

Wednesday Evening Prayer

2 Timothy 4

Reflection # 4

- I want you to wind the clock forward to around this time next year!
- It's the Northern Region conference **2017**...
- It's in Hawaii...!
- Everyone is catching up on the year...
- How's it been going?? //
- What will be **your** story? – what will be your testimony of life and ministry in the ensuing 12 months...?
- What will have given you most **joy**?
- What will have given you most **frustration**?
- What will it be that has come close to **braking** you? //
- We **can't know can** we?
- We can't possibly **know** what these next 12 months will hold for us.
- We hope and pray – for **lots** that is **good** and **positive, encouraging**...
- We hope and pray we will see people **become** disciples and **mature** as disciples!
- But we can't know **exactly** how this year will pan out.
- There may be **opposition**; there may be **hurdles**; there may be **persecution**; there may be **illness**...

- **We can't be sure. //**
- But there **are** things we **can** know about this **year!**
- I want to suggest that we can **know** that **our** testimony – **no matter what happens** – **will** be that of **Paul** in v17: ***'the Lord stood by my side'***.
- I am absolutely **confident that the testimony of each one of us this time next year will be... – THE LORD STOOD BY MY SIDE! ///**
- **Paul** found himself in **very difficult circumstances.**
- He was in **prison in Rome.** He feels the end of his **life** and **mission** is **near** – v7 – ***I have finished the race.***
- And at this **stage** of the race he felt **alone.** He feels alone because Demas deserted him v10 – Crescens had taken off – Titus too... Tychicus he had sent to Ephesus... v12 Alexander had turned on Paul... v14
- And he feels **alone** at his first defence... in court... v16 because – *everyone deserted me.*
- **No one** came to his support... Must have been very lonely...
- **Except** – except that...
- ***the Lord stood by my side.***
- 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** was with him at his defence! //

- **Sisters and brothers** – we don't know **what** is around the corner for one another in this next year.
- I trust it will be great **and wonderful, and fulfilling, exciting and stimulating.**
- But I'll be **surprised** - as you are doing the **Lord's work**, and as you are engaging in the **great spiritual warfare** – I'll be surprised if there aren't some **hard times.**
- There may be times like for Paul when you feel **very alone** – **no one** who will **support you.**
- But ***The Lord stood by my side.***
- Perhaps you will be **ill.**
- But ***The Lord stood by my side.***
- Perhaps the parish **council** or school **principal** or hospital **board** wants to block your **vision.**
- But ***The Lord stood by my side.***
- **That** will be your **story.**
- **Why I am so sure?**
- Because of the **promises** in **Scripture.**
- ***The Lord is my Shepherd, there's nothing I want.***
- ***I will be with you, even to the end of the age.***
- ***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....***
- **Cling** to such promises. **////**

- But you may have noticed that the Lord wasn't just **passively** standing by... as it were holding his hand!
- Paul says *The Lord stood by my side and **gave me strength** so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed....*
- Paul was **strengthened** to **proclaim** the **gospel**.
- And **you** will be too!!
- ...**because he** is even **more interested** in **that great end** than **you are!**
- **THE LORD STOOD BY MY SIDE**
- When we arrive this conference next year – **that** will be both **your** testimony and **mine** – to **his** glory and praise.
- The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.