

“PAUL’S LAST WORDS”

Text: II Timothy 4:9-22

Subject: How To Deal With Friends And Foes In The Ministry

Introduction

1. Paul writes this final letter (II Timothy) in his darkest hour.
2. Paul is a prisoner in Rome, facing certain death. (II Timothy 4:6)
3. Nearly 100 different friends and fellow laborers are named in Acts and Paul’s letters, but now only Luke is at his side. (II Timothy 4:11)

Question: Why is Paul writing this letter?

Answer: Because Paul’s great concern is not for himself, but for the success of the gospel.

- Paul encourages Timothy to be faithful.
- Paul sends Tychicus to replace Timothy at Ephesus so that Timothy might join Paul at Rome. (II Timothy 4:9,12)
- God will soon take Paul off the scene and Timothy will give spiritual leadership to the churches.

Question: What does Paul talk to Pastor Timothy about?

Answer: Real life issues that affect us all:

- In Chapter 1, ministers must deal with their...
 1. Enthusiasm (Vs. 1-7)
 2. Suffering (Vs. 8-12)
 3. Faithfulness (Vs. 13-18)
- In Chapter 2, the minister is a ...

1. Steward (Vs. 1-2)	4. Farmer (vs. 6-7)
2. Soldier (Vs. 3-4)	5. Workman (Vs. 14-18)
3. Athlete (Vs. 5)	6. Vessel (Vs. 19-22)
	7. Servant (Vs. 23-26)
- In Chapter 3, obedience in perilous times of ministry includes...
 1. Turning from the false. (Vs. 1-9)
 2. Following those who are true. (Vs. 10-12)
 3. Continuing in the Word. (Vs. 13-17)
- In Chapter 4, last words to every minister...
 1. How to preach the Word at all times. (Vs. 1-4)
 2. How to make full proof of your ministry. (Vs. 5-8)
 3. How to deal with friends and foes. (Vs. 9-22)

Question: What does God address through Paul at the end of Paul’s life?

Answer: Some nuts and bolts about “Ministerial Relationships”

(Things Like)

- How to be good when other people are bad.
- How to stay sweet when you’re tempted to get sour.
- How to deal with friends and foes throughout life’s journey.

(Incredible Secrets from Paul’s Final Hours)

I. God Knows We Can't Do It Alone!

"Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me." (V. 9)

"Take Mark and bring him with you, for he is profitable to me for the ministry." (V. 11)

◆ Paul was incredibly used of God (and) ◆ Paul knew a great life of power and ministry.

(Yet Paul Says)

"Only Luke is with me, hurry up and bring me my companion, Timothy, I'm lonely."

Question: What's the lesson here from God?

Answer: The lesson is; Paul never reached a plane of not needing other people!

The Lesson Is Clear

1. Unless we can get along with other people, we will live a lonely and unproductive life.
2. Unless we are healthy and secure, we will isolate ourselves from the team around us.
3. Unless we crucify our pride, we will reject all advice, correction and strength that surrounds us.

(Proverbs 27:5) *"Open rebuke is better than secret love."* (And)

(Proverbs 11:14) *"In the multitude of counselors there is safety."*

(Remember)

"If you can't get along with other people it is the kiss of death, because people are all we have to work with." (Lee Iacocca)

"Differences of opinions are okay, bad attitudes are not okay; it's not your position but your disposition that gives you influence." (John Maxwell)

II. God Knows That Your Heart Will Be Broken!

◆ In verse 10, *"Demas has deserted me."*

◆ In verse 14, *"Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil."*

(Paul Is Saying Here)

- *"Demas used to love God and me, but has turned away."*
- *"Alexander the metal worker was harmful to me."*
- *"Even Crescens and Titus were called away to Galatia and Dalmatia."* (V. 10)

(The Lesson Is Clear)

- People will let you down, people will disappoint you and some will even hurt you on purpose.

(The Life Application Is)

- Love people fervently, but always keep your expectations in the Lord.

(Psalm 62:5)

"My soul wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from Him."

(Jeremiah 17:5)

"Cursed is the man that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord."

(And If Your Heart Has Been Broken)

"God heals the broken heart and binds up their wounds." (Psalm 147:3)

(And Remember)

- Answer your critics with your life and not your words!
- Learn to wrestle with God in secret and you'll never lower yourself to wrestle with man in public.
- If you don't get healed (after you've been hurt) you'll injure others all along the way.

III. God Has An Escape Hatch From Internal Destruction!

"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." (V. 16)

Question: What protected Paul from internal destruction, a sour spirit, carnal planning, withdrawing from people and a defensive non-trusting disposition?

Answer: The escape hatch called forgiveness!

(In V. 14) *"The Lord reward Alexander according to his evil."* **(Means)**

- Not that Paul was praying for judgment to fall upon Alexander the metal worker.
- But that Paul was leaving Alexander in the hands of the Lord to work it out His way.

(In Other Words)

- Paul doesn't rehearse how to get even with his foes.
- Paul doesn't keep score of wrong doing against him.
- Paul doesn't feel good about justice upon his enemies.

Instead Paul Says:

- "My fellow minister, be a good forgiver and let God be the one who rewards and repays those who hurt you!"

Notice The Power Of Verse 11

"Take Mark and bring him to me now."

- In Acts, John Mark had deserted Paul in the journey.
- But now, Paul extends grace to the one who had failed him previously.

Paul Says:

"Timothy, go get Mark, God wants to use him, hurry up and bring him to me"

- "I know we haven't seen eye to eye."
- "I know we didn't get along before."
- "I know we've had heated discussions."
- "I know we parted ways in the past."

What A Discovery Here:

- That God has a way to restore friendships!
- That restored relationships can be some of the sweetest!
- The God restores through the power of a forgiving spirit!

Proverbs 13:10

"Only by pride cometh contention"

Remember

- "Unforgiveness is the poison we drink while we wait for the other person to die."
(Dr. Don Meyer)

- “An enemy in the heart is worse than 10,000 in the field.”
- “Our offenses will either be our tombstone or our stepping stone; it all depends on our choice.”
- “The only part of me that can be offended is that part of me which has not died.”

IV. **God Reserves Some Secrets Only For Himself!**

“Erastus abode at Corinth, but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.” (V. 20)

- Trophimus was from Ephesus and a friend of Tychicus. (Acts 20:4)
- Trophimus was with Paul when the riot was ignited in Jerusalem (Acts 21:28-29)
- Trophimus had been serving at Miletus, but now he is seriously ill.

Question: What does Scripture say here?

Answer: That a faithful minister gets sick.

Question: Why wasn't Trophimus healed? (Paul prayed for others who were healed)

Question: Why don't we know why some are healed and some are not?

Because...

- Some things are just plain **unexplainable** and,
- Some things we must simply leave in the **eternal chambers** of God.
- Some secrets God has kept only for **Himself**.

Truth Be Known:

- “All things work together for good.” (Romans 8:28)
- “As for God, His way is perfect.” (Psalm 18:30)
- “My grace is sufficient for you.” (II Corinthians 12:9)
- “He makes all things beautiful in His time.” (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

Remember

“When you cannot trace God's hand, you can always trust His heart!”

V. **God Is Always Present Even When No One Else Is!**

In verse 16, “All men forsook me.” (Yet)

In verse 17, “Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me.”

In Other Words

“I looked around and no one was there to befriend me – except the Lord!”

In Fact

1. “He stood with me (and)
2. He strengthened me.

Question: What is Paul telling Pastor Timothy?

Answer: That God is with you when no one else is (and that my friend is enough)!

Question: Why did Paul receive such strength from God?

Answer: Verse 17 “That by me (or through me) the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear.”

In Other Words

- Paul has no personal agenda – all that matters is that the gospel be heard and God's kingdom be increased.

The Lesson Is Clear

- That God will stand with you and strengthen you supernaturally to the degree that you want to do His will and not your own.

Let's Pray This Continually:

“Not my will but thine be done.” (Luke 22:42)

Question: Why let God fill us with His Spirit every day?

Answer: So that by our walk and our words, we can witness to the world that God exists and so people can come to know Him.

VI. God Honors Faith When your Mountains Seem Impossible!

- “I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” (v. 17)
- “The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work.” (v. 18)
- “The Lord will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory forever and ever.” (v. 18)

Question: What is Paul saying in his final words?

Answer: He is saying that he believes in the integrity and wisdom and faithfulness of God (regardless of how hopeless his circumstances appear.)

Question: Why is it God's will that you be filled with faith regardless of what you see in the natural?

Psalm 27:13 “I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”

In Other Words

- Paul in prison reminds us that at times God's work is invisible but God is working even when you cannot see Him. (And)
- We'll either exercise faith in our night seasons or we will experience fainting in those seasons. (It's either one or the other).
 1. What lions are you facing today?
 2. What mountains are before you today?
 3. Has someone or something broken your heart?
 4. Have you struggled to forgive someone that has hurt you?
 5. Encountered any unexplainable events in life? (Questions with no answers?)
 6. Battling any temptations on the inside?
 7. Fighting any demons of discouragement this hour because of unfulfilled expectations?

God Has Good News For You

- He will stand with you and strengthen you to the degree that you live to do His will on earth!
- He will pour out His Spirit upon you to the degree that you humble yourself before Him.
- He will honor and favor you to the degree that your attitude and spirit are undefiled and transparent. (Void of all pretending)

Remember

- Our progress in God will go no further than our obedience takes us!

Amen!
Bill Kirk