

2Timothy 25-02-23b

We're in 2 Timothy chapter 4, and we have looked extensively at these first five verses. We could spend easily another month exploring the depth that is here, but I think we've understood sufficiently what this charge is, what our opportunity is, our responsibility, the potential we have to represent the Lord Jesus Christ the way Paul encourages Timothy to do, and it is centered in the truth. Preach the word, and for those who receive that preaching, we should live the word.

We should be those who reflect it, not only verbally, but in our lives, in our decisions, our words. We've seen the effect of our thoughts and our words, our walk and our way in our look at Proverbs chapter 16, verses 1 through 9, and you see the importance of committing our way, of preparing our hearts so that God can bless what comes out of our mouth, our tongue, the answer that we give, that he can bless the course of our walk and our lives to the benefit of others and to the reflection of his glory, but it is centered in, it is grounded in the truth. We as the church, we as individuals are to be the pillar and ground of truth.

We saw this in 1 Timothy. So moving forward now, having explored that I think sufficiently to be able to undertake application in our own lives. Let's look at this next section, which is essentially chapter 4, verse 6 through 21.

And the reason I'm going to explore this in its entirety is to make a specific observation that offers a specific point. Paul says, I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight.

I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will give to me on that day, not to me only, but also to all who have loved his appearing.

This is an indication that Paul is aware of the time in his own life. What does it mean to be aware of the time? There are examples throughout scripture where people had a knowledge that seems to be beyond the ordinary, that there is something approaching in God's plan. In Luke chapter 2, verses 25 through 32, Simeon understood that something was approaching.

It was an understanding given to him by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit told him, you will not die before you have seen the deliverance, the Messiah, the hope of Israel. So Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple to dedicate him according to the law, notice, by the obedience of Mary and Joseph to the details of dedication of children when they are to be presented before the Lord.

They bring him to the temple. Simeon is at the temple because he is a devout man and Simeon recognizes them out of the crowd and throngs of people who are there. The Holy Spirit gives Simeon recognition of Mary, Joseph, and the Christ child.

Simeon recognizes him and sees that he is the one he has been waiting to see. And so he says, Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word. Depart in peace.

Remember when Paul says, my departure is at hand? There are things that need to be fulfilled. Simeon knows that his departure is now imminent because God's promise has been fulfilled. This I think is a wonderful observation that when it is important for us to understand that a time is at hand, that the plan of God with respect to where we are is going to move forward, we will be given the knowledge that we need.

It's important that Paul understands that it is time for him to entrust pastors like Timothy and Titus with the ongoing preaching of the truth because his time is drawing short. In the same way, you can look at John the Baptist. He knew that the arrival of the Messiah was imminent.

So he said, the kingdom is at hand, Matthew chapter 3, verse 2. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. We just take it for granted that John knew that it was time to preach. But John knew the story of the visit of Mary to Elizabeth and Zacharias.

At what point did he know that it was time to go into the wilderness and begin to preach? God revealed the time. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. And it is because John is in the wilderness that when Jesus begins his public ministry, John is there doing what John is supposed to do.

John knew through the Holy Spirit that he needed to be out there preaching. He needed to be baptizing in the Jordan and he was there. We don't typically realize that what if John got distracted and decided, well, I don't want to go out there to the desert just yet, let me wait a while.

Or what if he had started too early? He was sensitive to the leading of God and the season and the time was revealed to him and he responded in faith and obedience. That's why John is at the Jordan when Jesus arrives, so that he can say in the same way that Simeon recognized the Christ child, John immediately recognizes the Lord Jesus and says, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. John 1.29. It is a confluence of time involving multiple people because John is there baptizing at the Jordan.

Who else is there? John, Peter, Andrew, Philip. Remember the initial disciples who were there? They are there because John is there. John is there because he is sensitive to the timing that is revealed to him by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus often spoke of his hour and we often think, well, he's the Lord Jesus, he knows everything all the time. But remember, Jesus in his humanity was guided in the same way that we are guided, which is by the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus did not access his divine omniscience.

So how did he know to say the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified in John 12.23? The hour has come. Jesus knew that it was time when he finished preaching in one village, crowds are still coming and he says, we need to leave. There are other places I need to go.

He was led by the Holy Spirit to make decisions that were time related. I will spend this much time and no more. It is time.

He must needs go through Samaria in John chapter four and he's going to meet the woman at the well. Sensitivity to the revelation that comes through the Holy Spirit with regard to what time is it? Is it time for me to stay put or to move? Is it time for me to act or to wait? Wait on the Lord, be of good cheer. Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

What are we waiting for? We're waiting for the word. We're waiting for the command. We're waiting for the impetus to make a change.

In John 13, one, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the father. Did he triangulate this from Old Testament prophecy looking at the significance of three years or three and a half years? Is there a symmetry there that the Lord Jesus understood through the Holy Spirit that his earthly ministry would be of that duration and that this is the year. This is the Passover.

This is the feast of unleavened bread. This is the feast of firstfruits. It's this year where the son of man is going to be delivered into the hands of men and be crucified in John 17 one.

Jesus said, father, the hour has come. Glorify your son so that the sun may glorify you. This should be our hope and our purpose in understanding the times and the seasons.

As Jesus gives exhortation to his disciples, you understand harvest planting, you know what to expect when the sun rises and the sky is red. Do you not understand the signs of the times? And this is both the broad sweep of God's plan and purpose, the dispensations, the ages and also the times in our own lives. What is it time for now when a change is due and God reveals you've been in one situation.

Now you're going to be in another. You've been in one location. Now you're going in another.

You've served in one capacity, in a job, in employment or in a family relationship. Now it is time for another. A man leaves father and mother and cleaves to his wife.

What time does that occur? When do you know that it is time to move forward? We look to the leading of the Holy Spirit on the pillar and ground of the truth. We meet the conditions for the fulfillment of God's promises. We tend to our souls.

We prepare our hearts. We soak ourselves in the word of God so that the Holy Spirit has a voice with which to speak. This is what we do when we come together for Bible study and fellowship and worship through music and the other things that attend our gatherings.

We are looking for God's leading. We are looking for God's grace. We are looking for a word fitly spoken, the truth communicated in love, the encouragement we receive in conversation and fellowship with other believers.

And one of the results of that, the promise that is fulfilled, is that it will be given to us in the hour of need what we should say, by extension, what we should do, where we should be. When we are given something to do, how shall we do it? We look to the Lord because we ensure that we qualify for the fulfillment of promise. This, I think, is so widely missed in traditional and current time Christianity.

People say, God has promised, God has promised, God has promised. And focus is on when is God going to fulfill this promise instead of how soon can I be ready to receive that fulfillment. People that are looking to young people that are single and working through their 20s and into their 30s, and well, where is my life's partner? And when is God going to bring along, you know, it's not good for man to be alone.

To say, rather than frowning at God, you know, where is the fulfillment? Maybe the delay is that I'm not sufficiently attending to my preparation. And it doesn't mean that, you know, if you're getting on in years and haven't gotten married that there's something wrong with you. But what should the default priority be? So long as I have not yet met that person, I need to be sure that when God's time is fulfilled, I will know that time, I will recognize that provision, and I will be ready.

And we can spend years being ready, and when we are ready, now it's in God's court. I'm not the hold-up. Now it's God's timing.

It's other factors, and I can rest, and I can have peace. I'm ready whenever He wants to bring it along. This is true in any area of provision, any area of blessing, any area of opportunity.

It hasn't come yet. The reveal for the time and the purpose is not yet at hand. So what do I do? I don't just sit and pine and get distracted or deflected.

I concentrate on my preparation. Peacetime military, this is the mission. We're not in a shooting war at the moment.

We will train. We will hone our skills. We will be ready.

We will maintain our equipment. We will ensure that we've got supplies and provisions that are pre-positioned. There are caches of food and bullets and other necessities, vehicles, fuel, pre-positioned all around the world.

We're not currently in a shooting war ourselves. But should one break out, we want our troops to be trained. We want them to be focused on the chain of command and understanding what the mission is.

We practice. We ensure that our equipment is up-to-date and ready. We practice marksmanship.

We practice artillery missions. We practice airstrikes. Practice, practice, practice.

And we ensure that when the conflict does break out, we are a finely honed blade, able to cut through whatever resistance comes our way. So we will know the hour. If war is declared, if combat breaks out and we're deployed, well, they didn't have to choose a different unit because I wasn't ready.

Even medical, are your troops meeting their weight standards? Are they meeting fitness standards? Are they meeting dental standards? I remember agonizing year after year to ensure that all of the individuals in our reserve unit were deployable because their teeth had been fixed. And there were some who could not deploy and would be left behind if their health was not sufficient. If they didn't pass the PFT, the physical fitness test, if they didn't meet weight standards, if medically they weren't ready, they're left behind.

They're useless. They are of no good. I don't say useless in the ultimate sense, but useless for the mission.

So it's important that we be aware that God will reveal the time when we need to know it. Not everyone needs to know everything. That's why Jesus tells his disciples, it is not for you to know the times and the seasons.

Remember Matthew 24, will God at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Is he going to fulfill the gospel that you've been preaching for these last three and a half years? Will God at this time restore the kingdom? Jesus says, it is not for you to know. These are the disciples. These are the ones who are going to continue to preach the gospel of the kingdom.

Look at the end of the book of Acts. What is Paul doing in Rome when he's under two years of house arrest? He's preaching the gospel of the kingdom because there are a lot of Jews in Rome. And so he's not only preaching the gospel of Christ, he's preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

And how that pertains and relates to both Jews and Gentiles. But in John 17, Jesus says, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you.

What is our purpose in understanding the times and the seasons? To be reflectors of the glory of God. So in our passage, 2 Timothy 4, 6, Paul says, I'm being poured out as a drink offering. When you start pouring, you're going to run out pretty soon.

If it's a cup, if it's a glass, if it's a pitcher, if it's a bucket. Once you're pouring and a drink offering in particular is a relatively small amount of liquid. It's poured out on an altar and it doesn't put out the fire.

I am being poured out as a drink offering. There's not much left. The vessel is almost empty.

The time of my departure has come. And he says, my fight is over. I fought a good one.

He doesn't say I'm still fighting. I have fought the good fight. I'm not still running my race.

Remember, in Hebrews, which I think Paul wrote, chapter 12, seeing we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, forgetting those things which are behind, we press toward the mark of the high calling. Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. There's a time when we are running the race.

Paul says, I finished my race. I've crossed the finish line, which is very interesting. And the reason we're going to continue reading here will become apparent shortly.

Peter was aware of the times. 2 Peter 1.14 I know that the putting off of my body will be soon. When Peter wrote his second letter, he knew he was not long for this earth.

How did he know? Keep reading. I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. The Lord Jesus made clear to Peter that the putting off of his body would be soon.

Of course, Jesus, years earlier in John 21, verses 18 and 19, told Peter the time is coming. Right now you dress yourself. The time is coming when others are going to handle your body.

And it was a prediction of his death. 1 Thessalonians 5 You are not in darkness for that day to surprise you like a thief. This tells us that by walking in the light, we will have a sense of the approach of that day of judgment, that day of the rapture, that day when God's judgment will be revealed.

That's 1 Thessalonians 5.4 In Revelation 22, verse 20, Jesus said, behold, I am coming soon. How many years ago was that? 22, 20. Jesus says, behold.

He said, look, watch out. Pay attention. I am coming soon.

Is 2000 years soon? In what sense is it soon? Well, we understand this. Remember what John says in 1 John 2, 18? This is the passage where he talks about the Antichrist. John says in 1 John 2, 18, children, it is the last hour.

This is around the same time that John writes the Revelation. Jesus says, I'm coming soon. John says, children, it is the last hour.

And as you have heard that Antichrist is coming, so now many Antichrists, many Antichrists have come. Therefore, we know that it is the last hour. Every generation of believers faces Antichrist.

Many Antichrists have come in John's day, in the time from the Revelation of the Lord Jesus to the impending close of the apostolic age, it's the last hour and many Antichrists have come. We don't need to be as concerned about is this the literal end of the church age? Is this the literal approach of the tribulation? I think God's people will sense it just as God's faithful people sensed the approach of the Messiah, like Simeon and Anna and Zachariah and Elizabeth and Mary and Joseph and others. Remember when Anna sees the Christ child at the temple, she

tells a lot of others who were waiting for the hope of Israel.

So we can certainly know that in the larger sense, the time is near, but as we've said so many times, the return of the Lord Jesus, His appearing, the judgment, the final day is as near as our last breath, our last heartbeat, our last spark on the electroencephalogram. When we die, we're there. The last hour is now.

John doesn't say, children, it will soon be the last hour. He says, it is the last hour. We know it because look at the opposition.

Look at the activity of those who oppose Christ, who want a substitute Christ. Remember, anti means instead of, as much as it means anti. There are many alternatives to Christ that are being offered.

That's how we know it's the last hour. It wouldn't be historically the last hour before Christ comes because you don't offer an alternative to something that's not been revealed yet. But with the revelation of Jesus Christ and with the unfolding of the mysteries through Paul the apostle, now the truth of Christ, the gospel of Christ has alternatives.

The gospel of the kingdom has alternatives. And remember, Messiah is the anointed one. He is the anointed king.

The horn of oil in the hand of the prophet Samuel anointed Saul and anointed David. And the anointing makes an anointed one. The anointed one is the king of Israel.

So if you have an instead of Messiah and instead of king, whether it is the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of Israel, alternatives instead of Messiahs, instead of anointed ones, you don't need literal fulfillment. You don't need the literal presence of God. Here's a way to the peaceable kingdom.

Get climate change under control, fix poverty, embrace people who think that they're a duck or a weasel or some other entity, some other gender, some other type of person. That's antichrist. There are many alternatives that have come.

That's how we know it is the last hour. And this entire age is the last hour. And the last hour comes at the end of our life.

So this is so important to understand. We redeem the time because by default, the days are evil. And Paul knows his time.

Peter knew his time. John knew it was the last hour. Jesus said, I'm coming soon, not quickly soon.

I come soon. I will come suddenly. The Lord Jesus said, if you're not prepared, he will return at an hour you do not expect.

And there's nothing worse than negative surprises. I didn't know the bottom was going to fall out of my hot water tank and flood my house and ruin my carpet and wreck my furniture. And oh, by the way, I forgot to pay my insurance premium and the expenses all on me.

I want to close with one final observation here. We'll go in detail through this, but looking at the big picture, look at what Paul says. Look at verse nine.

We're going to look at nine through 21 here. We'll go back and pick up six through eight, the crown of righteousness and so on. But I want to look at nine through 21.

Be diligent to come to me quickly. Demas has forsaken me. Having loved this present world, has departed for Thessalonica.

Crescens has gone to Galatia. Titus has gone to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me.

Get Mark and bring him with you. He's useful to me for ministry. Tychicus, I have sent to Ephesus.

Remember, Timothy's in Ephesus. So Tychicus is coming in Timothy's direction. You get the idea that if he says, come to me soon, Timothy, Tychicus is going to relieve Timothy in the pastoral duties in Ephesus.

So be diligent to come to me quickly. Tychicus, I'm sending the other direction. And he says, I have sent.

So you get the idea that Timothy can pack up and go because Tychicus is already on the way. Paul ensures that there's not a vacuum of leadership in Ephesus. There are already problems there and all of the exhortations and encouragements to Timothy with regard in this second letter, which is later than the first letter, to continue to press, preach, represent the truth.

You think, well, why say all of that? And then he says, leave Ephesus and come to me quickly. And Paul is as near as we can tell in Rome at this time. This is general guidance for all of us.

Timothy is to preach all of these truths to the people in Ephesus. Tychicus has already gotten the same message from Paul and wherever Timothy is, whether he is in season or out of season, whether he is in Ephesus or out of Ephesus, he is to preach the word. He is a mobile attack unit.

Wherever he is, he is to do his preaching and teaching and work of an evangelist, bringing the good news, wherever he is. So Tychicus is going to Ephesus. Timothy is to come from Ephesus and meet up with Paul.

Bring the cloak I left with Carpus at Troas when you come and the books, especially the parchments. Alexander the coffer smith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works.

Beware of him. He has greatly resisted our words. At my first events, no one stood with me, but all forsook me.

May it not be charged against them. The Lord stood with me, strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me. The message, the truth, that everything stems from the truth communicated, residing in the souls of the hearers.

You can't do anything without the truth. That's the starting point. It's not a concomitant.

It's not an also ran. This is my difficulty with what they taught me. My first three days at seminary, which is that the mission of the church is to be the bride of Christ, the wife, W I F E, which is an acronym for worship instruction, fellowship, and evangelism wife.

It's a wonderful thought. Instruction is not equal to and parallel to worship, fellowship and evangelism. It is the ground floor.

Those of you that are familiar with Bob themes, edification complex. Remember it's got five floors. The bottom one is grace orientation.

I'll rattle them off for you. Grace orientation. Number one, number two, mastery of the details of life.

Number three, relaxed mental attitude. Number four, capacity for life, love, and happiness. And the top floor is occupation with Christ.

Focus on Christ. I have always viewed all five of those. They don't build on one another sequentially.

They all develop gradually and it is not a chronological stack. It is a desirability stack. And, but the beginning of it, the ground floor is recognizing what God provides in his grace, what God has done for us through grace.

This is how we can be objective and not be distracted by what happens in life. So if you're going to master the details, you have to already be soaking yourself in the grace of God, his gracious provision, his promises and understanding the conditions under which they are fulfilled. That's grace.

The grace that is revealed in Jesus Christ. So Jesus Christ is in every one of these levels, but orientation to grace, you don't have that if you don't understand Christ. And we need to begin to focus on him at the very outset.

But I say that to say this, you cannot do worship and you cannot do fellowship and you cannot do the good news. Whatever aspect of God's good news you reflect or you communicate, it can be the gospel of Jesus Christ. It can be communicating the opportunity to be related to God through Christ to an unbeliever.

It can also be the future hope and to remind each other of the motivation that gets us through the day. But you cannot get anywhere without orientation to God's grace and you cannot get anywhere without instruction in the word. Nothing happens without starting at the truth.

That's why this tremendous charge. But notice Paul says, the Lord will deliver me in verse 18 from every evil work and preserve me for his heavenly kingdom. Preserve me for his kingdom.

This is the gospel Paul is preaching at the end of Acts, preaching the gospel of the kingdom to everyone he came in contact with. To him be glory forever and ever. Now notice in verse 19, what I'm focusing on here is look at the people who are mentioned.

Greet Prisca and Aquila, Priscilla and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus that he mentioned back in chapter one. Onesiphorus evidently has passed away, so it's his household that is greeted. We saw that some months back.

Erastus stayed in Corinth. Trophimus I left sick in Miletus. Wonderful lesson in when God grants Paul the ability to heal and when he doesn't.

It's not always the time for healing. And for an apostle who has healed people in the past, and even brought a guy back from the dead when he fell out of the windowsill. Paul preached till midnight.

The guy fell out of sleep and died at the bottom of the wall. And Paul went and resuscitated him. Remember that? But Paul leaves Trophimus sick in Miletus.

It's not God's will that Trophimus be restored to health. God has a purpose even in illness, even in physical disability. And it's not always to be desired that we get over it.

We are delivered through it instead of out of it. Paul the apostle, with all of the healing power that Christ chooses to give him, leaves a guy behind sick. I left him.

He was too sick to accompany me. This changes Trophimus' location. When he does recover, if and when he gets well, he's in a different place doing a different thing.

And God can use this illness to separate him from Paul, put him in a different place, and Paul is going to be interacting with different companions. But look now. Dear utmost to come before winter.

This goes back to verse 9. 9 and 21. You have kind of an inclusio here. It's not exactly a chiasm, but he returns to his initial thought.

Be diligent to come to me quickly. Do your utmost to come before winter. Notice now.

This is what fascinates me. Do you see how interesting verse 21 is here? Ubbilis greets you as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren. All of these people send their greetings.

What did he say in verse 11? Only Luke is with me. Everybody else has departed. Demas fell in love with the world and departed.

I've sent other guys off to do ministry in different places. So Crescens has gone to Galatia. Titus has gone to Dalmatia.

By the way, guess where Dalmatia is today? What is Dalmatia today? It's not a place where spotted dogs are bred. To my knowledge, it's Croatia. Dalmatia is Croatia.

So Titus, who had been in Crete, remember? Cretans are liars and lazy, gluttons and all the rest of it. And we saw the letter to Titus. He was in Crete.

He has been sent to Croatia. How interesting is that? But notice, Paul says, Everyone has left me. Luke is the only guy here.

If that's the case, how can Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and a whole group of brethren send their greetings to Timothy along with this letter? What do you think? It's a smack in the head. He just said he's got one guy with him, Luke. Everybody else, for various reasons, has either been sent away or gone away.

But here's a whole bunch of people who say, Oh, Paul, you're writing a letter. Be sure and tell Timothy we said hello. What does it mean? This is why context is so important.

We'll go through this verse by verse before we finish the letter. But in big picture terms, when Paul says, Only Luke is with me. What is he saying? The individuals mentioned at the beginning, Demas, Crescens, Titus, Tychicus, these are the core ministry group.

This is Paul's staff. It's not every believer in the area. Paul's inner circle of fellow workers, laborers for the gospel, those who preach and teach, have all been deployed.

Notice, I have sent these guys for ministry purposes. Titus is going to what is now Croatia because Titus is a pastor and he's going to teach. I've deployed everyone and others left me because, like Demas, fell in love with the world.

So my support group, my inner circle, my one another's in the ministry have all departed. It doesn't mean that there is not a community of believers in Rome. Paul, if you look at the end of Acts, spends two whole years cultivating a whole community of believers and they are still there, but they are not the inner circle.

They are brethren. They are house churches scattered through the neighborhoods of Rome. They are still there.

Paul is not completely alone, but the inner circle. Were there believers in the Lord Jesus who weren't of the twelve? And there's a difference in what he says to the twelve and what he does with the twelve and the others, like Lazarus and Mary and Martha and Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus and others who were in the vicinity but were not a part of that core group that was

tasked with formal communication of the truth. These are the communicating group and all of those guys are gone.

So he says, you need to come and restock the staff here. You're a communicator and I need one here. And bring Mark.

And you remember there had been some diffugalties with Mark back in the middle of Acts. But Mark, they've reconciled. And so bring Mark with you.

He's another guy who can communicate. Write the Gospel of Mark. So I need more communicators.

That's why I need you to bring the books and especially the parchment. And notice the other thing. I'm running a little long here, but I'll finish here in about two minutes.

Verse 13. Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas. Because, verse 21, come to me before winter.

Winter is coming and I need you to bring my coat. Didn't he just say I'm being poured out like a drink offering. My time is at hand.

You know, you think, well, I could be dead any minute. I could be dead any day. But Paul is still planning ahead.

I'm still here. So I'm expecting to go through the winter. I need a coat.

I need some more guys here to help preach and teach. I need other guys that I can pass the torch to. I want you to come.

I want you to bring Mark. I've already deployed these other guys. Paul is still doing his job.

He is pressing for the tape at the end of the race. He's sprinting to the finish. And he says, every day that God gives me, I'm going to be ready.

He doesn't know exactly when he's leaving. So in case it's long term, I've got to get through this winter. I need my coat.

Isn't that fascinating? You may not know the day or the hour, but you know the season. And you want to be prepared. Whether the season doesn't come for a while or comes immediately, I'm ready either way.

I've got my weight over my feet. I've got my balance. My knees are flexed.

I'm ready for whatever God brings. In general, I'm pretty close to the end. But I'm not sitting in a chair saying, well, any moment now.

Come to me before winter. Bring Mark. I've got some stuff I want you all to do.

I'm going to communicate with you. I'm going to plow information into you. I need my coat.

Because I'm going to be here for the winter. Fascinating to me. And he's not all alone.

Please come to me. I'm so lonely. I've deployed the troops.

And I need some replacements. I need you guys to get here so that we can continue to work locally even as the work continues at a distance. He's planning.

He's thinking. He is working his apostolic gift right up to the end. He's not going to quit being an apostle until Caesar chops his head off.

Right up to the day. Right up to the minute. He says, I know it's going to end soon, but I'm sprinting to the finish.

What a great example for us. What a great inspiration. What a great reflection of living out the good news that every day counts.

Every minute God leaves us here, we can do something with it. I just think it's fascinating to explore the meat that is in this set of greetings and seeming life details. A lot of commentaries, when they get to the last part of chapter 4, they just kind of tail off.

Well, you know, final personal greetings and that's the end. There's a great amount of divine truth here and a wonderful example of how a faithful mature believer pushes through to the end. Doesn't waste a moment.

As long as I'm here, as long as I'm drawing breath, I'm going to get it done. I'm making plans. He's not deciding he won't buy any green bananas.

He's assuming he's going to be here and making plans accordingly. Well, something to think about. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for this wonderful letter, its preservation, its meaning and application for us. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will help us to see its pertinence, see the implementation in our own situation, our own lives, and that even as we anticipate the soon return of the Lord Jesus to appear in the heavens and to take us to himself and present us before your throne, we pray for wisdom, we pray for guidance, we pray for revelation that will feed our hope and enable us to walk in a life of faith and obedience to reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus and prepare for service and function now and in the ages to come.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.