort to get here before winter. **4:21a** - He could use a visit and his coat.

FINAL THOUGHT #7 – Faithful people of God greet you. **4:21**

- 6) Eubulus greets you. **4:21b** - These next four probably all from church of Rome.
- 7) Pudens greets you. **4:21c** - Some faithful man in the Roman church.
- 8) Linus greets you. **4:21d** - Eusebius says Linus became Pastor of church in Rome after the deaths of Paul and Peter. After Linus died he was succeeded by Anencletus and Clement, who knew the apostles (Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, p. 110, 208).

9) Claudia greets you. **4:21e** - Believing woman in Rome, connected to aristocratic family.

10) All the brethren greet you. **4:21f** - All who were in God's family greeted Timothy.

FINAL THOUGHT #8 – Remember the Lord is with you. **4:22a**

A believer goes through many things in life. This is so important to realize—the Lord is with you.

FINAL THOUGHT #9 – Remember God's grace is with you. **4:22b**

This of course was the entire ministry of God, the grace of God. Now the pronoun “you” is plural. So what this means is that Paul had all believers in mind when he wrote these words.