

2Timothy 25-03-02b

We're ready now to resume our study here in 2 Timothy chapter 4, and we've seen what you might call the charge or the commission. We've seen Paul's statement that the end is near for him, the time is at hand for his departure, being poured out like a drink offering. He may not know exactly how much is left in the cup, but most of it has been poured out in the service of the Lord and in the accomplishment of God's purpose for his life.

And he has fought the good fight, finished the race, and in so doing, he has kept the faith. And whatever we are doing, if we can just stop, think big picture and immediate circumstance, and examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith. Are we keeping the faith? Are we doing what we do as unto the Lord and not unto men? Are we doing it with an eye on the Lord's appearing and our desire to be judged faithful and therefore judged righteous and receive that crown of righteousness for those who lay hold of it by faith and who are looking forward fervently to the Lord's appearing? There is a time of judgment that people don't look forward to.

If they think they're going to be found guilty in a court trial, they don't really want the jury to come back and render the verdict. If they think that they have been found out, they don't want the consequences and the conviction and the sentence. If we are looking forward to the Lord's appearing, it is because we're looking with confidence.

It's going to be a happy day. We are not of those who fall back unto perdition, but of those who by faith and patience inherit the promises. The fulfillment of promises is conditioned on faith and obedience.

Always look at Israel leaving Egypt. They're given the opportunity. They're given God's promises.

I will take you to a land flowing with milk and honey. I will scatter your enemies before you. I will give you victory.

I will give you prosperity. I will give you peace. They couldn't trust Him for it.

They couldn't even trust Him for daily provision. They got to looking around and said, where's the water? The immediate circumstances defeated them. The journey into the wilderness and why are we taking this roundabout route and why is this taking so long? I thought we were going to leave Egypt and enter the land.

There's delay and difficulty. The strategic got ahead of them. Whether it was the immediate circumstances of the day or whether it was the promise of the land with all of its bounty and blessing, they couldn't trust God for it.

They died in the wilderness. Tragic. Paul gives us an example here of looking at the immediate and looking at the big picture and trusting God and in so doing, recognizing I may have

stumbled here and there in the race.

I may have slipped my guard and taken a punch or two in the face in my life, but I fought a good fight and I have finished my race. I didn't give up. I didn't quit.

I didn't fall down and stay down. I have finished by faith and righteousness is laid up for me like treasure in heaven. So I love the appearing.

I crave the appearing of the Lord. I am looking forward to opportunities to move into the future phases of God's plan and be someone who is prepared and therefore useful in that phase, even as we try to be prepared and useful in this phase. So then he picks up in verse nine and he says, do your best to come and see me soon.

Quickly means soon. Demas has deserted me, forsaken me because he loved this present world. If your eyes are on the present world, how can I succeed in this immediate challenge, this next assignment, this next task? They've given me something at work.

They've given me something. Medically speaking, I've got to address an issue of some kind. There's been rashes of a flu type A and flu type B and people are still getting COVID.

We have physical disabilities. As I circulate in the population, going to homes and churches and tuning pianos and things, inevitably you find out that someone that was hale and hearty last year, this year is in a walker or using a cane or has to reschedule because they've gone down with whatever's going around. And we face physical challenges.

We face relationship challenges. We face assignment and responsibility challenges, financial challenges, infrastructure challenges, how to keep our house from falling down around our ears or our plumbing from leaking or our wiring from burning up or our car from becoming unusable. Try to keep ourselves on the road.

And these circumstances, if we just stop and take a breath, are by design. We have what we have because it has been given to us by the Lord. Whatever the situation, whatever the relational good things or bad things, the support, the intentions, it is all in the Lord's hands.

It is in front of him. He allows certain things through the ring of fire that he puts around us. He will occasionally refrain from granting provision for a time, just as he did in the wilderness.

He made Israel all of these promises and they go three days and there's no water. That's a short-term test. All they had to do was be like Abraham.

When Abraham is told to go to the mountain and sacrifice Isaac, he figures that on the face of it appears to be bad on several levels. But God has promised that in Isaac my seed will be called. He cannot die until he has children.

Isaac cannot die until he has sons. So whatever happens on the mountain, Isaac is going to survive. And Abraham planted his faith on that promise and made sure that he was faithful and

obedient.

He trusted God for the fulfillment of the promise and he obeyed his immediate instructions even though they were to say counterintuitive is an understatement. He could have easily used rationalizations. We're not like the pagan nations and the idolaters who sacrifice children to their gods.

This can't be right. I must have eaten something and had a bad dream. I know better.

I know what God would or would not put me through and he would never put me through that. He could have easily rationalized it away and so can we. So did Israel.

They went out and said, the Lord has brought us out in the wilderness to die. Seriously? Couldn't they have more easily died under the oppressive hand of the Egyptians? Why would God go to all the trouble to send these sign devastations to Egypt? Water to blood, the darkness, the Moorane, the boils, the lice, the frogs, all of these horrific nine plagues and then the death of the firstborn. God went to all that trouble and in three days they go out in the wilderness and they think God just brought us out here to kill us.

That is not faith and that is not obedience. And by not meeting the condition for the fulfillment of the promise, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. It turns out that they are going to die in the wilderness.

Whose fault is that? They brought it on themselves. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. We are believers and we're not here just to get things done and to survive experiences.

We're here to represent God, to learn His ways, to incorporate His truth into our thinking, and to reflect it in what we think, what we say, and what we do. There's no other reason for us to be here. Any unbeliever can work a job, or maintain a relationship, or mow the lawn, or do the laundry, or drive their car, or any of the other myriad things that characterize our daily lives.

Any unbeliever can do that. We are not unbelievers. We have been bought with a price, a precious price.

We are valuable in the plan and purpose of God and we manifest that value and we reflect that value when we approach each and every day with faith, patience, obedience, and we step back and look at the big picture and take stock. Am I strategically? Am I in the plans and purposes and long-term situation? Am I on the road doing what God would have me do? Paul takes the microscope and the telescope here, both in this section. So when he says here, Demas has deserted me because he loved this present world, what did he just say in the previous verse? The crown of righteousness comes to those who love His appearing.

The appearing of the Lord, His return, His judgment seat is conceptual. We haven't seen it. It is a promise like the promise God made to Abraham, in Isaac shall your seed be called, in you all nations of the world will be blessed.

You will have descendants more numerous than the grains of sand on the beach and the stars in the sky. Abraham hasn't seen any of that yet. He's got two sons.

He's got Ishmael and Isaac. Two is not a beach full of sand. Two is not a sky full of stars.

It's a promise. It is a prospect and its reality depends on the faith with which Abraham views it. Faith can make the purposes, the promises, the plans, the truth of God more real than current circumstances, more real than our situation in life.

Faith is the substance, the materiality of things that are in the future, that are a hope, the evidence of things not seen. We are here to be people of faith. It is so easy to forget that and think, I'm here to get things done.

I'm here to fulfill responsibilities. I'm here to check off things on my list. Sorry, no.

We are here to be people of faith and to convert the invisible and the future into a present reality by God's grace, in God's power within us. The Holy Spirit and the Word of God are here so that we can turn faith into righteousness and into reality in the future. Demas is the counterexample.

You look at what Timothy is charged with. Demas had the same chance. Timothy and Demas are both co-workers, fellow ministers of the truth of God, the gospel, and the message of daily deliverance.

Both of them are close to the Apostle Paul. Any pastor in his right mind would give his eye teeth, A, to know Greek, and B, to be one of Paul's fellow workers, just like the disciples traveling with Jesus. Ask him anything.

If you're ready, if you're capable, if you've got a frame of reference, you'll get the answer. Paul, I get to Romans 9 and I start getting bogged down here. What did you mean when you were talking about Jacob and Esau? How does that work out? Can you clarify a little bit this whole thing about predestination and foreknowledge and the relationship between the two? Demas has that privilege.

Demas is with the Apostle Paul. We just have an inspired slice of the things that Paul knew here in these epistles. Demas is with him.

Ask him a question anytime. Pick his brain. Probe his knowledge.

Ask him about that thing that happened 14 years ago. I know not in the body or out of the body, caught up to the third heaven, saw things that angels see and a man's not allowed to speak about. Well, can you give me a clue? Give me a hint.

Tell me a little more about that. Demas has forsaken me. He has deserted me.

And the problem for Demas isn't leaving Paul. The problem is everything that Paul represents.

There are people who grow up in a Christian home and when they are old, they depart from it.

And it's tragic. It's heartbreaking. But you have to look at Demas.

It isn't the family or the parents or the siblings or the church that they are leaving. It is the Lord. It is the faith.

When there is a believing family, a believing situation, children are raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, endeavoring to claim that promise, train up a child in the way that they should go so that when they are old, they won't depart from it. Yet, they depart. Demas has deserted me, having loved this present world.

Individuals have a wonderful exposure in many cases to the truth of God, to the love of God, to the fulfillment of all of these wonderful opportunities. And if a person can forsake the Apostle Paul because the world has more attraction, I want to go out and do and be and see and feel and experience. And I've got my own ideas about what is good, what constitutes a fulfilling life.

I'm going to go off on my own and the world is more attractive than what I am learning from the Apostle Paul. You think about Demas. How many people, how many millions of people would give their eye teeth to trade places with Demas? What an opportunity.

He walked out. I got better things to do. There's an opportunity over here, but it's in the world.

It's not of the Lord. Demas has deserted me, having loved this present world. Notice the having, this is important because this is a pre-existing condition.

Having loved, this is agape love. This is the verb form, agapao, but it is an aorist active participle. How many times have we noted this? What do you know about an aorist participle? The action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb.

The action of the aorist participle, which is loving this present world, having loved, he deserted. The main verb is Demas has deserted, has forsaken. He didn't forsake it and then fall in love with the world.

His love for the world preceded it and was a condition. We have to watch what we fall in love with, what we devote our time. What is love of the world? Well, the things that are in the world, stimulation, momentary pleasures, gratifications, distractions, and if we allow those through the defenses, if we say, well, this is okay, this isn't really too bad.

I know this is not in line with scripture or I really hope God's kind of not watching right now, but I just love this. I am attracted to this and it is a fatal attraction. Having loved this present world, what does the crown of righteousness mean? Who gets it? Those who love something in the future.

The future is not good enough for me. I'm being offered something now. Think about the Lord Jesus during the temptations by Satan.

Here's all the kingdoms of the world in the present. Satan shows the Lord Jesus, here are the kingdoms, all these because I am the God of the world, all of these kingdoms. Notice he doesn't say, see this land of Israel.

He said, it's all the other kingdoms. Satan is the God of the world. He's not the God of Israel.

Satan has rulership and authority over the world, not over Israel. The Lord Jesus has already been promised the kingship of Israel. So what is Satan offering? All the kingdoms beyond Israel in the present.

All these I will give to you now, if you will fall down and worship me. The Lord Jesus will eventually rule the world, but it's future. There is the cross before the crown.

Satan is tempting him to obviate and eliminate and avoid the cross and go straight to the crown of the world. How is that going to work? Evidently it was a valid offer. Jesus could have said, how are you going to give me the kingdoms of the world? You don't have that power.

Evidently he does. Satan's not going to waste his time trying to tempt the Lord Jesus with something that has no merit. Lift up your house and move it six feet north and I'll give you a hundred million dollars.

It's not possible. It's not a temptation if you can't do it, if the offer is not valid, or if you do move your house and the guy says, well, he didn't really have a hundred million dollars. It's a valid offer.

And the Lord Jesus, the role he plays as the son of David, king of Israel, and eventually ruling the nations, ruling the world with a rod of iron is future. He's from outward appearance is just a dusty Jewish rabbi at the point that Satan approaches him to instantly have royal power and to fix the ills of the world was a valid temptation. But the Lord Jesus was looking ahead, love the appearing, crave the future coming.

Demas loved this present world too much in circumstances caught up too much in what's going on right now. My headlights don't reach that far. I can't think about what's down the road.

I want to deal right now. And right now I want to be happy. I want to be fulfilled.

I want to get over and move up and succeed and pie in the sky by and by that's not for me too much in the present world, having loved. This is the problem. Demas could have told himself that he's, he can have his cake and eat it too.

I'm an associate of the apostle Paul. And, uh, you know, I can take a little money on the side. I can, uh, I can move over here and do these other things.

We don't know what form this worldly emolument may have taken, but whatever it was, it was sufficient that Demas left the apostle Paul for it. But he started by loving the world and the departure followed. That was an outcome.

And people could say, Oh, Demas don't leave. Paul could have pleaded with him. Demas don't leave.

But if the love for the world is already present, that's already tripped him. It's already created failure. We have to go back to the cause.

Wouldn't it be great instead of getting sick for a week is to have a divine revelation that the person you're about to shake hands with or the surface you're about to touch has germs that are going to knock you down for seven to 10 days. The handle of the door at the store has got something, a little kid left behind. That's going to make you sick.

Let me just avoid the cause. And I won't have to endure the consequence for us, the world dazzling us, offering us stimulation. It's the crafty harlot that we saw in the first several chapters of Proverbs.

Instead of lady wisdom, lady wisdom calls out and says, don't even start down that street because at the end of that street is the harlot's house. It's decorated. There's perfume.

There's all kinds of persuasion and the ends are death. So we want to stop at having loved the world. We don't want to love the world, love, not the world or the things that are in the world is a direct command of scripture.

Because if we love the world, we will depart from the faith and we will depart from those who represent it, who communicate it from those who believe it and are living it. And if your heart falls in love with the world, you will leave even close friends and close family. You will be split from them the way Demas splits from Paul and Paul can't get him back.

Paul's an apostle. He can't can his faith and hand it to Demas and say, take a drink of this and you'll be back in the fold. We have free will.

We choose. And the outcome is either to be outside and away, eventually in the darkness, which is outside or inside with those who love the appearing, who recognize the opportunity to be approved in the sight of the righteous judge, who will evaluate the living and the dead. Demas has departed for Thessalonica.

Wouldn't be great if Demas gets there and gets a copy of Thessalonians and gets back on track. We don't know what happened to Demas, but by now they've got a copy of Thessalonians first and second. By the way, just as an aside, I have a wonderful parallel type of book.

It's in the same way that they took the gospels. And if you're going through Matthew as your primary text, every parallel passage in Mark, Luke, and John is in a column. And so you can compare and contrast the presentation of those as we have done before, as we did when we looked at Kings, Chronicles, and in some cases, Isaiah, where there's a second and a third witness.

And when you put them side by side, it's very fascinating to see what is communicated. What is the viewpoint? Why are some things included, others left out? Why does it say that Satan put it in David's heart to number the people and other times it's phrased differently? Well, there is one of these for Paul. And so if you're going through 1 Corinthians or you're going through Ephesians or Colossians as your primary text, parallel thoughts and similar communication in the other epistles is laid out beside.

And so when I began the pastoral study, I went to that book and I thought this is going to be great because the charge that Paul gives to Timothy and to Titus and the things he communicates to them will occur in the other letters where the congregations are being addressed directly. The book doesn't include 1 and 2 Timothy or Titus because modern scholarship is so sure that Paul didn't write them. It isn't even included because they don't believe Paul even wrote this.

Can you believe it? It is so powerful. It is so central. This is what Satan does.

The world says, I know more than the Holy Spirit knows. I know more than those who believe God when he says his scriptures are God breathed and profitable. And when the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that these are divine truths, the world says, no, they're not.

The world says, you know, these are a witness to the truth, but they aren't the truth. And the Old Testament people, they didn't really know what they were talking about. Joshua shouldn't have gone in and conquered the Canaanites.

Jesus didn't say half of what's attributed to him. It's late. It's a pastiche.

This is the world for you. And if you fall in love with the world and their air of superiority, I will raise my throne above the stars of God. I will be like the most high.

I'll decide what's true and what's not. I will arbitrate. I know what's best.

And it's the plan of me, myself, and I, instead of the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit. Falling in love with the world is incredibly dangerous and destructive. Crescens and Titus did not fall in love with the world.

They have been sent by Paul to continue ministry. He can't send Demas. Demas is no longer qualified for service and function, now or ever.

He is going to be in the darkness which is outside for the indefinite future. Kingdom of the Son, Kingdom of the Father. Demas, when he forsook Paul because he fell in love with the world, he has forsaken the future.

He's forsaken the appearing. What is going to happen when the righteous judge appears evaluating the living and the dead and Demas comes up to the yellow footprints? Don't want to be Demas. And Demas is going to be kicking himself thinking, what was I thinking? How could I

grab a hold of something that is ephemeral and fleeting and short-term and forsake and lose eternal value, eternal benefits, eternal privileges, eternal opportunities.

I took the immediate and traded it away, traded my future. But Crescens is faithful, Titus is faithful, and they have been deployed. The Galatians need help.

Remember when Paul wrote Galatians, the Judaizers were running them off the track and trying to get them back under the law, teaching them another gospel. And so Paul has deployed the troops to meet that need and to communicate the truth and to fight the opposition. Crescens and Titus, Luke is with me, get Mark and bring him with you.

Think about this, by the time Timothy arrives and Luke is there, you're going to have supporting Paul, Luke and Timothy and Mark. He's rebuilding the team. He has sent these men away and he's replacing them.

There are new opportunities. Think what an opportunity for Mark. Paul ran him off in earlier days when you read Acts and you have that falling out.

But Mark realized that he was in the wrong and has returned. There's been a change of mind. We don't know exactly what the issue was.

Paul could have been in the wrong. It could have been a misunderstanding. But Mark did not accompany Paul as was the original plan.

But he is coming back now. And where Demas has left, Mark can take his place. Where Titus and Crescens have been sent out to do ministry in areas of need, Timothy is going to be there.

And his father in the faith and the comfort that Paul is going to get from having his son in the faith near at hand at the close of his life is incalculable. And with him, he is going to bring logistical blessing. He's going to bring a coat for warmth.

He's going to bring manuscripts and parchments for study, for reference. Paul is still studying. He says, I'm at the end of my race, but I haven't finished learning.

I haven't finished reflecting and soaking my soul in the Word of God, which is alive and powerful. Paul needs it personally just as much as those to whom he speaks. And these manuscripts and parchments are Old Testament scriptures.

And Paul is marinating in those. It is something the Holy Spirit uses to enable him and to inform him and to equip him for training these pastors who are going to be in his immediate periphery. So bring those things.

Beware of those who are in open opposition. Alexander the coppersmith. Remember, we saw the warning early on where there was an Alexander who was a problem child back in 1 Timothy 1.20. You need to have faith and a good conscience to wage the good warfare, Paul says.

This was his charge in the earlier letter, beginning in verse 18. This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare. The Word of God, the prophetic word in those days, because they didn't have scriptures yet.

So it was issued through the mouth of those that had the gift of prophetic utterance. They spoke truth to Timothy. And by that truth you can wage the good warfare having faith and a good conscience.

A good truth detector, a good right and wrong detector that's been rehabilitated by the presence of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Word. You'll have faith and a good conscience. Some, having rejected concerning the faith, have suffered shipwreck.

Demas is one. Alexander is another. Hymenaeus and Alexander delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

This is evidently the same Alexander that we find. We're told he's a coppersmith. And having been a former associate, now he is doing Paul much harm.

There's no harm like betrayal. There's no harm like a turncoat, a traitor. Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm.

May the Lord repay him according to his works. He was turned over to Satan to learn not to blaspheme. Didn't work.

Satan isn't very good at rehabilitating believers. So now Paul says, the Lord will judge. The Lord will repay him.

The righteous judge judging the living and the dead. You must also beware of him. He has the words.

He has the teaching. He has the insider experience which he will twist. Have you ever seen people that maybe were close to a president in times past and then they publish a book and they tell all kinds of tales and excoriate and belittle and denigrate the person they worked for? They were happy to work for him at the time.

But then when they leave, they do damage by impressing people with their proximity and their experience and then using it to attack their former mentor. Someone appointed them and now they're attacking and biting the hand that fed them. That's Alexander.

You beware of him. He has greatly resisted our words. He knows the words and he's twisting them.

Satan did this to the Lord Jesus. Doesn't scripture say, he will give his angels charge over you. They will bear you up lest you dash your foot against a stone.

Using the words. Words of Paul, the words of truth and twisting them. Taking them out of context and doing much harm.

There has been more harm done to the church and the fellowship of believers by insiders than there ever was from outsiders. I don't fear atheism. I fear twisted and corrupted truth being passed off as bread when it is a rock and a snake and a scorpion by those who claim to be ministers of truth.

Far more harm. Far more damage. We have to be careful what we take in.

We have to be careful who we listen to. We have to watch for departure and for things that are actually leveraging and making a proxy of things that are in the world. A big church is good.

Money is good. So we're going to grow numbers and we're going to get money. That's the world and that's in love with the world.

That's a worldly standard of success. And when you insinuate that in and you bring it through the defenses and get it inside the church, you do much harm. Timothy is to watch out for it.

At my first defense, no one stood with me. We don't want to be demons. We want to stand with Paul in daily ministry.

Those who commit to the way of the Lord need to commit 24/7. And that's us. That is how we enter into blessing. That is how we can look forward with eagerness and anticipation to the return of the Lord.

We have no fear of retribution for failures and sins. We have brought those to the throne. We have been cleansed by the blood of Christ.

We have been washed and made white. We have been purged. God has created in us a clean heart.

He's renewed a right spirit within us. We forget the things which are behind and we press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And there's nothing that we more fervently wish for than to be in His presence, to be evaluated, to pass that evaluation and to enter into the wonderful, bright opportunities that exist, not only now, but in the ages to come.

What's not to like about that? Love His appearing, not loving the world. It's a choice we make every day, sometimes every hour. Well, we have a wonderful encouragement here from Paul.

We are going to be concluding our study in 2 Timothy here in the next week or two, but we'll close for now in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for these wonderful words from the Apostle Paul that You have preserved for our instruction, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction. We pray that as we reflect on them, as we think about them, as we try to live in their light, that God the Holy Spirit will bring them to our minds, enable us in the moment when we are faced with a distraction, with a deception, with a persuasion, with a temptation to follow the

way of the world that will be brought up short, that the Holy Spirit will convict us of sin and righteousness and judgment, as He does with the world, so He does with us.

And we're so grateful for His presence. Thank You most of all for the Lord Jesus, who has made this life possible for us, who lived it first, who demonstrated its power and its purpose. And we thank You for Him and His ongoing representation and intercession on our behalf.

And we do look forward with great anticipation to the day when You will send Him to receive us to Himself and present us before Your throne. We thank You and we praise You. In Jesus' name, Amen.