

DEAR TIMOTHY...

AN 8 WEEK SERIES IN THE BOOK OF 2 TIMOTHY

Connect group questions

2 Timothy 4: 9-22 – Dear Timothy... the Lord stood at my side

1. Share a time when you've felt all alone as a Christian.
2. What are some of the reasons we should not skip over these verses as mere "personal remarks" or "final greetings" - as if they were unimportant and insignificant?

DESERTED

If you haven't done so, read 2 Timothy 4:9-22

3. Why did Demas leave Paul (v10)? How does one end up in this position?
4. Read 1 John 2:15. How do we guard against loving the world?
5. Note Paul's attitude to Alexander. He had done Paul a lot of harm, yet he trusts that God will bring justice. How do we wrestle with wanting to get back at someone who has done us a lot of harm? How do we learn in the end, to leave justice to God?
6. Paul was totally deserted, and yet declared 'may it not be held against them'. Suffering, deserted, yet not holding grudges? How is this possible? (See also Jesus in Mark 14:48-50 and Stephen in Acts 7:59-60.)

STRENGTHENED

7. Paul was not, in fact alone, for the Lord stood at his side. What did Mark suggest was the significance of the Lord *standing* at Paul's side? See also Acts 7:54-56.
8. Paul's testimony here is of his own personal experience. So how can we sure that his experience will also be ours in our time of need? (See Matthew 28:16-20 and Psalm 121 for example.)
9. Paul reported that the Lord stood by his side, not just to hold his hand, but so that *what* might happen? When we are feeling alone, with nothing useful to say, how should we respond?

DELIVERED

Paul gladly reports that on this occasion he was delivered from the lion's mouth. But he also wants Timothy – and us – to know that he/we will always be delivered by God. Even when he finally dies, it will be the means by which he is brought safely into God's heavenly Kingdom. (Remember 2 Tim 1:12?)

10. What is the comfort for us in this message? Do you have confidence in your ultimate safety because of the Lord Jesus?
11. How might this assurance give us greater boldness when we have opportunity to stand up for Jesus? What have we got to lose?
12. We haven't explored in depth ALL these verses from 9-22 – but could you workshop as a group, headings for these verses which better reflect the significance of their content?
13. We've finished this wonderful letter. What have been the highlights for you? How will your life as a follower of Jesus change through what we've read here?

(Refer/recall Mark's summary of some of the teaching from 2 Timothy in Mark's message on the second last page of the sermon beginning "Don't be timid about the gospel Timothy".)

Lord, give us such confidence that you will stand by our side to strengthen us, that we will become bolder for you, in the certain knowledge that you will rescue us and in the end, bring us safely into your heavenly Kingdom.

Date: 23rd June 2019
Services: 730, 930 Tewantin and Peregian
Series: Dear Timothy
Title: ... the Lord stood at my side
Passage: 2 Timothy 4:9-22
Outline:
1. **Deserted**
2. **Strengthened**
3. **Delivered**

INTRODUCTION

- Now I want you to note carefully, the **headings** over the two sections which have been read for us this morning...
- **First heading** - "**Personal remarks**"
- **Second heading** - vv19-22 - "**Final Greetings**" ... /
- So - really - there's nothing for us to see here... we need not bother ourselves with this passage - let's move straight to the prayer time...! //
- Well you **could** get that impression from the headings **couldn't you...?** // remember these headings are not part of Scripture - they're just put in by the editors... they should **not** be read out when the passage is read...
- I think **both** headings are misleading... and could quite **easily** result in us passing the passages over as if there's nothing here for us... just part of an ancient piece of correspondence from the 1st century... historic **curiosity** perhaps, but nothing really for **us**.../
- How **wrong** would we be...!
- What did we see two weeks ago? - that **all** Scripture is God-breathed and useful for *teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness* (2 Timothy 3:16)...
- So we approach **this** passage like we approach **every** part of the Bible - that this is **God's word** to us and it is here for a **reason**...
- And so with **confidence** and **expectation** we go **exploring** this morning to see what God in his kindness and mercy has to **say** to us... /
- And I want you to note **three** things Paul reports to us... namely; that he was
 1. **Deserted**, he was
 2. **Strengthened**; and that he was
 3. **Delivered**...
- First:

1. DESERTED

- Can you put yourself in Paul's situation for a minute?
- He asks in v9, for Timothy to come **quickly**. Why? Because apart from **Luke**, a long-time friend and missionary companion, he's completely **alone**!
- v10 *Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica....* / He's not only left **Paul**, he's left the **Lord** - quit the **faith**.
- Why? Because he loved the **world**. /
- More often than not, **this** is what will take people away from the Lord Jesus...! ...**Love** of the **world**.
- The Apostle John in his first Epistle challenges us with these words: *Do not love the **world** or anything in the world. If anyone loves the **world**, love for the **Father** is not in them* 1 John 2:15
- Scripture is much more **blunt** than we would be isn't it? *If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is*

not in them... !

- How do you know if you're in **danger** of loving the **world** and therefore walking away from **Jesus**?
- Because worldly **concerns** or worldly **passions** fill your **heart** or your **calendar** more than **Jesus**... or fill you with **excitement** – get your heart **racing** – more than the things of **God**... or things in this **world** are the things you just couldn't possibly **live without**... /
- Are there things of the world that are just too **important** to you today? Taking up too much **time** and **energy**?
- Be **careful!** Don't end up like **Demas!** *If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in them!* //
- So Demas has disappeared off the **scene**...
- **Other** friends who perhaps *were* with him, are now on assignment **elsewhere** - *Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia...* v10, *I sent Tychicus to Ephesus* v11.
- And then there's **Alexander** the **metalworker**... v14 – Paul says that he had done him a great deal of harm... he strongly **opposed** the message... some think that it's because he was making **idols**... and Paul's ministry was impacting his bottom **line**... /
- ...but not in any way seeking **revenge** but trusting in God's **justice** he says in v14 *the Lord will repay him for what he has done...* /
- Is there someone who has done **you** a lot of harm?
- Are you trusting the God of **justice** as Paul does **here**?
- The Lord will **repay** them for what they have done...? you can **leave** that with **him!** /
- So the **impact** of all this is... - v16 – is that at his **first** defence... Paul says, *no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me...* and then did you note what he adds? *May it not be held against them.*
- The great church leader of the 1st century... all **alone** at trial... his **life** hangs in the balance and there's **no one there to support him**... to **pray**... to add **support**... to **testify**... to **strengthen**... to **assure**... to **comfort him!** //
- Does it remind you of someone **else**? /
- The very one Paul had taken up his cross to **follow**?
- The very one whom Paul considered it a **privilege** to suffer **with** and **for**?
- Jesus – arrested in the garden... Mark 14:48-50 - *"Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." 50 Then everyone deserted him and fled.*
- **Paul** said – *may it not be held against them* – **Jesus** said, *Father, forgive them*
- There is a **pattern** here.
- Do you recall **Stephen** the first Christian martyr – Paul was there at his **execution**... *While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.* Acts 7:59-60
- **Alone. Deserted. Suffering.** Yet, not holding this against those inflicting the **suffering**.
- Jesus set the **pattern**, as he entrusted himself to the **Father**... **Stephen** and **Paul**, **followed**...
- Will **you**? If called upon to do **so**? /
- Will **you** bear suffering for Jesus? /
- And will you be heard saying '**may this not be held against them!**' ...
- **Challenging**, isn't it? //
- So; Paul reports that he was **deserted**, but also that he was:

2. STRENGTHENED

- Let's pick the passage up again at v16 – *At my first defence, no one came to my support, but everyone*

deserted me. May it not be held against them. 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.

- In fact he was **not alone**. The **Lord Jesus** was **with him – right** at his **side**.
- He was **conscious** of his **presence**.
- He who was his **great advocate** before the **Father**.
- The very one who had **died** and been **raised** for his **sin**.
- The one for whose **cause** he was in **chains**.
- The **Lord** of the **universe** – the **maker** of **heaven** and **earth** – **stood by his side!** What a **TESTIMONY!**
//
- And you do you notice what the Lord was doing?
- **Standing!**
- Same vision that Stephen had – of Jesus **standing!**
- What's the **significance** of that when we usually read that Jesus is **seated** at the right hand of God?
- The Biblical picture is that people usually **stand** to **pray**.
- When Paul pictures the Lord **standing** by his side, he pictures him **praying** for him! /
- None of us here has gone to court for following Jesus... but I guarantee there have been moments when you have felt all **alone** in serving him...
- These are **difficult times** and we are involved in a spiritual **warfare**...
- It may be that in your **family** – you **alone** follow Jesus.
- Perhaps at **work**... there are no other Christians and sometimes in standing up for what you believe you feel terribly **alone**...
- Sometimes in your year at school or in your **village**, at your **club**... or on your **staff**, there's **no one else** who loves **Jesus**...
- And sometimes in the very **home** in which you **live**... you **alone** love and serve **Jesus**.
- ... and you can feel terribly **alone**... sometimes **fearful**... often **helpless**... to say **ANYTHING** about Jesus!
- ...and that's **hard**. //
- But friends I want assure you today that Paul's **testimony** is also your **reality**...
- You too can say *The Lord stood by my side*.
- Someone is giving you a hard time for being in church...
- But *The Lord stood by my side*.
- Your family have jacked up against you and are rubbishing everything you stand for as being out of touch and old fashioned....
- But *The Lord stood by my side*.
- **That** will be your **story**.
- At **work** – everyone is critical of those arrogant Christians who think they know better than anyone else and you're just wanting to die inside...
- But – *the Lord stood by your side*...
- **Why I am so sure?**
- Because of the **promises** in **Scripture** we can **claim** together. *I will be with you, even to the end of the age*. Matthew 28

- *I lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord – the Maker of heaven and earth....* Psalm 121
- **Cling** to such promises.
- There may be times when you are tempted to ask – well – **HOW** is the Lord present with me in all this? It doesn't **feel** that way!
- At that time you must say – **I trust you. I know you. You are here!** You may *feel* otherwise, but you must bully your **feeling** with the **facts** of **God's promises**.
- *The Lord stood by my side* – what a **great testimony** of **Paul's**.
- *And* what a great testimony of **yours!** //
- But you may have noticed that the Lord wasn't just **passively** standing at Paul's side...
- Paul says *The Lord stood by my side and gave me strength so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.*
- Paul was **strengthened** to **proclaim** the **gospel**.
- He won't just be with **you** to **hold** your **hand**.
- He will be with you to **bless** you and **strengthen** you so that the **message** of **Jesus** will be **advanced**...
- He will strengthen **YOU** to say something about Jesus!
- And you might think – well that's the **last** thing I actually want to do! – I don't **want** to say anything... and it's true that some times and places and circumstances will provide **more opportunity** than **others**... but the Lord in his time – the **right** time – will give you words to say of **wisdom** and **love** and **grace** which will speak to others about **Jesus**... !
- **How do I know?** Because **he** is even **more interested** in **that** great end than **you** are!
- **How do I know?** Because its **implicit** in the promise of Matthew 28 that the Lord himself will be **part** of the work he sent his disciples **out to do. Go and make disciples** he says, *and I will be with you even to the end of the age!*
- **How do I know?** - because when you *give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord,...* you know that your *labour in the Lord is not in vain.* (1 Cor 15:58) ///
- Friends, because the **Lord** is true to his **promises**, *your* testimony will be that the Lord **stood by your side** and **strengthened** you so that the message might be **fully proclaimed**..../
- **THE LORD STOOD BY MY SIDE**
- **To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.** ///
- But there is one **more** thing Paul wants us to know... that he was **delivered**...

3. DELIVERED

- So the result of that first court case was that he **survived**... his life was spared...
- End of v17 and then v18 – have a look with me “*and I was delivered from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.*” //
- So Paul says he was **delivered** on that occasion... **fantastic**...!
- But he also wants **Timothy** to know – he wants **YOU** to know – that ultimately he will always be **safe** in the hands of his **all-powerful God**... /
- The court could have easily decided to take his life, but instead there would be another hearing.
- But Paul knew that though he would one day die a physical death, he would actually be **rescued** from every **evil attack**...
- And Paul of course, did die in the end, but the Lord provided the **ultimate** rescue to this faithful messenger – and brought him through death into God's heavenly kingdom!

- Because we know from the words of the Lord Jesus that - *The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.* (John 11:25)
- What a wonderful **confidence!** /
- Do **you** have that confidence?
- You should!!
- Friends, no **matter** what Satan throws at you will be **safe**... you will be **rescued**.... /
- That awkward situation in the **village** over drinks on Friday afternoon? **The Lord will rescue you.** Don't panic.
- That difficult confrontation at **school** in class about science disproving religion? **The Lord will rescue you.**
- That conversation at **work** bagging out Israel Falou for crowd-funding his defence? The Lord will **rescue** you.
- That family gathering where everyone thinks you're a fool for defending traditional marriage? **The Lord will rescue you!!!** ///
- Don't **panic**. Be **strong**. **Persecution** is **normal**.... AND... God's presence to stand **with** you and **strengthen** you, then **rescue** you is **guaranteed!!** //
- Back in **2016**, 21 Coptic Christians were killed on a beach in Libya.
- And we might ask - well - where was God - why didn't he rescue them?
- He did. // He rescued them and brought them safely to his heavenly **kingdom**.
- The Christians killed on Easter morning in **Sri Lanka**?
- The Lord **rescued** them and brought them safely to his **heavenly Kingdom**...
- We're not going to face situations as **tough** as that - not **yet** at least...
- But that just means that in the **lesser** situations we face... we can be **sure** we will be kept **safe**... we **are** safe...!
- And that really helps bring the whole message of 2 Timothy we've been looking these past 8 weeks together...
- Don't be **timid** about the gospel Timothy
- Don't be **ashamed** of the testimony about our Lord Timothy...
- Jesus has destroyed **death** Timothy and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel...
- God is able to guard what we've **entrusted** to him....
- So you must guard the gospel Timothy
- Be **strong** in the grace that is in Christ Jesus Timothy...
- Pass on this message to those qualified to pass it on to **others**...
- Be **focused, determined**.. like a **soldier, an athlete, a farmer**....
- Keep reminding God's people of **Jesus - raised** from the **dead, descended** from **David**,
- Be a **vessel** Timothy, for God's **noble purposes**...
- **Separate** yourself from those people in the church who will only lead you astray...
- Know that persecution will be the norm for **everyone** who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus...
- And the **Scriptures** Timothy? They will make you wise for **salvation** through **faith** in Christ Jesus.. they are all God's words... and will equip us for doing **good**...
- And **preach** the **word** Timothy - whether you **feel** like it or **not**... because people won't want to put up with sound doctrine any more...

- And know that although everyone deserted **me**, the Lord stood by my side and strengthened me to proclaim the **message**...
- And that **ultimately** – even if I lose **my** life or you lose **yours** – we will be **safely** brought into God's **heavenly kingdom**... ///

- Are you **timid** about the news of Jesus?
- Or **strong** and **brave** and **clear**... and **focused** and **determined** and **passionate**... because you know that nothing matters **more** than that **more** and **more people** hear this **news**...
- And that **yes**, you will face **opposition** – but **yes** – you will always be **safe**...
- ...because the Lord will stand by your **side** and strengthen you to say **something** about **Jesus**...
- And then, in his time, bring you into his heavenly **Kingdom**? //
- What have you got to **lose**??