

“Biographies”
2 Timothy 4:9-22
(Preached at Trinity, November 27, 2022)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verses 9-22** Paul covers a variety of topics. The main focus deals with Paul’s situation in prison and his personal needs. The section opens and closes with almost the same statements by Paul – “Come to me as soon as you are able.”
In between these verses Paul gives a chronicle of those who had helped him as well as a listing of those who had abandoned him. And then, as a glorious reminder to us all, in spite of his personal hardships and the abandonment he had experienced by many, one thing remained consistent and unchanging:
2 Timothy 4:17-18 NAU - "But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen."
2. That will be the focus of our final sermon in 2 Timothy next week. But this morning I would like us to pause to consider the lives of these individuals that God had brought into the life of Paul. I give this morning’s sermon a simple title, “Biographies.”
3. This morning I want us to briefly look at these various individuals – brief biographies of men and women whose lives are over – the decisions that they made cannot be erased. May their biographies remind us of our own biography. Part of it has already been written. It can never be changed. Part, however, is still being written.
4. We have already looked at Demas. He was faithful for a season but wasn’t able to continue. The fearful thing is that he was probably unaware of the slow drift. He might have been able to justify forsaking Paul as we are sometimes prone to justify our own sins. He might have returned to Thessalonica and continued a religious life without Christ only to die and hear those fearful words from our Lord, “Depart from Me, I never knew you.”
5. As we begin this section touching on the lives of those who most impacted the later days of Paul we can’t overlook Timothy.
 - A. He was faithful to the end. He had always demonstrated great loyalty to Paul.
Philippians 2:19-22 NAU - "But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. ²⁰ For I have no one *else* of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. ²¹ For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. ²² But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child *serv*ing his father."

- B. Now in Paul's great hour of need when so many others had forgotten about him Paul knew he could depend on Timothy.

2 Timothy 4:9 NAU - "Make every effort to come to me soon;"

2 Timothy 4:21 NAU - "Make every effort to come before winter."

This was no small request. The journey would have taken over six months over land and sea, but Paul knew he could depend on Timothy.

I. **Verse 10** – "Crescens has gone to Galatia"

- A. Little is known of his life
1. We know nothing of his many childhood experiences.
 2. Was he married, did he have children?
 3. God knows every detail of his life?
- B. In contrast to Demas who forsook Paul, Crescens was most likely *sent* to Galatia.
1. He was probably faithful and dependable and was sent to one of the many churches that Paul had established in Galatia. Paul would have sent a man in whom he had full confidence.
 2. The mention of his name to Timothy tells us that he would have been known in the early church
 3. His life is very known to God and he will receive his full reward.

II. **Verse 10** – "Titus to Dalmatia"

- A. Titus is well known as a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ
1. He was one of Paul's converts – **Titus 1:4 NAU** - "To Titus, my true child in a common faith"
 2. Besides the book which bears his name, his name is written eight times in 2 Corinthians. Twice in Galatians.
- B. Paul had often used him to build, teach, and pastor struggling churches.
1. In Titus 1:5 we find him being left in Crete.
 2. In Titus 3:12 we find Paul sending for him while he was at Nicopolis. Now we find that he has been sent to Dalmatia
 3. His life too has been recorded and will receive his full reward.

III. Next we find a brief mention of Luke – **Verse 11**

- A. He had been a faithful friend and companion of Paul
1. He is only mentioned by name three times in the Bible but was the author of two N.T. books (Luke, the longest of the four Gospels & Acts) – was the only Gentile author.
 2. In Colossians 4:14 he is referred to as "Luke, the beloved physician"
(it is interesting that this verse also mentions Demas)
 3. In Philemon 24 he is mentioned along with Demas as a "fellow laborer"
- B. He was Paul's companion on many journeys but demonstrated his humility and servant spirit often leaving himself in the background in his writings
1. Yet, the frequent pronouns (we, us, our, etc.) in Acts places him with Paul throughout his journeys. He went with him to Jerusalem to face arrest and imprisonment. He was shipwrecked with Paul on the shores of Malta. He ministered with Paul in Rome where he served faithfully. Paul records, "Only Luke is with me"
 2. His life is recorded and he will be rewarded according to what he has done

IV. Next, Paul mentions Mark also called John Mark – **Verse 11**

- A. At one point, Paul was angry with one of Mark's decisions. Earlier in his life he had also departed from Paul.
1. He had been chosen to accompany Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey.
 2. For some reason, Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem.
 - a. The exact reason is not given but his love for Christ is not questioned.
 - b. Paul, however, did not think it reasonable or excusable.
 - c. Paul had such negative feelings towards Mark that it led to his ultimate separation with Barnabas – **Acts 15:36-39**
 - d. Paul had no patience for men who were lazy or cowardly or uncommitted.
 - e. Whatever Mark's reason for departing from Paul it was not a departing from the faith.
- B. In the end Mark proved himself faithful.
1. Whatever struggles, difficulties, and failures we have in our Christian life the important thing is how we are found in the end – has our overall life been that of faithful perseverance and are we found faithful in the end.
 2. Whatever weakness Mark had at the beginning, in the end some twenty years later we have this wonderful testimony from Paul the Apostle, "he is useful to me for service."
Of all the individuals Paul could have chosen for Timothy to bring with him, Paul chose Mark
 3. Is your life of profit to our Lord's Kingdom? Has your life made the Kingdom stronger?

IV. The next name we find is that of Tychicus – **Verse 12**

- A. In Acts 20:4 we find recorded that he was from Asia
1. Now Paul is sending him to Ephesus which is Timothy's church.
 2. Perhaps Tychicus is the messenger charged with delivering this letter as he had been used for this task before. And it is likely Paul had in mind for him to labor in Ephesus while Timothy makes the journey to Rome.
- B. He was trustworthy and dependable as Paul's courier.
- Ephesians 6:21 NAU** - "But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you."
- Colossians 4:7 NAU** - "As to all my affairs, Tychicus, *our* beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information."
- a. God knows all of the actions of this "beloved brother and faithful servant."
 - b. He will be rewarded by our Lord for his faithfulness

- V. Paul pauses in **Verse 13** to ask Timothy to bring his coat and books
- A. We must not deny the weakness of our flesh
 - a. Paul was cold and that effected his ability to pray and study.
 - b. Paul recognized the importance of study to the end of his life (some might say, what's the point, I'm about to die. We must remain diligent all the way to the end)
 - c. The books might have been works in progress, or passages of Scripture. The parchments might have also been works in progress or even blank pages upon which Paul might continue his writing.
 - B. We know nothing of Carpus except that Paul trusted him with his possessions We may know nothing of Carpus, but God knows everything. He will be rewarded according to his faithfulness
- VI. After mentioning several faithful brothers in Christ Paul now calls out the name an enemy of the cross
- A. For generations Christians have read the name of Alexander as one whose life had been spent in opposition to the Gospel – a sad, regretful, wasted life.
Paul says in **Verse 14** – “he did me much evil”
and in **Verse 15** – “he vigorously opposed our teaching.”
 - B. Alexander probably had reason to withstand Paul
 1. As a coppersmith he probably used his craft in the making of idols – Christianity was a direct threat to his trade. His love for the things of this world far out shadowed any attention to the Gospel.
 2. This characterizes most Americans in our generation – Serving Christ would interfere with their fleshly desires.
 - C. Alexander, however, did not just passively reject the Gospel. He openly opposed it. He did Paul much evil.
 1. Paul responded to Alexander as we must respond to our enemies. He delivered him into the hands of God.
 2. Notice Alexander, too, will receive a reward for his deeds. His reward will be eternal torment and suffering.
2 Corinthians 5:10 NAU - "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."
- VII. Next Paul speaks of a large unnamed group of those who had been unfaithful – **Verse 16**
- A. We don't know how many Paul is referring to. We don't know their names. We know nothing about their lives.
 1. To stand with Paul might have cost them great personal hardship –
 - a. Only a few years before Nero burned Rome and blamed it on Christians.
 - b. Some Christians were sewn into the skins of freshly killed animals and tossed into the arena to be mauled by wild dogs.
 - c. Tradition tells us some were coated with pitch and set on fire to light Nero's garden parties.
 - d. Not one of these were willing to take a stand to defend Paul.

2. We can only hope that their weakness was not due to being lost in their sins – that they are not among those described in **2 Tim. 3:4-5**
2 Timothy 3:4-5 NAU - "treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these."
 - a. Paul does not describe them along with Demas who “loved this present world.” He doesn’t describe them with Alexander who, “Did me much harm.”
 - b. Paul prays on their behalf, “I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.”
 - c. Either way, their weakness is to their shame and to Paul’s grief and disappointment.
 - B. Every pastor has experiences with professing Christians that continually disappoint him with their unfaithfulness. It is a constant source of grief.
 - C. Although these people are unnamed and faceless God knows each one intimately. Each will be rewarded according to what he or she has done.
- VIII. Next, Paul mentions a faithful husband and wife – **Verse 19** – Prisca, also called Pricilla, and her husband, Aquila
- A. Paul stayed in their home while he was at Corinth. Paul took them with him when he left Corinth to go to Ephesus
 1. While at Ephesus they met Apollos who was mighty in the Scriptures but whose knowledge of the gospel was incomplete. This couple took him aside and taught him.
Acts 18:26 NAU - "and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately."
 2. Paul greets them in his letter from Rome where he describes them as risking their life for him. Quite the opposite of the many who abandoned Paul.
Romans 16:3-4 NAU - "Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;"
 3. In Romans Paul also states that they had a church meeting in their home.
Romans 16:5 NAU - "*greet* the church that is in their house."
 - B. God will reward them for their faithfulness and hospitality
- IX. Paul mentions the household of Onesiphorus – **Verse 19**
- A. Paul mentioned this saint in chapter 1
2 Timothy 1:16-17 NAU - "The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains; ¹⁷ but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me--"
 1. This man often risked his own safety to visit Paul in prison.
 2. He was a faithful friend and fellow laborer.

- B Jesus saw this act as actually visiting Him personally
Matthew 25:35-36 NAU - "I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; ³⁶ naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me."
Matthew 25:40 NAU - "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me."
1. Paul asked God to bless this man on the day of judgment
2 Timothy 1:18 NAU - "the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day-- and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus."
 2. Onesiphorus will be rewarded for his love and faithfulness
- X. In **Verse 20** Paul mentions Erastus and Trophimus without comment.
- A. In **Acts 19** Erastus is mentioned with Timothy as being among those who ministered to Paul. In **Romans 16** Paul identified him as the city treasurer.
 - B. Trophimus is also mentioned in Acts as being in the company of Paul. He was present the night Eutychus fell out of the window after Paul had preached until midnight.
 - C. Paul thinks to mention these two men by name because of their faithfulness. They will receive their reward.
 - D. It is of note to mention that Paul did not heal Trophimus possibly indicating that by this time towards of the apostolic period it was no longer necessary to validate their ministry with miracles.
- XI. Paul closes with the mention of several other faithful brethren.
- A. All were probably members of the church of Rome.
 - B. Paul refers to them by name because of their faithfulness.
 God knows them well and knows their works. They will not lose their reward

Conclusion:

1. God has chosen to record all of these names that we might remember that He knows each and every one. Their biographies are written, permanently recorded in the mind of God.
2. Our biographies are still in progress.
 May God grant us that we be found faithful each and every day of our lives.
 May we finish our course with faithfulness.