

THE LEADER'S HEALTHY "HEART"

(II Timothy 4:3-20)



GOSPEL CENTERED LEADERS

- ◆ Have a Healthy Core
- ◆ Never Feel Entitled
- ◆ Are Honored to Serve
- ◆ Need No Attention

"Complete the ministry God has given you." (II Timothy 4:5, NLT)

Bill Kirk

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Text: II Timothy 4:9-22

Subject: THE KIND OF HEART THAT ENABLES YOU TO MARCH FORWARD INTO BATTLE – AND GO THE DISTANCE!

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. 91 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 and Pastor Timothy.

- ◆ 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).
- ◆ And Paul wants Timothy to march forward and "go the distance".

Question: So what does Paul talk to Pastor Timothy about?

Answer: Real life issues that affect us all:

- ◆ In **Chapter 1**, How ministers must deal with their:
 1. Enthusiasm (Vs. 1-7)
 2. Suffering (Vs. 8-12)
 3. Faithfulness (Vs. 13-18)
- ◆ In **Chapter 2**, How the minister is a:
 1. Steward (Vs. 1-2)
 2. Soldier (Vs. 3-4)
 3. Athlete (V. 5)
 4. Farmer (Vs. 6-7)
 5. Workman (Vs. 14-18)
 6. Vessel (Vs. 19-22)
 7. Servant (Vs. 23-26)
- ◆ In **Chapter 3**, How 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 faithful in the Word (Vs. 13-17)
- ◆ In **Chapter 4**, Paul's 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 in the journey. (Vs. 9-22)

Question: Why is this passage (and Timothy's context) so important to us?

Answer: Because God knows that our heart (our spiritual health) will determine our distance!!!

- ◆ Maybe you've been tempted to withdraw in battle,
- ◆ Maybe you're facing pressures where you serve,
- ◆ Maybe a close associate has betrayed you,
- ◆ Maybe your heart has been saddened,
- ◆ Maybe you're having difficulty trusting people,
- ◆ Maybe you're doubting God's promise to you,
- ◆ Maybe you've been considering "other options",
- ◆ Maybe you think your challenges are unique only to you.
- ◆ Maybe you feel isolated in your section or in the district.
- ◆ Maybe things haven't gone just as you had planned.

God's wisdom for "Going the Distance"

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 (he 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 place 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 wisdom that surrounds us.
4. Unless we bury our ego we will never learn from the others nearby.

D.A. Carson said in "Love In Hard Places":

"The church is a band of natural enemies who love each other for Jesus' sake."

Eugene Peterson said:

"Nobody really grows outside of community."

Malcolm Gladwell said:

"Nobody gets where they are alone."

So nail this down leader:

Neglecting to meet with others is believing in your heart one of two things:

1. Either the gifts God has given others are of no real consequence to you
(or)
2. You have determined that you are so gifted that you can happily survive without other people!

Fact: We can run faster alone, but farther together!!!

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:

1. "Demas used to love God and me, but has turned away."
2. "Alexander the metal worker was harmful to me."
3. "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."

In other words:

- ◆ Not everybody that you **start** with will you **end** with.

Dr. Dobbins often said:

"It would be nice if everybody liked you, but it's not necessary for God to use you."

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 Verse 14; "The Lord reward Alexander according to his evil." (Means):

- ◆ Not that Paul was praying for judgement 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:

1. Paul doesn't rehearse how to get even with his foes.
2. Paul doesn't keep score of wrong doing against him.
3. 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:

1. That God has a way to restore friendships!
2. That restored relationships can be some of the sweetest!
3. That God restores through the power of a forgiving spirit!
4. That healthy leaders **build** more bridges than they **burn!**

Leaders Who "Go The Distance" Understand:

"The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." (Proverbs 19:11)

“Forgive one another even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.”
(Ephesians 4:32)

Question: What is forgiveness?

Answer: The cancellation of a **debt** as if it never existed!

Question: How is it possible?

Answer: By understanding that God (in Christ) has forgiven you of every sin (when you could not forgive yourself).

Question: Why is it so important?

Answer: Because unforgiveness is the umbilical cord that keeps you tied to the past. When you forgive, you cut that cord and begin to live free from the **control** of what someone else has done to you.

In other words:

- ◆ Forgiveness unclogs us spiritually and frees us from living as the victims of other people’s behaviors.

(In fact, forgiveness **protects** and **preserves** us....)
From carrying around emotional baggage that is **exhausting!**

And never forget:

- ◆ The only power that an offense has is the power that **you** give it!

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 secrets God has kept only for **Himself**.

Remember:

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever.” (Deuteronomy 29:29)

Spurgeon said:

- ◆ "A secret thing is something we must simply leave in the eternal chambers of God." (and)
- ◆ "A secret thing is something that God has chosen not to reveal this side of heaven."

The Good News is:

- ◆ "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.

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 will.
- ◆ That God will enable you to go the distance to the degree that you live "on mission" to build His kingdom.

So much so that Paul says:

- ◆ "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 for ever 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).

If you want to go the distance, 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)

It's Pretty Clear:

- ◆ That ministry leaders who keep from being **"sidelined"** and **"Go The Distance"** are those who maintain a healthy non-toxic heart, spirit, attitude and disposition!

Three Truths That Help Me More Than Any Other

(In Ministry to People)

1. **What is a servant?** Someone who...
 - ◆ Advances others at the expense of them self,
 - ◆ Cares less who gets the credit,
 - ◆ Doesn't need to be **"thanked"** for their service,
 - ◆ Takes up their cross without complaint.
2. **Why did Jesus wash feet?** To show us that healthy leaders serve;
 - ◆ despite their pain (Jesus was carrying the weight of world's sin)
 - ◆ despite their title (Jesus was King of the Universe)
 - ◆ despite their reward (Jesus knew that all would forsake Him)
3. **How did Jesus answer Peter's question in Matthew 19:27**
"Lord, we've left everything to follow you, now what's in it for us?"
 - ◆ Peter was feeling cheated, entitled and underappreciated.
 - ◆ Jesus answered him in Chapter 20 with a 16 verse parable that teaches:

The root cause of all complaints is when a person feels they're not getting what they deserve. And the truth of the matter is – we don't want what we deserve!

Nuf Sed!
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