



# Desertion

September 11, 2017

**2 TIMOTHY 4:9-16 NKJV** – (9) Be diligent to come to me quickly; (10) for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. (11) Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. (12) And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. (13) Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments. (14) Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. (15) You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words. (16) At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

Paul is cold in the prison and lonely. He would like to see Timothy again; he thinks of him as his own son (**2 Timothy 1:4**). Paul urges Timothy to try to visit before the winter (**2 Timothy 4:21**). He asks Timothy to bring the warm coat that he left in the town of Troas. He also wants Timothy to bring his books and papers (**2 Timothy 4:13**). Paul also asks Timothy, to bring Mark with him. Mark was probably not in Ephesus with Timothy. Paul is asking Timothy to bring Mark from wherever he is located. Paul expects that he will soon be killed (**2 Timothy 4:6**). Paul writes to encourage Timothy in his Christian life. He urges him to be strong in what he believes. Timothy must use the gifts that God has given him. He must preach the "gospel and teach the truth". Those who were close to him had left him for one reason or another.

One of those that left Paul was Demas, a friend whom Paul had trusted. The first time Paul was imprisoned in Rome, Demas supported him well. When writing to Philemon, Paul refers to Demas as one who worked with him (**Philemon 24**). By the time Paul is imprisoned again, Demas is no longer a trusted friend. He has left Paul because the world was too tempting. In the text, Paul does not give all the reasons how Demas leaves him. It was probably hard and perhaps even dangerous to be a friend of Paul in Rome. Demas was not ready to share or risk the same kind of suffering that Paul endured. 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 about the fact that Crescens and Titus went away, nor are we told the reason they left Paul at Rome. It could be that Paul sent them to continue the work of the gospel. All the rest were gone; only Luke stayed with Paul. Luke travelled often with him, and looked after Paul as he was a doctor. Paul refers to Luke as the much loved doctor (**Colossians 4:14**).

We do not know when, where, or how Alexander the coppersmith caused Paul a great deal of trouble. All we know about him is that he worked with metal. Alexander was a common name. A Jew called Alexander tried to stop the angry crowd in Ephesus (**Acts 19:33-34**). There was another man called Alexander whom Paul put out of the church there (**1 Timothy 1:19-20**). It could have been either of these men or some other man with the same name. Paul is not asking the Lord to punish him. This is not a prayer but a statement of fact. The Lord will punish him for the evil that he has done. In **Verse 15** 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 did not blame them though they all failed him. They did wrong but Paul forgave them. He did not want the Lord to hold it against them. In **Verse 17** all Paul friends have left him and failed to help him, yet he did not lack in help or support for the Lord was there. The Lord gave him the strength to answer those who accused him. As a result, Paul was able to speak about the gospel. Those who deserted Paul, actually deserted God - a lesson for us as well. "Desertion" - it can and it will happen.

**SCRIPTURE READING:** 1 PETER 1:14

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:** Forgiveness is doing opposite of what our negative minds is telling us to do.