

FINAL REFLECTIONS FROM A SPIRITUAL FATHER

2 Timothy 4:9-22

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I. The Encouragement of Faithful Teammates

Do your best to come to me soon.

2 Tim. 4:9

Greet Prisca 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 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.

2 Tim. 4:19-22

II. The Pain of Desertion

For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.

2 Tim. 4:10

III. A Deserter Restored

Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

2 Tim. 4:11b

IV. The Nourishment of God's Word

When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.

2 Tim. 4:13

V. The Danger of Opposition

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.

2 Tim. 4:14-15

VI. The Power of the Presence of God

At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.

2 Tim. 4:16-17

VII. The Hope of Heaven

The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

2 Tim. 4:18

For Further study:

1. The spiritual journey of a man named **Demas** is a sad one. Demas started as a teammate of Paul's (*along with Luke and Mark*) in **Philemon 24**. In **Colossians 4:14** he is referred to by name only (*no reference to teammate*). In today's passage, he is identified as one who has deserted the faith (**2 Tim. 4:10**). The explanation given is that Demas loved the present world. Look at **I John 2:15-17** and **James 4:4**—which refer to the dangers of loving the world. What traces of these dangers do you see in your life?
2. The spiritual journey of **Mark** is the exact opposite of that of Demas. Mark, is also referred to as John Mark in the Bible. His mother was a noted Christian in Jerusalem—when Peter was put in prison in **Acts 12**, she hosted a prayer meeting in her home. John Mark was also a teammate of Paul's on his first missionary journey (**Acts 13:1-3**). But he couldn't handle the pressures of ministry, and he bailed on Paul (**Acts 13:5, 13**). When Paul was preparing to go on his second missionary journey, he had planned on taking Barnabas, and John Mark wanted to go along too. But Paul wanted nothing to do with John Mark, and he even had such a heated argument with Barnabas about whether or not to take John Mark on the trip that Paul and Barnabas parted ways and didn't travel together (**Acts 15:36-41**). But somewhere along the way, most likely due to the influence of Barnabas in his life, John Mark was built up in his faith, and in **2 Timothy 4:11** Paul asks Timothy to have John Mark join him because he is useful! John Mark's story is often one we can relate to—who are the people God has used in your life to take you from a time of failure and help you become useful to God?

To Discuss...with a friend, family member, community group...

- 1) Who in your life fires you up through their example of following Jesus?
- 2) Was there a period on your life when you drifted from Jesus because of "the love of this world"—like Demas? What brought you back?
- 3) Can you think of a time when God empowered you in the midst of difficulty to stand strong and serve Him?
- 4) Like Barnabas did for John Mark, who has come alongside you to equip you to be useful in ministry? Who can you equip and encourage to be useful to God?

What's Next?

The next three Sundays will feature Psalms of Ascent which were designed to lead the children of Israel back home, back to Jerusalem, back to God. Christmas provides us with a similar opportunity—to return home to God. These three weeks will provide excellent opportunities to invite friends who have wandered from the faith and are seeking meaning and purpose in life.