

Jesus, a friend indeed

November 23, 2020

2 TIMOTHY 4:9-18 AMP - (9) Make every effort to come to me soon; (10) for Demas, having loved (the pleasures of) this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens *has gone* to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. (11) Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very helpful to me for the ministry. (12) But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. (13) When you come bring the coat that I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. (14) Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; [but that is no concern of mine, for] the Lord will repay him according to his actions. (15) Be on guard against him yourself, because he vigorously opposed our message. (16) At my first trial no one supported me [as an advocate] or stood with me, but they all deserted me. May it not be counted against them [by God]. (17) But the Lord stood by me and strengthened *and* empowered me, so that through me the [gospel] message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear it; and I was rescued from the mouth of the lion. (18) The Lord will rescue me from every evil assault, and He will bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

These verses express some urgency. Paul not only asks for a visit, but one soon, and with Timothy's best efforts. Paul deeply desired for Timothy to visit him before his death. Paul will also request that Timothy bring Mark with him (**2 Timothy 4:11**), as well as Paul's cloak, books, and parchments (**2 Timothy 4:13**). Paul was all alone at this time with the exception of Luke (**2 Timothy 4:11**) and longed for friends to visit.

The time of this writing was likely in the fall. This can be determined since Paul was asking for his cloak (**2 Timothy 4:13**) and urged Timothy to come before winter (**2 Timothy 4:21**). Since Timothy would need to sail in the Mediterranean to come to Paul, it meant he needed to leave before sailing became too difficult in winter weather, usually late October. A time frame of early fall, in the last year of Paul's life.

Demas had been a friend whom Paul trusted. The first time Paul was in prison in *Rome, Demas supported him well. When writing to Philemon Paul refers to Demas as one who worked with him (**Philemon 24**). But now Demas had gone from him. Demas left because he loved this world. Paul did not say what the cause of this was. It must have been hard and perhaps dangerous to be a friend of Paul in *Rome. Demas was not ready to share or risk the same kind of suffering that Paul had. Perhaps he wanted an easier life. Perhaps a desire for money caused him to leave Paul. Whatever the reason, he did leave Paul and went to Thessalonica.

Paul does not seem to complain that Crescens and Titus had gone away. We are not told the reason why these two men left Paul at Rome. It could be that Paul had sent them to continue the work of the gospel. Paul warns Timothy that Alexander is a dangerous man. As he has troubled Paul, he could well attack Timothy. He opposed the Christian teachers as they taught the truth. He was an enemy of the gospel of Christ. He may also have spoken in the courts against Paul. Paul is not asking the Lord to punish him. This is not a prayer but a statement of fact. Paul speaks about how Jesus was there regardless. Some other men could have assisted Paul, but like Christ?

You were made for friendship with God. God does not just want us to know *about* him; he wants us to *know* him — and to experience his friendship. I urge you to “Let Him be your first love. We should enter into an everlasting friendship with Christ that never shall be broken. Jesus gathered his disciples one last time, on the night before his death, to prepare them for the next day and beyond. In the midst of this sacred evening he said, “No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you” (**John 15:15**). To be called Jesus's servant is an immeasurable privilege. Yet Jesus confers a greater honor. He brings us even closer. He calls us friends.

SCRIPTURE READING: JOHN 15:14

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: We must trust Christ as Savior and we must follow Christ as Lord.

"A JOURNEY OF THE HEART"