**Lesson 24: Paul’s Last Words (2 Timothy 4:9-22)**

This section is notably similar to Psalm 22: forsaking, none to help, salvation from the lion’s mouth, the spread of the gospel to the nations, the kingdom of the Lord, etc.

*Make every effort to come to me soon;*

*Make every effort –* from spoudazw – used in 1:4; 2:15; 4:21; come before winter!

Paul, like Jesus, longs for companionship in the hour of death (cf. Matt. 26:38).

*Come to me soon* makes the call all the more urgent. Paul is lonely and distressed.

*for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.*

*For –* like in the previous section, Paul continues to provide reasons for his requests.

*Demas –* not necessarily apostatize, but that is what the language naturally leans toward.

His worldly love is agaphv love (1Jn. 2:15-17). Going to Thessalonica, may be understood as a longing for the things of this world. Thessalonica was originally settled by military generals who were corrupt and wealthy. One tradition suggests that Demas became a religious leader in one of Thessalonica’s pagan temples. Demas, like Aristarchus (Philemon 24), may have also been from Thessalonica (see Chrysostom). He literally “let Paul down” (Wuest) spiritually (Col. 4:14). Reasons for this may include: not counting the cost, weariness of the years, and love of the present world. Maybe Demas (Demetrius) returned to the faith (3Jn. 12).

While Demas clearly abandoned the faith and/or wronged Paul in some terrible way, it does not seem that the same was true of Crescens and Titus despite the lack of a verb for these two individuals.

*Crescens –* a Latin name; traditionally, his ministry was focused in Galatia (Apost. Conf. VII.46). Some very early MSS (Sinaiticus and Ephraemi) have “Gaul” instead of Galatia. Because of this variation, it is uncertain as to whether Asia Minor or France would be the place in mind (see Hendriksen for extended treatment).

*Titus –* Apparently, Titus had finished in Crete (1:5), had visited Paul in Nicopolis and traveled with him to Rome (3:12), and been sent to Dalmatia (modern-day Yugoslavia). Dalmatia was a province of Illyricum on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea across from southern Italy (cf. Rom. 15:19).

*Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.*

*Luke* stayed with Paul during his 1st Roman imprisonment as well (Col. 4:14; Philemon 24). He may have stayed not only for friendship, but also for medical assistance for Paul. After all, not only did Paul suffer many beatings, but also suffered from the thorn in the flesh. He seems to have needed Luke around fairly often. During the 2-year stint at Caesarea, Luke may have written Acts (cf. Acts 28:30). The use of “we” in Acts suggests that Luke traveled with Paul extensively (Acts 16:10-17; 20:6-16; 21:1-18, 27f). Traditionally, Luke is the one referenced in 2Cor. 8:18.

“It may well have been true that when an arrested prisoner was on his way to trial at Rome, he was allowed to be accompanied by only two slaves. It is therefore highly probable that Luke enrolled himself as Paul’s slave in order to be allowed to accompany him to Rome and to prison. Little wonder that Paul speaks of Luke with a thrill of love in his voice. Surely devotion could go no farther. Rather than be separated from him, Luke became Paul’s slave.” (Barclay, 249).

“Mark had a curiously chequered career. He was very young when the Church began, but he lived at the very centre of the Church’s life. It was to the house of Mary, Mark’s mother, that Peter turned his steps when he escaped from prison, and we may therefore take it that Mark’s mother’s house was the central meeting place of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 12:12).” (Barclay, 250).

*Mark* may have been at Colossae at this point so for Timothy to pick him up, he would not have to go too much out of his way from Ephesus. Mark had abandoned Paul and Barnabas at Pamphylia (cf. Acts 13:13; 15:38). Because of this abandonment, Paul thought it unwise to bring John Mark on the second missionary journey and he and Barnabas separated (Acts 15:37-40).

Paul and Mark had patched up relations at least five years prior (cf. Col. 4:9f; Philemon 24). Mark was able to provide service to Paul, whether in a formal sense of evangelism (Col. 4:17; 1Tim. 1:12; 2Tim. 4:5) or informal (Acts 19:22). *Useful* was used in 2:21 in reference to sound teachers of the gospel. Later, Mark assists Peter (1Pet. 5:13). Paul and Barnabas worked things out too (1Cor. 9:6).

“Still to this day Jesus Christ can make the coward spirit brave and nerve the feeble arm for fight. He can release the sleeping hero in the soul of every man. He can turn the shame of failure into the joy of triumphant service.” (Barclay, 251).

*But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.*

*Tychicus* seems to be the letter bearer. Artemas had probably been sent to Crete and Tychicus will now be sent to Ephesus to reprieve Timothy (cf. Titus 3:12). Tychicus is mentioned often elsewhere (Col. 4:7f; Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:21f).

*When you come bring the cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.*

No other information on Carpus, but apparently he had given Paul a “storage unit.”

Some theologians attempt to identify this cloak as a sacral vestment, but this is eisegesis. The cloak was a thick, outer garment, probably made from the fur of goats that was cut in a circle with a hole for the head and covered the entire body. The request was simply for a garment to warm him for the ensuing winter.

Interestingly, William Tyndale made a similar request when he was imprisoned. “Send me, for Jesus’ sake, a warmer cap, something to patch my leggings, a woolen shirt, and above all my Hebrew Bible.”

The *books* were writings on papyrus (biblia), whereas the *parchments* (membrana) were much more valuable writings. Paul may have been a bibliophile (cf. Acts 26:24). These writings were most likely the Scriptures although others have suggested other possibilities. Jews pride themselves in their priceless OT scrolls on vellum. Some have offered the alternative explanation that the parchments were Paul’s legal documents as this material would be costly.

*Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.*

*Alexander* was an Ephesian metal worker (cf. Acts 19:33; 1Tim. 1:20) who had been delivered over to Satan because of his heretical teaching. This being handed over had not resulted in repentance, but rather a vindictive spirit toward Paul.

*Did me much harm –* from endeiknumi –this is a technical phrase in Greek that is used in courtroom contexts (Barclay, 252). Alexander had likely betrayed and/or testified against Paul in Rome. Like Ps. 137, gives authority to imprecatory prayers, properly addressed to God (cf. Rom. 12:19; Ps. 62:12).

*Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching.*

*Be on guard –* present tense imperative

It could be that Timothy will run into Alexander on his way to Paul in Rome (at Troas? Ephesus? Colossae?) or could just be a general statement of warning.

*For* again provides the reasoning for such instruction. *Opposed –* cf. 1Tim. 3:8; Acts 13:8

*At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them.*

*Defense* is from apologia and is a legal term (cf. Acts 25:16; Phil. 1:16f; 1Pet. 3:15).

*Supported* is paragineto and is a technical word for an advocate, procurator, or *patronus*. “Powerful men sometimes brought such a multitude of assistants as to overawe the magistrate, as Orgetorix the Helvetian, when summoned to trial, appeared with 10,000 followers, and so there was not trial. There wasn’t any one to stand by Paul in his hour of trial. The Christians in Rome, who on another occasion might have stood by him, were not in a position to do so at his trial.” (Reese, 539).

At Paul’s first imprisonment, his friends did stand by him and he seems to have been acquitted (Acts 28:30f). Now, nobody stands with him.

Had Luke arrived after this first presentation of accusation? Had Paul sent the other men away before this trial? *Deserted* is the same word used of Demas’ abandoning of Paul. This was the same hand dealt to our Lord in His time of need (John 16:32f).

However, Paul does not treat these individuals the same as Demas. He shows mercy and sympathy for the failure in the face of fear (Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:50). He is magnanimous toward them. But is Paul giving his plea to Timothy or the Lord?

Paul’s mercy is reminiscent of Jesus’ and Stephen’s (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60).

*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; & I was rescued out of the lion’s mouth.*

Paul’s friends were like the desert wadis (Job 6:19), while God was a very present help in his time of need (Acts 27:11; Phil. 4:13; Heb. 13:5; Matt. 10:28).

*Strengthened –* from ejnedunavmosen – literally “poured power into me” (cf. Phil. 4:13; 1Tim. 1:12; 2Tim. 2:1).

*Proclamation might be fully accomplished –* proclamation is from khrussw and fully accomplished from plhrow (cf. 4:6). Fulfillment of Acts 9:15f; 25:11f; 26:32.

Paul’s trials were his *Apologia pro Christo*! Paul spoke before an extremely large forum of people, possibly even Nero! Paul saw this more as an opportunity for preaching the gospel and defending Jesus than for defending himself.

Whether Paul was saved from the mouths of literal lions or if this is a figurative reference, we cannot be sure. Roman law precluded Roman citizens from being fed to the lions, but Nero wasn’t exactly keen on always observing that law. Lion could be a reference to Satan (1Pet. 5:8), to the emperor himself (Josephus, *Ant.* 18:22), or literal animals in the Circus Maximus (Dan. 6:20; Ps. 22:21).

Paul frequently expressed his faith in God’s power to save His children (1Cor. 10:13; Gal. 1:4; 2Tim. 1:12; Heb. 4:15f; cf. also 1Pet. 1:5; 2Pet. 2:9).

*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.*

Paul will be delivered. Sometimes God delivers from death; sometimes God delivers through death. Compare Luke 12:4; Phil. 1:25.

*The heavenly kingdom* (Heaven – Acts 14:22; 2Tim. 4:18; 2Pet. 1:11) as opposed to the earthly phase (the Church – Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 1:9)

The doxology is similar to that given in Heb. 13:21; Rom. 9:5. This doxology is given to the Father in 1Tim. 1:17. Paul often erupts into doxologies (Rom. 11:36; Gal. 1:4f; Phil. 4:19f; Eph. 3:21; 1Tim. 1:17).

*Forever and ever –* Greek rendering of the Hebrew idiom “unto the ages of the ages.”

*Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.*

*Prisca* is merely a variation of Priscilla elsewhere (Acts 18; Rom. 16:3; 1Cor. 16:19). Prisca is typically mentioned first for some reason. This couple traveled a ton! And everywhere they went, they had a church in their house.

*the household of Onesiphorus* – cf. 2Tim. 1:16-18. Again, commentators take this to mean that Onesiphorus had passed away since aiding Paul.

*Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus.*

Archaeology has uncovered an inscription at the ancient site of *Corinth* from this same time frame of the city treasurer named *Erastus* (cf. Acts 19:22; Rom. 16:23).

*Trophimus* was left sick. With a doctor being around as well as the miraculous gifts, it is striking to note that Trophimus was not healed. Trophimus carried the offering for saints in Jerusalem (Acts 20:4), was an Ephesian, and was the man Paul was accused of bringing into the Temple which led to his 1st Roman imprisonment (Acts 21:29). Miletus was the seaport of Caria, 30 miles from Ephesus, and was also where Paul had previously met the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:15ff).

*Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren.*

The Mediterranean channels were closed off from October through April because sea travel was too dangerous. Paul expects to not be executed at least until spring.

The supposed location for Paul’s death in the spring of 68 AD is outside of the city and is now the site of a church building known as “St. Paul’s Outside-the-Walls.”

Of *Eubulus*, we know nothing more, but the other three are surrounded with tradition.

*Linus* may have been an early bishop at Rome (per Irenaeus, III.iii.3 and Eusebius, *H.E.* III.2). Some writers also suggest that he was the son of a Welsh king named Caractacus who defied the Roman armies for 9 years. After this valiant effort fell, he was brought to Rome and gave such a powerful speech that he and his family were released. Some suggest that Claudia was his sister.

*Pudens and Claudia ­*have there own traditional “Romeo and Juliet” story. It is suggested that Claudia was the daughter of a British king named Cogidubnus that was given to marry Pudens as a part of a deal involving a gift of land. It is claimed that she stayed in the house of a royal official whose wife was a Christian and was thus converted. Following her conversion, she taught her husband and he was converted. Sources for this hypothesis include Tacitus and Martial, IV.13; XI.54. For a more detailed account of these postulations, see Reese, 547f; Barclay, 255f.

*All the brethren –* fellow evangelists? church at Rome? Fellow imprisoned Christians?

*The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.*

*You* is in the plural which indicates the letter is not just for Timothy to read.