Forsaken, But Not Alone

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us.!

This morning for our sermon will be in 2 Timothy chapter 4 verses 9 through 22. And let's pray together. Our Father, we thank you for the grace and mercy you've shown us in Christ.
You've made much of your Son and we have worshipped Him through song. I pray now as we turn to your written word that we would continue to exalt your Son and worship Him.
And it's in His name we pray. Amen. Well, many of you, as part of your estate planning, have written a will. And this is a good and wise thing to do to set your estate in order.
And really that's an act of love for those who will be left behind after you depart this world. It is your statement about what you want to be done with your stuff and your possessions.
[1:09] So that your loved ones, when they're left behind, aren't having to make all these decisions and can just rest in your wishes. Rest in the process that's been set in place by you through what you've written in your will.

And in very many ways, the book of 2 Timothy is Paul's final will. This is how Paul wants the church to conduct itself after he is gone.
And this is specifically how Paul wants Timothy to conduct himself after Paul departs this world. This is Paul's will for his son in the faith, Timothy.
Paul is setting his house in order by writing this letter to his beloved son in the faith, his dear Timothy. And this letter is really about encouraging Timothy.
He's trying to keep Timothy going. He's trying to keep Timothy fulfilling his ministry. He opens the letter by saying, Timothy, don't be afraid. The Lord has given us a spirit of love and power and self-control.
[2:16] Don't be afraid. Fulfill your ministry. He says earlier in chapter 4. Paul is seeking to encourage Timothy. And in this letter, we get a glimpse of Paul that we don't really get anywhere else in the New Testament.

When I think of Paul, I kind of lionize him. I think of him as a kind of superhero sort of guy. And he certainly is much more of a man than I ever will be. But here, in our passage today, we get a very authentic look at his humanity.
He has very real needs. And he depends on others to meet those needs. He's left alone as he writes much of this letter.
And we see those real needs he has. But we also see real, authentic faith as well. We'll cover our passage in three points.
The first of which is friends and foes. Friends and foes. We see this in verses 9 through 15. And I'll read that section for us.
[3:23] Beginning in verse 9. Do your best to come to me soon. For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.

Crescens has gone to Galatia. Titus to Dalmatia. Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he's very useful to me for ministry.
Tychicus I've sent to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas. Also the books. And above all, the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm.
The Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself. For he strongly opposed our message. Paul mentions eight names in this opening section.
Most of them were friends. Some of them began well, but finished poorly. Some of them began poorly and finished well. Some were faithful the whole time, and some were faithless the whole time.

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[4:29] And Paul begins by saying, do your best to come to me soon. This is the command that governs this whole section, verses 9 through 15. Make every effort. Hasten to come to me quickly.

And he'll specify later on in our passage today that he wants him to come before winter in particular. This journey from Ephesus to Rome, where Paul is imprisoned, would have taken about four to six months, depending on travel schedule and how busy it was.
But why does Paul want Timothy to come to him so urgently? A couple of reasons. One, he's alone. He's alone in jail.
And as we read our Bibles, we learn that so often leadership and loneliness go hand in hand. In some sense, to lead people is to be exiled from them.
You think of all the great leaders throughout the church history and throughout Israel's history. Many of them struggled and felt this loneliness. But right now, Paul doesn't just feel alone.
[5:33] He really is alone. So he's alone and he wants Timothy to come alleviate his loneliness. But a second reason is that Paul is also about to die.

If you look back up to chapter 4, verse 6, listen to his language. I'm already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure has come.
And then he speaks about himself in the past tense, starting in verse 7. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith.
Verse 8, henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that day. And not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.
Paul is about to die. He recognizes that this trial will lead to the loss of his life. And he wants Timothy to make every effort to get to him before he dances with death and before he departs this world.
[6:38] And he explains his loneliness starting in verse 10, beginning with a description of Demas. For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me or has forsaken me and gone to Thessalonica.

What a contrast it is between Demas and Paul. Demas began in ministry with Paul, was one of Paul's trusted partners. He's mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament as one of Paul's faithful friends.
And Paul says in verse 8, I have loved Christ's appearing. And Demas loves this world. And because he loves this world, he has abandoned me.
And we don't know exactly what this love of the world looked like in Demas' life, but this is a weighty condemnation that Paul lays on him. We know from elsewhere in the New Testament that friendship with this world or love of this world is enmity with God, James 4 says.
1 John 2 says that whoever loves this world does not have the love of the Father in them. Paul doesn't get specific here, but this is a heavy charge he gives concerning Demas' soul.
[7:55] This could have looked like the love of money, the love of power, the love of any kind of sinful pleasure that this world offers. But whatever particular sin he was ensnared by, whatever this love of the world looked like in his life, his feet eventually followed his heart, and he abandoned Paul altogether.

The church will always have its Demases, its people who start well but finish poorly. And so be careful. Do you truly love Jesus in your heart?
You can say the right things. We can appear faithful. We can appear holy. But where is your heart? What do you love?
And so Demas has abandoned Paul. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. These are men who are faithful ministry partners with Paul, and he has sent them out to strengthen other churches, most likely.
And so these men have departed because of duty, not because they defected like Demas did. Crescens is not mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament. We don't know anything about him.
[9:09] Titus is the same Titus to whom the letter of Titus is written. And so he trusted these men, and he sent them out to strengthen the churches in these regions. And so they remained faithful to the Lord and to Paul, but they've been sent out, and so Paul is nonetheless alone.

And this isn't just practically explaining his loneliness. This is also valuable information. If Paul dies before Timothy can get to him, Timothy will now know where these men have gone.

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He'll know where to find these men. Verse 11, Luke alone is with me. Now this is not a shot at Luke. He's not saying, I don't have a single friend here. I just have Luke. That's not what he's saying. He's saying, I've just got one person here tending to my needs. And the Roman prison system did not treat its prisoners kindly.
They did not provide basic necessities for them. And so prisoners were heavily dependent upon friends or family to come and visit them and tend to their needs physically and medically.
[10:15] And so Luke is a good one to have with you, but that's all he has. He only has Luke. And he says later in verse 11, get Mark and bring him with you.

For he is very useful to me for ministry. This is the same Mark who wrote the gospel according to Mark. And Paul had not always found Mark useful for ministry.
Mark went on Paul's first missionary journey with Barnabas. And at some point, Mark leaves. He deserted. He abandoned Paul and Barnabas.
And it just says he went back to Jerusalem. And when it came time to go out again, Paul was taking Barnabas with him. And Barnabas said, hey, let's bring my cousin Mark. And Paul said, I don't have time to carry around other people's weight.
He can't go with us. Paul didn't have time or bandwidth to bring along people who were lazy or scared or were unwilling to carry their own load.
[11:18] And so actually Paul and Barnabas broke up over it. Barnabas went his way with Mark. Paul went his way with Silas. And so Paul had not always found Mark useful for ministry.

And now he says, bring him with you. He's useful to me. Not just personally, but for the sake of ministry. And so Paul's mind has changed about Mark because Mark's conduct has changed.
He has proved himself. He has repented of his weakness or his fear or whatever it was that led him to desert them on that first missionary journey. And it's such a beautiful picture of forgiveness. Failure does not have to be final in ministry. And so maybe you've tried to minister in a certain way and it did not go well. Failure does not have to be final.
Failure does not have to be final in ministry. And so Paul has forgiven Mark from his heart and says, get him and bring him with you because he can be very valuable to us. Verse 12, further explaining his loneliness, Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.
[12:24] Now Paul is writing from Rome to Timothy and Timothy is in Ephesus. And so it's likely that Tychicus is carrying this letter to Timothy. He's saying, I'm sending him to Ephesus.

And so practically, he likely would carry this letter to Timothy and then sub in for Timothy. Timothy needs to take this long journey to Paul and Ephesus is going to need a pastor while he's gone. Tychicus is someone that Paul trusts, sends him with this letter to take Timothy's place while Timothy makes this journey to try and see Paul before he dies. Verse 13, when you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all, the parchments.
We don't know who Carpus is, but Paul practically would need a coat for his cold prison cell. And winter was on the horizon and so he needed that rather quickly.
And he also asked for his books. These would have been scrolls, likely of Old Testament books. And so Paul is wanting to pass his time in prison reading the scriptures, reading and studying and meditating on God's word.
[13:43] Paul was a very well-read man in terms of the Bible. He knew the Old Testament very well. And there were very few things more important to pastors than their jackets and their books.

And so he really trusted this Carpus guy, evidently, to leave these things there. And he says, and above all, the parchments. These would have been animal skins that were turned into sheets. And so really, it's a loose-leaf paper. But it would have been very expensive. This could have been New Testament scripture that has been written. This could have been some of Paul's previous writings.
Or these could be blanks. Paul intends to continue to write from his prison cell in Rome. Now, why did he leave all of this with Carpus at Troas?
Well, we don't know. These things likely would have traveled with Paul everywhere he went. We don't know definitively. But it's possible that this is where he was arrested. He was staying with Carpus and was arrested there and shipped off to the capital for his trial.
[14:47] With no chance to gather his belongings or take things with him. Now, there are some things here that he asked for that are very practical. There are some things here that he asked for that are very spiritual.

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And I don't think we need to draw a hard line between what's practical and what's spiritual. I think practical things aren't necessarily unspiritual. He asked for his coat. His body needs warmth.
It's not unspiritual for missionaries to ask for supplies. To ask for money to carry out their ministry.
And he also asked for some things that are spiritual, like the scriptures.
And we might be tempted to say, Paul, you're in jail and you're about to die. Why do you need to read? What do you need to read for? Well, if nothing else, this will prepare him to better worship Christ for all of eternity.
He will continue to know his Savior better through his study of the scriptures. But I'm so encouraged by Paul's example here in verse 13. He's in his older age now.
[15:53] He's in a very difficult physical situation. And he has no plans of stopping. He knows he's going to die within the next calendar year. And he has zero plans to stop writing and zero plans to stop studying God's word.

Reading is essential to the Christian life. We must read our Bibles. This is how we know who our Savior is.
And also, I'm reminded here of older men and women in our church. Some of these older men are in the Institute. Some of these older men and women are here every single week to study the Bible. I'm so encouraged by you guys. I'm so encouraged by that. You're very much like the Apostle Paul. You're still studying, still learning. Paul was an absolute genius when it came to the scriptures.
He's at the end of his life. He could have just mailed it in. And he wants to continue to study. And then he gives Timothy a warning.
[17:03] Verse 14, Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm. The Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Paul almost writes more words about Alexander than he does the rest of these men combined.

We don't know who this Alexander is. There are several mentioned in the New Testament. So this was likely a common first century name. There's an Alexander he mentions in 1 Timothy, who was an elder in the church at Ephesus and had departed from the faith.
I don't think it's the same Alexander because he specifies here that this is Alexander the coppersmith. Furthermore, that Alexander that was the elder was in Ephesus.
And I think this Alexander is in Rome. It seems like what this Alexander did led to Paul being imprisoned. It seems like whatever this Alexander did led to Paul being put on trial.
And Paul says the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Paul leaves room for the wrath of God. Paul wrote in Romans 12 that the Lord says, vengeance is mine.
[18:18] I will repay. And so Paul is not interested in making sure Alexander gets justice here and now. He is confident and joyful to leave it in the hands of the Lord.

And that word repay is the same word that Paul uses in verse 8. It's translated as award. The Lord Jesus Christ will award to everyone what they deserve.
He will award to those who have loved him the crown of righteousness. And he will award to men like Alexander wrath for all eternity. And if we can imitate Paul on this, this will greatly change how we navigate through injustice.
This will greatly change how we handle difficulty in our lives. We can get so fixated on making sure everyone gets what's owed to them here in this life that we don't even think about what's coming in eternity.
And Paul says, I'm not bitter. The Lord's going to deal with Alexander. I remember as a kid doing some things that upset my mom when I was little.
[19:31] And I could see it on her face and she would be disappointed in me or frustrated with me. But I got really scared when she stayed calm and said, wait till your dad gets home.

And I tried my best to make her forget about what had happened. I was like, maybe if I am just good enough, she'll forget to tell my dad and I'll get out of this. Never happened. She was leaving room for the wrath of dad in that situation.
And Paul is essentially looking at Alexander and saying, wait until the Lord returns. I'm happy to wait until he gets here. He will repay everything perfectly and in full.
But then Paul says in verse 15, beware of him yourself. For he strongly opposed our message. Why does Paul mention Alexander at all?
He wants Timothy to watch out for him. Timothy, you're going to be coming to me. You might cross paths with a guy named Alexander. Watch out for him. He's greatly opposed me.

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[20:39] He's greatly harmed me. He's greatly opposed the message of the gospel. And so this inclusion of Alexander is both theological and practical.

He's telling Timothy, don't be worried about repaying him. The Lord's going to do that. But keep your eyes peeled for him. Stay away from him when you come and see me.
So trust God and watch out for him. And now a question I often have when Paul calls out people by name is, is this gossip?
Is this slander? And really in every chapter of 2 Timothy, he's mentioning people by name, calling them out. And so is this gossip? Is this gossip? I think for some of us, gossip is a very acceptable sin.
It's something that we just participate in and don't even really know that we're doing it. Maybe even justify that we do it. I think for others of us, we've swung our conscience so far the other direction that we might think any mention of someone that's negative is gossip and is therefore sinful.
[21:44] So what is gossip? Is this a form of gossip? Well, it's a difficult thing to nail down because the New Testament doesn't really define what it is.

It just kind of describes it in action as like a whispering behind people's backs. So I've got a few questions to help analyze, is something gossip? Or should you tell someone something?
So first, is it true? Is it true? Second question is, does it need to be said? If it's not true, it shouldn't be passed on.
But it's possible for something to be true and not need to be said. So is it true? Is it true? Does it need to be said? And a couple more clarifying questions regarding the necessity.
Does it need to be said by me? And does it need to be said to this person? And so as we think about gossip and passing along information that is true but could be damaging to someone's reputation, is it true?
[22:54] Does it need to be said? Does it need to be said by me? Does it need to be said to this person? If the answer to any of those questions is no, then it most likely shouldn't be passed along.

If the answer to all these questions is yes, then it's probably wise to speak about it. This is true about Alexander. It needs to be said for Timothy's safety.
So Paul needs to say it. He's the one who experienced it. It needs to be said to Timothy to keep him safe as he makes his way to Paul. Now what did this opposition look like?
Paul doesn't give any details at all. But based on what he says next, it seems that whatever Alexander did led directly to Paul being put on trial.
So secondly, we see rescued now and forever. We saw friends and foes. Secondly, we see rescued now and forever in verses 16 through 18.
[23:55] Paul says in verse 16, He mentions his first defense here.

And most Roman trials had two phases. This first one is something like a grand jury in our court system. It's just a hearing to establish if there's enough evidence for this to actually go to court.
And so this first phase of the Roman trial would be a chance for witnesses to bring charges against Paul to see if there could be another trial to condemn him. And during this first trial, no one came to Paul.
No one helped Paul. No one testified on Paul's behalf. It seems like they were afraid to associate with him in his persecution. It would have been damaging to their own reputation.
It would have been potentially dangerous for them as well. And so they just abandoned him. And we are all very capable of withdrawing from our friends when they're in need.
[25:03] But Paul is saying, they left me. And this first trial could have been anywhere up to six months prior to him writing this. And so when he mentions Luke and he mentions Tychicus and he mentions these guys that he sent out, it's possible they were already gone.

They'd already left him because they were sent out by Paul. It's possible they hadn't arrived in Rome yet. And so he's mentioning friends that are there with him now. But at his first offense, no one stood by him.
Here's a man who's been a lion for Christ across multiple continents. Has more friends than any of us in this room have and certainly more enemies than any of us would want.
and yet here he's all alone. Unable to adequately defend himself in light of the hostilities of this Gentile court.
His friends left him alone in his hour of greatest need. And I don't think he ever looked more like Christ.

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[26:08] I don't think he was ever more like Christ than in this moment. You remember how our Savior died, this Savior of the world, the one who would be proclaimed to the ends of the earth, the only Savior of the whole world.

When he dies, there's one disciple with him and a handful of women. All alone, his friends forsook him.
His friends abandoned him. But even look at how Paul responds in such a Christ-like way at the end of verse 16. May it not be charged against them.
He forgives his friends. He prays on behalf of his friends that their sins wouldn't be counted against them. He learns to talk this way from Jesus himself.
Father, forgive them. They know not what they do. And he was there when Stephen was stoned. He presided over Stephen's stoning and Stephen cried out before he died, may it not be counted against them.
[27:18] Paul was willing to forgive his friends. I'm trying to put myself in his circumstance. I don't know if my heart is big enough to say something like that.

That's shocking. If Paul's friends had been there, he might not be in prison right now. His life might have been extended a few more years here on earth. So we have here in this passage Paul extending mercy to his friends but turning over his enemies to God.
Why the difference? I think Paul recognizes the difference between being weak and being fake. Being weak-hearted in the face of persecution is different than being fake-hearted toward your friends.
And so Paul is willing to extend mercy and grace to them. He was all alone at this trial. Utterly forsaken.
But look at verse 17. But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me. Paul was forsaken but he was not alone.
[28:30] Jesus was with him. And when we read the Apostle Paul, when he says Lord, he's always referring to Christ. When he's referring to the Father, he says Father or he says God.

When he's referring to Christ, he oftentimes says Lord. And this has happened very many times. The Lord has stood by him. In Acts 18, the Lord appeared to him in a vision in the night to encourage him, to strengthen him.
In Acts 22 and Acts 23, Jesus appears to Paul to encourage him and strengthen him. And really, these are just special manifestations of Christ's promise to all of his disciples.
I will be with you to the end of the age. I'll be with you to the end of the age. And why does Paul think the Lord did this?
So that through me, the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. Paul's concern was always for the gospel and never for himself.
[29:37] He said, my friends abandoned me, but the Lord stood by me so that the gospel could go forward in this Roman court. Jesus told Paul in Acts 23, just as you've testified about me here in Jerusalem, so also you must testify about me in Rome.

Paul is seeing how the Lord's will is being fulfilled as he proclaims the gospel to these pagans who are putting him on trial. How would you respond to his situation?
Would you be bitter? Would you shut down? Would you clam up? Would you be depressed? Paul is joyful. He's not holding on to this.
And he says, the gospel was proclaimed in Rome. And in chapter 2, verse 8 of this letter, he says, I endure everything for the sake of the elect.
So they can hear the gospel, including this trial, including this imprisonment. So because the Lord stood by him, because the Lord strengthened him and allowed him to proclaim to all the Gentiles here in Rome, the end of verse 17, he says, so I was rescued from the lion's mouth.
[30:55] Paul could have been executed on the spot after this first trial, but he wasn't. His life was extended possibly up to a year. And he says, I was rescued from death.

And this particular phrase actually comes from Psalm 22, which was also on the Lord's lips as he died. It says, I was rescued from death. This trial will ultimately lead me to death in the future, but not yet.
I was delivered from death temporarily. In verse 18, the Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom.

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To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Now he specifies heavenly kingdom here in verse 18 because he's already in the kingdom by faith.
And yet he's going to experience it more fully in heaven after he dies. Paul looks death in the face and does not flinch.
[31:59] The Lord has rescued me from every trial I've been in and he's going to rescue me from every evil deed. He's been rescued from death on so many occasions and now he recognizes I'm going to be rescued again, not from death, but through death.

I'm going to leave this cell as a free man, not because I've been acquitted, but because I've been delivered through death into Christ's heavenly kingdom. Paul, tradition tells us, would be decapitated and he arrived in heaven without a scratch.
He says, I will be brought safely there. the Lord will keep me safely to the other side. To him, to live was Christ.
To live was proclamation and to die was gain. This will be his triumph. Every day he was given in this body was an opportunity to preach Christ and when the Lord was done with him he would be brought safely home.
there's a missionary by the name of John Payton who I enjoy reading about and hearing about. He was a missionary to this group of islands called the New Hebrides Islands just off the coast of Australia.
[33:20] It was a very dangerous situation, a cannibalistic people group he was preaching the gospel to and someone asked him if he's afraid and he said he was not afraid and he said I am immortal until the Lord is done with me.

Nothing will take my life until I fulfilled my ministry and then I'll go to heaven. And that's how Paul is thinking about his life here.
Nothing can touch me until the Lord is done with me and even then I'm going to be brought safely to heaven. I'll be in one piece for the rest of eternity.
And that word safely is literally saved. Paul says he will save me into his heavenly kingdom. Our salvation is fully accomplished now, fully applied now but not fully experienced until we get to heaven.
And Paul says I will be completely saved. I will be utterly safe in his heavenly kingdom. And so to him be the glory. To the Lord Jesus Christ be the glory forever and ever.
[34:36] Amen. This is his last doxology, his last word of praise. This is his swan song before he leaves this world. And he died valiantly. He died boldly.

He died faithfully. And nearness to death reveals character. It brings out the best or the worst in people. And what we see here is not a man who's bitter or complaining.
He's cold, hungry, probably sick all the time, unable to see the sun on most days, mostly alone, and he's happy. He's joyful in Christ.
As he says in 112, I know whom I have believed. I'm convinced that he is able to keep until that day the deposit that he's entrusted to me.
Paul never forgot the sweet promises of the gospel made to sinners through the death and resurrection of Christ. And so we see thirdly, friends new and old.
[35:39] Friends new and old in verses 19 through 22. Beginning in verse 19, he says to Timothy, greet Prissa and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.

Erastus remained at Corinth and I left Trophimus who was ill at Miletus. Do your best to come to me before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.
The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Most of these men and women Paul would never see face to face again. He was passing along greetings to them, telling Timothy to greet them on his behalf.
And interestingly, Trophimus, he was sick and so Paul left him behind which seems like maybe an unloving thing to do but Paul had an obligation to continue to preach the gospel.
And this isn't the point of this text so I don't want to spend a ton of time here but Paul was an apostle. He had the ability to heal people. Why didn't he heal his friend? Well, it's consistent with what we see as more of the New Testament is being written, those miraculous sign gifts fade off the scene.

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[36:52] And so his friend Trophimus who was useful to him for ministry was sick and so he leaves him behind to recover at Miletus. Verse 21, he says, do your best, same language as verse 9, do your best to come before winter.

I need that coat, Timothy, get here quickly. But also the travel by sea would be shut down over winter because that was storm season for them and so he's saying make it to the coast before winter, get here while it's still safe and while travel is still available to you.
Paul was ready to see his savior but he desperately wanted to see his son one more time. Wanted to say goodbye in person. He mentions these names at the end of verse 21.
These are all Latin names so likely Christians at the church in Rome. Claudia is a woman's name and he just gives a general greeting from all the brothers.
These people are completely unknown to us and yet fully known to Christ. There are people in our church who are faithful in ministry that maybe just a few people in here actually know about.
[38:02] There are also people who are serving Christ in our state and in our world that we don't know anything about and yet Christ sees all. And so as you serve the church as you proclaim the gospel to your kids serve for the pleasure of God and not for the praise of man.

Christ will adequately compensate you for every good deed that goes unnoticed. And we are encouraged by the examples of these men and women whom we know nothing about.
In verse 22 we have the final recorded words that the Apostle Paul ever wrote. The Lord be with your spirit. This is the point of 2 Timothy.
The Lord has given us a spirit not of fear Timothy and so I'm praying that the Lord would strengthen your spirit would strengthen your resolve would continue to be with you so that you can stay faithful after I'm gone.
So you'll be encouraged and powerful in the ministry that Christ has given to you. And he says grace be with you. This bloodied and beaten apostle knew something about grace.
[39:17] And so his prayer is that Christ's unmerited favor and unending forgiveness would continue to sustain Timothy until Timothy would come to die.

And interestingly verse 22 your spirit is singular so he's speaking to Timothy praying on Timothy's behalf that the Lord Jesus Christ would be with his spirit as an individual.
The second you in verse 22 is plural. So if Paul was writing this letter to me he would say grace be with y'all. He's writing to the church as a whole. Paul wrote this letter to Timothy and his intent was for this letter to be read to the whole church.
his intent was for this letter to be useful for every church that existed until the Lord returned. Did they make it in time?
Did Paul and Mark make it or excuse me did Timothy and Mark make it to Paul in time? If they did they would have provided tremendous comfort to Paul as he exited this world.
[40:29] And in the same room you would have had Paul, Timothy, Luke and Mark gathered together. These men accounted for about 60% of the entire New Testament. They would have been praying together and strategizing together for what life would look like after Paul.

Paul would have been the quarterback of this huddle. They were drawing up plays. Mark, I need you to give me one of these. Luke, I need you to go here and serve this church faithfully. Paul met death boldly and if they made it in time surrounded by friends.
Christ was no longer with him he went to be with Christ. And what's on Paul's mind as he's about to die?
Jesus and his friends. Jesus and his friends. And if you've gone to a funeral it's a blessing to go to a funeral of someone you know as a believer.
and what you hear at that funeral is testimonies of this person's faith in Christ and the people who are there are their friends and loved ones. Adrian Rogers said that to measure true riches he said true riches are things that money can't buy and death cannot take away.
[41:50] And when you boil that down you've really got Jesus in your friends. you cannot buy faith in Christ you cannot buy Jesus' favor it's received by grace through faith and death cannot take it away.

He's a good shepherd who keeps his sheep. And by that grace that he gives to us our friendships are also eternal. There will be a pause for a number of years after some of us die and go to be with the Lord but those friendships don't end.

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Relationships are critically important. He need Paul needed friends. He mentions 16 friends in the final section of this letter and the need for friends is not a spiritual weakness.
Faith in Christ and friendship go together. This is just one reason why the church is so important. We need friends who understand us.
We need friends who want what we want and understand our heart and Christ has provided a plethora of friendships in the church that he has created through his word. And so I want to think about a few implications about friendship from this passage.
[43:04] Number one, when you're lonely, you need friends. And that may seem like a self-evident statement but we tend to view friendship as a weakness.

We tend to view the need for friendship as a weakness. But it's truly a spiritual strength. Christ has created us for friendship. And so cultivate friendship now.
Friends rarely leap into existence when loneliness strikes. Develop deep friendships now. And many times the true strength of friendship isn't seen until death is near.
And so cultivate those friendships now. Number two, friends can carry you through dark days. Friends can carry you through dark days.
Friendship will sometimes slow you down a lot. Things in your life will be great and tragedy will strike a friend and you've got to slow down and mourn with them.
[44:07] Sometimes things in your life will be difficult and your friend is celebrating and you'll need to lay your life down to celebrate with them. Friendships will slow you down but as J.C.

Ryle said, friendship is the relationship that halves our sorrows and doubles our joys. The joy is richer because of the friends that Christ has provided.
But then finally, don't expect your friends to be Jesus. Don't expect your friends to be Jesus. We need to depend on friends but our faith is in Christ and Christ alone.
Our friends will let us down just like we've let them down and we'll continue to let them down. But we must depend on faithful friends while we trust in Jesus and wait for full deliverance into his kingdom.
And when we get to heaven, we'll look back on our lives and say there were times when my friends let me down. There were times when I was forsaken but I was never alone because Jesus kept his promises to me.
[45:16] He was faithful to the words that he spoke and Jesus truly is a friend who we will have at all times. Jesus is a friend who lays his life down for us so that we can have eternal life.

He is a friend who will never leave us or forsake us. And he's a friend in such a way that even when we feel forsaken, even when we feel alone, we can know we're not alone and we never will be.
And because of Jesus' salvation, because of his friendship to us, heaven is a place where we will never have to say goodbye to our friends anymore.
Heaven is a place where we will enjoy Christ forever and also enjoy the perfection of friendship with one another. And heaven will be a much sweeter place for my wife Lacey and I because of you, because of the friendship that we will enjoy together around Christ.
And we will say forever and ever and continue to say to Christ be the glory forever and ever because of his salvation and because of the friendships he's provided for us.
[46:30] Let's pray. Our Father, we thank you for your grace. Thank you for sending Christ to die for our sins. We thank you also for this sweet, intimate letter that Paul wrote to his son in the faith, Timothy.

I pray that we would learn from the example of Paul. I pray that we would face death in the same way that he did with boldness and confidence and faith, not in ourselves but in our true friend Christ who laid his life down for us.
And it's in his name we pray. Amen. God bless you. Amen.
Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen.

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