

The Final Words of Paul – Part 2

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Paul reviews his life and ministry, and encourages Timothy to come to him
2. aim – to cause us to see our lives as a drink offering being poured out by Christ to the glory of God
3. passage – 2 Timothy 4:6-22

b. outline

1. Paul Reviews His Life (2 Timothy 4:6-8)
2. Paul Invites His Friend (2 Timothy 4:9-18)
3. Paul Sends His Greetings (2 Timothy 4:19-22)

c. opening

1. the **final words** of Paul
 - a. his final words *in the New Testament* – the “closing” of his apostolic ministry
 1. not his “last” words *period* (spoken or written), but the last words that the Spirit *inspired*
 - b. (more importantly) his final words *in this letter* – the “closing” of the letter itself
 1. very typical for Paul, to close each letter with some *personal remarks*
 2. often making reference to common acquaintances with the audience (**note Romans 16**)
2. the **final review** of Paul
 - a. Paul addresses his life *in general* (**vv. 6-8**)
 1. he *announces* his “*departure*” – that he is about to face execution
 2. he *analyzes* his faithfulness – that he has “*run the race*” and persevered to the end
 3. he *anticipates* his reward – that he has a “*crown of righteousness*” – the presence of Christ
 - b. Paul addresses his *current situation* (**vv. 9-22**)
 1. **question:** how would Timothy *respond* to the announcement of **vv. 6-8** – that his mentor and friend is expecting to be dead shortly?
 - a. given: that Timothy is much more than just a co-laborer – that Timothy is Paul’s “child” in the faith, that they have traveled extensively together, suffered together, etc.?
 2. **answer:** Timothy would receive this news with great grief and sadness – he would **mourn**
 - a. so ... it seems reasonable that Paul (knowing this!) would attempt to **comfort him**
 - b. **e.g.** most of the **17** names in this paragraph are *family* who will continue to support Timothy
 3. but ... it appears *primarily* that Paul is **reaching out to Timothy for comfort for himself**
 - a. **IOW:** Paul is **mourning too** – these very personal comments reflect that emotion in him

II. Paul Invites His Friend (2 Timothy 4:9-18)

Content

a. the invitation (v. 9)

1. **note:** “*Come Before Winter*” by Dr. Charles Carter (SMBC) – an annual evangelistic appeal
 - a. a call for people to “do” what they are called to “do” before it is “too late” – a well-meaning, but typical example of preaching designed to encourage specific behaviors, but with little *doctrinal foundation* to support that behavior *over the long-term* (**i.e.** as only “rote” behavior)
2. Paul encourages his young apprentice to come to Rome “soon”
 - a. “soon” = “before winter” (**v. 21**); before the travel channels on the Mediterranean close
 1. **i.e.** the journey from Ephesus to Rome would be much quicker by sea, but would close in winter
 2. **i.e.** over land, the journey would be ~5 times the distance (>800 miles)
 - b. “soon” = before I am gone (**v. 6**); before the executioner comes (as Paul anticipates)
 1. **note:** Paul must believe that he has time, since it took >4 years to resolve his first arrest
 - a. this is why he wants his “*cloak*” and the “*books and parchments*” from Troas – he can use the remaining time to study and finish his notes *and spend it with friends teaching, etc.*

b. the desire in the invitation (vv. 10-13)

1. the “for” in **v. 10** explains *why* Paul wants Timothy to come soon: **Paul feels deserted and alone**
 - a. **note:** this section is very **ad hoc** (**i.e.** not very polished; off-the-cuff) – it is Paul’s attempt to communicate his *feelings* of loneliness and despair in the face of death (**e.g.** Jesus in the Garden)
2. in **vv. 10-14a; 20**, Paul mentions ten (10) people related to this sense of loneliness

- a. Demas – the co-worker that has deserted him to go back to Thessalonica (**see below**)
 - b. Crescens – an unknown co-worker that has gone to Galatia; probably for good reason
 - c. Titus – probably the same Titus as in the next letter, a close friend and co-laborer that has gone to Dalmatia (modern Croatia, N shore of the Adriatic); probably for good reason
 - 1. **IOW:** these three men have left me (two for good reason), and I am now feeling quite alone
 - d. Luke – the beloved physician (and author) that joined Paul on his Second journey (**Acts 16**)
 - 1. Luke being with Paul is good (of course!), but Paul *still feels* a sense of loneliness
 - 2. because (as he notes in **vv. 16ff**) the **general** sense he feels now is one of desertion by many
 - e. Mark (John) – the author of the Gospel who abandoned Paul on his First journey (**Acts 13**)
 - 1. Paul refused to bring him along on the Second journey, causing a rift with Barnabas
 - 2. now, Paul sees him as “*useful to me*” = although he abandoned the mission, he did not abandon the Christian faith, but was restored, and became an effective gospel worker
 - a. **note:** John Mark was *not* an apostate because he abandoned a “work” – we must be careful to distinguish between true apostasy (**see Demas below**) and simple failure
 - 3. **IOW:** Paul desires for Mark to join him also because Mark is an integral part of the missionary and church-planting effort, *and that is who Paul needs in this hour of loneliness*
 - f. Tychicus – the messenger of Paul, the deliverer of Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon
 - 1. Paul has “*sent*” him to Ephesus, possibly to deliver *this* letter or to “replace” Timothy there
 - 2. **IOW:** Tychicus will “hold down the fort” while you come to Rome
 - g. Carpus – an unknown native of Troas; probably a friend who provided support and lodging there
 - 1. Troas was the port of travel into the Aegean for the Macedonian Call (**Acts 16:11**)
 - h. Alexander the coppersmith – a direct opposer of Paul (**see below**)
 - i. Erastus – a helper to Paul, possibly the city treasurer of Rome (**Rom. 16:23**), now at Corinth
 - 1. sent ahead with Timothy as Paul left Ephesus for Jerusalem (**Acts 19**)
 - j. Trophimus – a helper to Paul on his Second journey, a native of Ephesus, now ill and at Miletus
3. most of these men (with Timothy) were Paul’s *family* – they were close to Paul because they labored alongside of him and were his closest allies and friends in the world
- a. **note:** Timothy was probably Paul’s closest friend above all!!
4. **Paul desires his friends to comfort him and he still wants to be useful even with the shadow of death hanging over him, so he invites Timothy and John Mark to join him for his own encouragement and strengthening, and to provide continued training and mission support**
- c. the reality behind the invitation (vv. 10, 14-15)**
- 1. the *primary reason* Paul feels this loneliness is that he has experienced **the effect of apostasy**
 - a. **Demas** is listed in both **Colossians 4** and **Philemon 24** as a “*fellow worker*” with Paul
 - 1. we can surmise that he was an important part of the missionary team at Paul’s first arrest
 - 2. now, however, at Paul’s second arrest, he has deserted Paul and gone back to Thessalonica
 - 3. **question:** is Demas an *apostate*; can we say that his desertion *of Paul* is apostasy?
 - a. after all, Paul *doesn’t say* that Demas deserted “the faith,” rather deserted “*me*”
 - 4. **answer:** based on Paul’s *description*, we can say Demas was an apostate from the faith
 - a. Demas was “*in love with this present [age]*” – the ideology of the world; the way the world thinks; a worldview centered around a “worldly” focus rather than a focus on Christ
 - b. so, Paul describes Demas as having left *because* his love for the world overruled his love for Christ – the *classic* example of the “weedy” soil in the Parable of the Soils
 - 5. **the second form of apostasy** (out of three; **see below**)
 - a. the first is the utter and open denial of the faith – to publicly abandon beliefs once held firm
 - b. the second is the slow “drift” away from the faith – to slide away slowly over time
 - 1. embracing subtle forms of worldly ideology that seem to “coexist” with Christian belief
 - b. **Alexander** is *possibly* the excommunicated man of **1 Tim. 1:20** – who had made “*shipwreck*” of his faith along with Hymenaeus, two men guilty of teaching heterodoxy (**in context**)
 - 1. Paul warns Timothy to “*beware of him*” (**v. 15a**) – implying that Alexander is still “around”
 - 2. Paul says that Alexander “*strongly opposed our message*” (**v. 15b**) – implying that he opposes the orthodox gospel message *in the church*, thus *damages* it by his continuing presence
 - 3. **question:** is Alexander an apostate; was he ever a “believer” or just an opposer
 - 4. **answer:** the context of **1 Tim.** suggests that Alexander was a part of the church, thus had “some” sense of the Christian faith, but turned against it *in rebellion*
 - 5. **the third form of apostasy** = the individual who abandons the faith *but continues in the life of the church* – the person who becomes an *opposition* within the church body to the true gospel
2. **even the Apostle Paul cannot avoid the reality of apostasy occurring amongst his own**
 - a. just as Jesus had his Judas, Paul had his Demas

- b. **principle: the cultural opposition coming against the church will unleash a tsunami of apostasy in the days ahead, and this is normal after a period of cultural acceptance**
 - 1. **IOW:** the last 200 years of comfort for the church has created a wide swath of people who have embraced Christianity only because it is comfortable – many will leave when it isn't anymore!
- d. **the comfort behind the reality in the invitation (vv. 16-18)**
 - 1. Paul has taken all of this *personally* (which is a common reaction to apostasy and abandonment)
 - a. Demas has deserted “me”; Alexander opposed “our” message; no one stood by “me” (v. 16)
 - b. Paul feels a very strong sense of *personal* abandonment at this time
 - 2. but, then Paul recognizes the One **who will never abandon him**
 - a. he desires to emulate Jesus, as one who forgave his own executioners
 - b. he knows that while human beings may abandon him, *the Lord* will always stand beside him
 - c. he also knows that he will be “rescued” by the Lord from every evil deed (like abandonment)
 - d. he is confident that the Lord will “bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom” (i.e. his presence)
 - e. which is what leads him to his doxology in v. 18c – all of this is to the glory of Christ Jesus
 - 3. **as the paragraph unfolds in thought, Paul moves from a sense of personal abandonment to a realization of the never-ending closeness of Christ, the very promise of Jesus himself**
“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:20)
 - 4. thus, the invitation to Timothy is a *part* of the promise of Christ – in Timothy, Paul would experience the closeness of Christ – in his friend and co-laborer, Paul would “know” the presence of Jesus

III. Paul Sends His Greetings (2 Timothy 4:19-22)

Content

a. greeting some common friends (vv. 19-21)

- 1. Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila – long-term co-laborers with Paul, especially at Corinth, now at Ephesus
- 2. the household of Onesiphorus – a prominent family of believers at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:16)
- 3. Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia – friends in Rome that were common acquaintances to Timothy

b. signing off the letter (v. 22)

- 1. “*the Lord be with your spirit*” = may the Lord be close to you, may he give you refreshment and encouragement – may the Lord grant you “*grace*” in your days of darkness as he has in mine

c. a final thought from the letter

- 1. Paul has been deeply concerned throughout this letter about the importance of a consistent and solid faith being “*entrusted to faithful men*” (2:2) and passed on to another generation, even in the face of those who would abandon it in apostasy or opposition (as he himself has experienced)
- 2. **2 Timothy is a stark warning to all of us of the need to persevere in the faith, to endure to the end – to surround ourselves with those who want to see us grow in that faith, and to shun those who would drag us away from trusting in Christ to cheap substitutes**