

2 Timothy Study
Week 5
2 Timothy 4:11-22

Day One

11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. 12 I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

v. 11 – It has been said that it is lonely at the top, where leaders function. At this point, Paul only had Luke with him. **Who helps you in work and ministry? Whom do you help? Paul preferred to function in a team whenever possible. Who is on your team? Of whose team are you a part?**

Was this the same Mark with whom Paul had a “falling out” early in his missionary work? If it was, then significant healing had taken place between the two. This break had been so severe that it actually caused Paul and Barnabas to part ways, after the Holy Spirit had joined those two together. Read how this played out for yourself:

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off (Acts 13:2-3).

From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13).

Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches (Acts 15:36-41).

Too often, we underestimate what I call the human dynamics in ministry. We think that because God and the Spirit are involved, then people will get along well. This has been anything but reality. Churches and ministries have split over simple things, and passions, anger, opinions and hurt feelings have hindered God’s work again and again.

Do you know who you are and how you function best? Do you know the same for the members of your team? Do you work to better understand one another so that you can be effective together? If not, don’t be surprised if at some point you have tension and misunderstanding that could have been avoided if you had paid more attention to the “human dynamics.” If Paul and Barnabas had a split and the Holy Spirit had spoken to join them together, any team can experience the same.

Notice that Mark was useful to Paul's ministry. Perhaps Paul was willing to overlook past hurts and failures in order to stay focused on the mission he had from God. **That's a good attitude to have, don't you think?**

v. 12 – Paul worked hard to tend his young network of churches and keep them connected. He deployed his team in the field to stay in touch with the other churches. This is a critical part of leading a team – giving meaningful work to those who are members. If the team only serves the leader, eventually team members will lose focus on the main task, which is whatever the team was assembled to achieve. The team was not just put together to serve the leader so the leader can minister.

Do you have meaningful work to do? Do you give others their own meaningful work?

Day Two

13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments. 14 Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done.

v. 13 – As Paul traveled, his “stuff” got spread out over the Roman Empire! He was without his cloak, scrolls and parchments. I know the feeling. I have left enough things in my travels to fill two or three suitcases. Not only that, but many of my things have been damaged or stolen. What's more, I have a full set of clothes in Zimbabwe, left in the care of friends. When I arrive, often my things have been moved, consolidated or misplaced.

If you are going to serve the Lord and, if by chance that service requires travel, you had better have a certain detachment from your belongings. I always advise people not to bring anything on a trip that they don't mind losing.

I suppose that the scrolls and parchments were for study purposes. Paul wrote profound letters, but I am sure they were borne out of times of study, discussion and reflection.

What are you doing to grow in your knowledge of the Word? How much time, if any, do you spend studying the Word and not just reading it?

v. 14 – Paul certainly had his share of betrayals and team problems. Here he mentioned Alexander the metalworker, who did not just harm to Paul, but a “great deal” of harm! The Spirit called Alexander by name and for all eternity he will be known as the man who brought great harm to Paul. **That is not the kind of legacy I want to leave, do you?**

What's more, Paul was sure that the Lord would repay Alexander for what he had done. I do not want God to get involved with any problem I caused for someone else. I want to be a blessing and not a problem.

God is watching what we do and how we treat one another.

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head" (Romans 12:18-20).

Just pray a quick prayer right now and ask God to show you if you've done anyone any harm. If He brings a name or situation to mind, do what you can to make it right. You don't want God owing you punishment or retribution for a wrong done.

Day Three

15 You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message. 16 At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.

v. 15 – Now we see that Alexander opposed Paul's message. I assume that Paul was writing this from prison in Rome. I also assume that Alexander was at one time numbered among the believers, but was now opposing Paul's message. (Otherwise, why would Paul have urged Timothy to avoid Alexander? The saints must have known who he was.)

Yet, what message could Alexander have opposed if he was already a believer? I'm not sure what Alexander did, but it caused Paul no small amount of grief. Someone once said that every leader must recognize a threat to his work or business. Paul saw that Alexander was dangerous, since Paul was a good leader and devoted to see that his work would succeed. He was not ambivalent about someone who opposed his work. If someone was Paul's opponent, then Paul became their opponent, for the sake of the work.

v. 16 – I am not sure what defense Paul made, but no one stood with him. In fact, there were some who were with Paul but deserted him. Paul forgave them in the spirit of Jesus:

When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One" (Luke 23:33-35).

I want to be careful here, but I have an opinion and I want to make it clear that it is just an opinion. I think Paul was a difficult man with whom to relate. He was driven, a perfectionist, and wasn't "warm and fuzzy" in any manner of thinking. He was intense and I think many probably had trouble with him when he was in his task mode. Paul was

passionate about preaching and spreading the gospel and, if someone did not share that urgency, I think they could easily have misunderstood Paul.

I think Paul was best taken in short, intense doses. That is why even when Paul wanted to stay with a work or area, the Spirit usually moved him on to do the work that he did best.

I base my opinion on having worked with many church planters and apostolic ministries. They tend to be hard to work with, but wonderfully used of the Lord. I don't want to take anything away from Paul either, for he was truly the greatest man in the New Testament next to Jesus! I do think, however, that his intensity got the best of him and others from time to time.

By the way, is there anyone you need to forgive for having let you down or even deserted you?

Day Four

17 But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth.

v. 17 – Jesus was and is faithful to His faithful servants. While everyone deserted Paul, the Lord stood by his side. Imagine that! Jesus stood by Paul's side when people accused him and Paul defended himself. Thank you, Jesus! You are true to Your word and promise:

"When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say" (Luke 12:11-12).

Paul understood how to rely on God's strength when his own had run out. That is something I am still learning to do. Time and time again, we read that the Lord gave Paul strength beyond what is natural, even raising him from the dead at one point.

Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe (Acts 13:19-20).

Notice what Paul did when he was raised. He went right back to the people who had just tried to kill him! That is operating in God's strength. When you read what Paul endured to carry out his work, you realize that he had to have supernatural strength on his side:

Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty

lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness (2 Corinthians 11:23-30).

Do you operate in God's strength or your own? How can you draw on God's strength more than you do currently?

Why was Paul given this strength? So he could fulfill his purpose of preaching to the Gentiles. **What is your purpose?** That is where you will have the greatest strength. Read about John Wesley and what he was able to do in the strength of his purpose:

Wesley would preach three times a day, beginning at 5:00 a.m. since workers could stop to hear him as they walked to their daily drudgery. He sometimes covered sixty miles a day on horseback. Weather conditions made no difference; he made his schedule and kept it regardless. He would flee an angry mob by jumping into a cold pond, swim out and go on to preach again. He had the ability to turn hostile people his way. In all he went to Ireland forty-two times and to Scotland twenty-two times.

John Wesley taught as much by example as by his measured sermons. He published many volumes for use in devotions and turned profits into such projects as a dispensary for the poor. His personal life was beyond reproach. He translated hymns, interpreted scripture, wrote hundreds of letters, trained hundreds of men and women, and kept in his journals a record of expended energy that has hardly a rival in western literature.

He made the following diary entry on Tuesday, June 28, 1774:

This being my birthday, the first day of my seventy-second year, I was considering: How is this, that I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago? That my sight is considerably better now, and my nerves firmer than they were then? That I have none of the infirmities of old age, and have lost several I had in my youth? The grand reason is the good pleasure of God, who doth whatsoever pleaseth him. The chief means are: 1) my constantly rising at four, for about fifty years; 2) my generally preaching at five in the morning, one of the most healthy exercises in the world; 3) my never travelling less, by sea or land, than four thousand five hundred miles a year.

During his ministry, Wesley rode over 250,000 miles on horseback, a distance equal to ten circuits of the globe along the equator. He preached over 40,000 sermons. Today his followers number 40 million people.

Paul referred to Daniel's experience with the lions in the lions' den. You may want to look at that story now and see what lessons you can learn from Daniel and Paul as they faced their respective lions, one physical and literal, the other figuratively speaking.

Where are you facing lions?

Day Five

18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

v. 18 – What a positive affirmation! Paul didn't write, "I hope the Lord will rescue me," or "Pray that the Lord will rescue," or "He rescued me once, but I hope my luck doesn't run out." No, instead he boldly and confidently declared, "The Lord will rescue me from every attack!" Neither Rome nor Caesar intimidated Paul. He knew that he belonged to God and God would protect him. When it was his time to die, Paul knew it would not be an accident, but the will of God.

Paul knew that the Lord would bring him safely to his heavenly Kingdom. What confidence! What peace and security that must have brought! Paul knew the truth of what he had written:

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory (Colossians 3:3-4).

Paul knew that for anything to get to him it had to get through Him first. He was hidden in Christ and only Christ could let someone know where Paul was, so to speak. So when the day finally came when Paul was martyred, it was only after he had completed his purpose and the days that the Lord had appointed for him.

This confident statement led Paul to worship and he declared that God was worthy of all glory forever and ever. Worship isn't something we do because we must. It is something that emanates from our understanding of who He is, His power and how He protects us by His grace and mercy.

How is your worship these days? Does it flow from a realization of who God is and what He does and can do, or is it forced and out of necessity and duty? Is there anything you can do to improve your depth of worship? If so, what?

Day Six

19 Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus.

v. 19 – Paul mentioned his friends and associates, Priscilla and Aquilla, fellow tent makers and laborers for the gospel. Remember how Paul met them?

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them (Acts 18:1-3).

Who are your friends in the Lord? Is there someone you need to call, write or email today?

And do you remember Onesiphorus and the wonderful endorsement he received from Paul earlier in this letter?

May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains (2 Timothy 1:16).

He certainly had a better name than Alexander, which reminds me of a verse in Proverbs:

A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold (Proverbs 22:1).

It seems that our legacy is important, and the best thing we can leave is a good name! And that name is best recorded and kept in God's mind and book, not in culture's or society's records. You should rejoice that your name has been made "good" by the best name there is, Jesus, and your name is in heaven's book.

However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

v. 20 – Paul had his team spread out, like his possessions, throughout the Roman Empire. That is the nature of apostolic ministry. The work must go on and it is important but difficult work because it involves people and all their complexities and problems. It has been said that church would be a great place to work – if it wasn't for all the people!

Do you see how Paul and his team were always on the move, here today, there tomorrow. Many want to talk about being an apostle and doing apostolic work, but few really want to do it. It involves a mobile lifestyle that requires a total commitment.

Are you willing to go where God wants you to go? Don't answer too quickly, because He may send you there!

Day Seven

21 Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers. 22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

v. 21 – Paul wanted to see Timothy before winter, because travel became more difficult there, as we learned in the book of Acts. We are subject to natural causes and circumstances, but we also have the Lord of all causes on our side. **Are you afraid of travel or hindered by conditions?** Then remember what Jesus did when He was here and take courage. The Lord is on your side!

I refuse to limit my plans because of weather, war, travel advisories or other natural conditions. I want to plan and then go, and allow God to make a way. When I was growing up, my family limited all our plans because of what “could” happen. We didn’t go anywhere in winter because it “may” snow. We didn’t go anywhere in summer because it “may” rain. We didn’t buy many things because an economic depression “may” come.

I made up my mind as a child that I was not going to live that way when I got older, and I have not for the most part. **How about you? Notice Paul asked Timothy to “do his best.” Are you doing your best where God’s work is concerned? What can you do more effectively or with more fervor?**

Paul sent greetings to Timothy from the people who were with him. Obviously, Timothy knew who those people were. **How many people do you know by name in your church? Why don’t you know more? How can you get to know more?**

v. 22 – Paul closed with a simple but profound closing. He prayed that the Lord would be with Timothy’s spirit—not his mind or body, but his spirit. God is a Spirit and when he touches our spirit, it affects our body and soul. And then Paul prayed grace on Timothy’s life. **On whose life can you pray down grace? To whose spirit can you wish that God would join His Spirit?**

I have often said that the Bible has many great prayers, inspired by the Spirit of God. We should not hesitate to use those prayers! What a great blessing for someone, that God would join their spirit and give them grace. **Who can pray that for today?**

That concludes our study of Second Timothy and I will finish as Paul finished this letter by simply writing “Amen!”