

2Timothy 25-03-16b

We're ready now to resume our investigation of 2 Timothy chapter 4. I wanted to include information about Titus that escaped my presence in the first session. In Titus chapter 1 verse 4, Titus is called Paul's true son in the faith. He had this paternal feeling for Timothy and Titus both.

My true son in the common faith. And you remember our trip through 1 Corinthians. There are only two New Testament books that we have not traveled through together.

We're going to start one of them next week, which is the book of James. And the other remaining book is 2 Corinthians. And in 2 Corinthians, Titus is referenced several times.

So the trouble of division and dissension in Corinth was worrying to Paul. And so Titus was the individual that Paul sent to Corinth to try to put things right. So you find him mentioned in 2 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 13.

Paul says, I had no rest in my spirit because I did not find Titus my brother and taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia. So interestingly, Titus is his son in the faith and he is also his brother. And depending on context and nature of the work, he's viewed both ways.

And in chapter 7 verse 6 of 2 Corinthians, God who comforts the downcast comforted us by the coming of Titus. And Titus seems to have had the same gift as Barnabas. Barnabas, you remember his name means son of consolation, son of comfort.

Tychicus, I'm sorry, Titus had this ability as well. So God comforts the downcast. And Paul, even though he's an apostle, even though he has the wonderful presence and gifting from the Holy Spirit to impart divine truth, gets downcast.

He is worried. And Titus has the ability to comfort him with his coming in 7 6. A few verses later in chapter 7 verse 13, we have been comforted in your comfort and we rejoice exceedingly more for the joy of Titus because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. So Titus in Corinth is refreshed.

Titus is able to refresh and comfort Paul. And this fellowship is so important to cultivate and prioritize fellowship with other growing believers, believers of like mind, believers who understand how important our calling is and how important the word of God is. And this comfort and refreshment and encouragement is a part of it.

Then again, in 2 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 18, I urged Titus and sent our brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps? Is he not like me in his regard for you, in his encouragement and teaching ministry? Titus is a reflection of Paul in not taking advantage. A big issue in 2 Corinthians is that Paul has not accepted support from Corinth.

He's not been a burden to them financially or otherwise. And they have returned Paul's great love with lesser love. And it's sort of a tragic come to pass that the more Paul pours himself into the ministry in Corinth, the less they seem to love him.

And he says that in chapter 12. Tychicus, of course, we've talked about him in Colossians chapter four and Ephesians chapter six. But this brings us now to verse 16 and following.

After the warning about Alexander the metalworker, Alexander the coppersmith, to know that there is opposition, to know the nature of it, to be aware of it. Our opposition can be in the realm of our relationships, of those that we know, those that we come in contact with, whether it's through work or school or the course of our journey through life. There are those that are dangerous to us in terms of distraction, deflection, putting our mind on unhelpful things, keeping us from concentrating on the things that are true and honest and noble and lovely and of good report that we are supposed to think on.

Instead, we are distracted and we are in tight circles of worry or concern or the kind of worry and discouragement that Paul faced and that the fellowship of believers can alleviate and can bring us encouragement and comfort rather than associations that do the opposite and are actually harmful and deleterious to our spiritual life. So Paul says, Alexander did me much harm. In verse 14, that phrase did me much harm is one that is used in secular Greek of the day for talking about someone in sort of a betraying fashion, using inside access to share information that ends up being harmful.

Sort of like Judas in sharing the whereabouts of the Lord Jesus with those who wanted to arrest him and do him harm. And Alexander evidently leaked or shared information with Paul's enemies. And this is the nature of the harm is he used his access from the inside to trip up and cause difficulties for the apostle Paul.

And this is why it is important for us to curate, pay attention to our conversations, those with whom we converse, what information we share, remembering that in the wrong hands, that information could not only be harmful to us, but to others. If we share information that is of a private nature incautiously and suddenly it's on Facebook or it's in social media, it's in someone's email, it's in someone's phone conversation, we need to be very good stewards of the privacy of those that are close to us and not on purpose or accidentally cause harm by incautious conversation, uncaredful talk. That is the nature of what Alexander the coppersmith did.

And so Paul warns Timothy, you must beware of him. He has greatly resisted our words. And this is not just rejecting it personally, but he is arguing others out of the teaching, the point of view, the sharing of inspired truth from God.

Alexander is an opponent of that. And by his words, he is resisting the good word of God that comes from Paul. So then we come to verse 16.

This is where we have a fascinating allusion to Old Testament scripture. Paul says, at my first defense, no one was there to stand by me, but all forsook me. This first defense is a standard part of a Roman trial.

A Roman trial began with a preliminary examination where the exact charge against a prisoner was presented, was formulated. And so it's sort of a preliminary hearing, if you will, that is in advance of the main trial. And so when Paul was brought to this preliminary examination, no one stood with him.

It was dangerous to be associated with Paul. You think of the Lord Jesus on the night of his arrest, where his disciples fled. And when Peter comes to warm himself by the fire and is questioned by a servant girl, he disavows any association or knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

And like the Lord Jesus, Paul is on trial for his life. This is a capital case. And evidently, even those closest to Paul didn't think it prudent to stand with him at his preliminary hearing, his first defense.

There are here many correspondences with the Lord Jesus, his arrest, his trial, and his crucifixion. And these are anticipated in the Old Testament. Turn with me back to the Psalms, specifically Psalm 22.

Psalm 22, you may remember this and remember it by its number. You will certainly remember it when I begin to read it, because Psalm 22 begins, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me and from the words of my groaning? Obviously, this Psalm was in the heart and on the mind of the Lord Jesus during his time of self-sacrifice. So in Psalm 22, why have you forsaken me? What does Paul say? At my first defense, no one stood with me, all forsook me.

Psalm 22 says, there is no one to help. And Paul says, no one was there to stand by me. Psalm 22 says, save me from the mouth of the lion.

Paul says, I was rescued from the mouth of the lion. Psalm 22 says, all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord. Paul says, so that all the Gentiles might hear it.

Psalm 22 says, dominion belongs to the Lord. Paul says, the Lord will save me for his heavenly kingdom. It seems virtually certain that Paul was comforting himself with his no doubt memorized understanding of Psalm 22.

No doubt thinking back to the Lord Jesus in the time of his imprisonment and his eventual death penalty execution. This Psalm was in the mind of the Lord Jesus. As Paul faces death, it's in his heart and mind, and he takes encouragement from it.

Thinking through Psalm 22, it begins with, why have you forsaken me, O Lord? But by the end, he says in celebration and in praise, verse 27, all the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord. The families of the nations shall worship before you. For the kingdom is the Lord's

and he rules over the nations.

Verse 19 of the Psalm says, you, O Lord, do not be far from me, O my strength, hasten to help me, deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog, save me from the lion's mouth in verse 21 and from the horns of the wild oxen. And then he says in verse 21, you have answered me. Why have you forsaken me? Why are you far from helping me? 20 something verses later, you have answered me.

I will declare your name to my brethren in the midst of the assembly. I will praise you and so on. Many times we find ourselves hard up against difficulty.

We're not necessarily facing the end of our life, although some of us can and do, but we can be imprisoned by circumstances. We can feel hemmed in, short of options, unable to do what we would most like to do. And the comparison between our current situation and what we wish our situation was can be separated by a vast distance.

We can feel hemmed in, feel imprisoned, feel that things are not going to end well. Like the Lord Jesus, like the Apostle Paul, we can take comfort and encouragement from the scriptures. Why am I here? Who am I in the Lord? And to focus on our spiritual identity, on the answer from the Lord.

The Lord Jesus was not delivered from his crucifixion. Paul was not delivered from his Roman imprisonment a second time. He will be executed within something measured in months, but it's in God's hands.

What is more real, our circumstances or the truth of who we are in and what we have to look forward to both now and in the ages to come. So there are three conclusions you can draw from this, three things that are an encouragement in situations like this. Number one, Paul says everyone has forsaken him, but the Lord was with him.

This is the evolution in Psalm 22. The Lord Jesus cries out, Psalm 22, one, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? But he is talking to his father in his final words, father into thy hands, I commit my spirit. So God is there to hear and the Lord Jesus knows it.

It seems as though the circumstances so dire that God is not in it, but upon reflection and upon working the word of God through our soul, we change from a short-term and immediate human viewpoint reaction to a better, more long-term and more realistic divine viewpoint reaction. So instead of being forsaken, Paul says, you know, people might've been out of the picture and it was pretty discouraging to look around and no one is standing with me, but that forced me to remember and to be comforted and encouraged by the fact that the Lord was with me. The Lord was with me.

Jesus said he would never leave his followers or forsake them and that he would be with them to the end of the age. That is a promise for us. The Lord is with us if we meet the conditions.

When is the Lord Jesus present with us as he was with the apostle Paul? Those who have his words and keep them, those who love him, who are called according to his purpose, all things work together for good. Jesus said, I and my father will come to that person and make our home with him and we will always be there and we will be with there to the end of this life, to the end of the age and into the ages to come. To be presented before the father is not a privilege for everyone.

It is those who have cultivated the father's presence and the son's presence along with the Holy Spirit in this life. If we value it now, if we treasure it now, if we rely on it and are encouraged and comforted by it now, it will be our privilege throughout all of the eternal ages to come. So, Paul is a witness to the truth of Jesus' promise because Paul met those conditions of loving the Lord, having his word and guarding it and keeping it, treasuring it.

The Lord Jesus was with him and with him to the end. Joan of Arc is quoted as saying, just before she was executed, it is better to be alone with God. By implication, you know, you could be surrounded by friends who have no power to help or you can have no one standing with you, but God is there, that's better.

Secondly, even in the most adverse of circumstances, Paul looked at his trial in a Roman court as an opportunity for the spread of the good news, the truth of God's word, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, when he told Timothy earlier in the chapter, be ready in season and out of season, being on trial for your life in a secular Roman court would be out of season. But Paul is still ready to proclaim, to represent the Lord Jesus Christ and the good news of salvation and of life in Christ and under the Father's wise plan and purpose.

So, Paul, even in this circumstance, is busy thinking of the teaching opportunities. Who can I send to communities who are most needful of the word of God faithfully presented? And immersed in that task, Paul is not conquered by fear or discouragement. Even in this most adverse of circumstances, he isn't discouraged.

He looks at it as an opportunity. Thirdly, Paul was convinced and was certain of his final deliverance. To the outside viewer, to the human eye, he might look like he's a victim of circumstances.

He's been harmed by Alexander the coppersmith. He's been arrested. He's been betrayed by his fellow Jews in Jerusalem and accused and hailed before Caesar and condemned by Roman justice.

But Paul looks beyond that. He doesn't see this as such an unhappy circumstance and a dismal conclusion. He looks past it.

He looks beyond the present time. And he knew that his eternal destination, his commendation before the Lord is secure. Earlier he spoke of there is a crown of righteousness laid up for him because he loves the Lord appearing.

And all of those who love the Lord's appearing had that crown awaiting them. He is looking beyond the immediate, beyond the temporal, beyond the limitations, the dank environment in which he is imprisoned and thinking of the glory that is to come. As he says in Romans, this momentary light affliction is working for us an eternal weight of glory.

Better to be uncomfortable and limited for a short time than to be secure in the short term and jeopardize all of the wonderful things God has for us in eternity. So this fairly clear allusion to Psalm 22 is so persuasive. Let me just run it by you again, in case you want to put it in your notes.

Psalm 22 begins, why have you forsaken me? Paul says, all forsook me. Psalm 22 says, there is no one to help. Paul says, no one was there to stand by me.

Psalm 22 says, save me from the mouth of the lion. Paul says, I was rescued from the mouth of the lion. There are those who have thought that Paul was alluding to a possible bad fate in the Colosseum, as some early Christians did.

Was he actually put out there and the lions didn't touch him like Daniel? I don't think so. I think this is one of our connections back to Old Testament scripture. And as we have seen so many times, allusions to the Old Testament, however brief, draw our mind and our attention back to that entire context.

So Paul's situation in a Roman prison facing almost certain death draws his mind to Psalm 22. When we are faced with hardship and difficulty, this is a great place for us to go as well. So why have you forsaken me? Paul says, all forsook me.

There is no one to help. Paul says, no one stood with me. Psalm 22 says, save me from the mouth of the lion.

Paul says, I was rescued from the mouth of the lion. Psalm 22 says, all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord. Paul says, this circumstance has turned out so that all the Gentiles are going to hear.

Psalm 22 says, dominion belongs to the Lord and his kingdom. Paul says, the Lord will save me for his heavenly kingdom. So as was the case with the Lord Jesus in enduring the cross, despising the shame so that he is now seated at the right hand of the Father.

So Psalm 22 encourages comforts and strengthens the apostle Paul in his hour of trial, conviction, and eventual execution. Well, that brings us then to the closing section here in verses 19 through 22. Greet Prisca and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.

We have looked at this in some detail. Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned in Acts chapter 18, verse two, where Paul meets them. He found a certain Jew named Aquila born in Pontus who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome and he came to them.

So Claudius is expelling the Jews from Rome. This is a hardship and difficulty for Aquila and his wife Priscilla, but it is because of this that they encounter the apostle Paul and a deep and abiding friendship and ministry partnership is the result. They are blasted out of hearth and home and are positioned by God to be a blessing and encouragement and a help to the apostle Paul in his gospel ministry.

Romans chapter 16, verse three, Paul says, greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. In first Corinthians chapter 16, verse 19, as Paul signs off in the first letter to Corinth, the churches of Asia greet you, Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord with the church that is in their house. What a wonderful testimony.

We've already talked about Onesiphorus who evidently has passed away, but he in the first chapter of this letter is mentioned as having come to refresh Paul, this ministry of refreshment, the fellowship of believers to comfort and encourage and refresh as Titus does, as Timothy does, as John Mark does, and here as Onesiphorus does. He often refreshed me, not ashamed of my chain. You get the idea that if Onesiphorus had still been alive, he would have stood with Paul at his first defense.

And it is possible that this loyalty may have even cost Onesiphorus his life. We don't know for sure. There is a greeting to Erastus here.

Erastus was sent by Paul as a messenger to Macedonia in Acts chapter 19, verse 22. Paul sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus. So years earlier, Erastus is known to Timothy and they journey together to Macedonia.

And it is very likely that he later ends up in Rome and joins the church there. So in Romans 16, 23, Paul says, Gaius, my host, and the host of the whole church greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you.

And Cordus, a brother. There is a greeting to Trophimus. This is the Gentile.

We often think of the circumcision question with regard to Timothy or with regard to Titus, but Trophimus, who is greeted here, is the Gentile that Paul was accused of bringing into the temple precincts in Jerusalem. And this incident is part of what sparked the riot that results in Paul's arrest and his claim to be tried before Caesar. In Acts chapter 20, verse 4, when Paul arrives, Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia, also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy and Tychicus, and Trophimus of Asia.

So Trophimus is another one who is well known to Timothy and well known to Paul and has been useful in the past. And then in chapter 21 of Acts, verse 29, those who riot and demand that Paul be arrested had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city. And they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

This supposition is evidently not even true, but it is enough to cause this imprisonment. And then finally, there are greetings in our closing section here from others, Eubulus, Linus, Pudens,

and Claudia. There are traditions that say that Linus became the first bishop of Rome.

Again, it's church tradition. We don't know. There's an interesting story and you can look this up.

It isn't in our scripture, so I'm not going to detail it, but Pudens and Claudia, either coincidentally or possibly with reference to these two mentioned by Paul, are described by Marshall, M-A-R-T-I-A-L. He's a famous Roman poet, if you've ever had to go through some of that early Roman literature. He was around from about A.D. 66 till 100.

And he has a couple of epigrams that have survived down to the present time that celebrate the marriage of Pudens, a distinguished Roman from an aristocratic family, to a lady called Claudia. Claudia is called a stranger in Rome in one of these Martian, or Martial, ones that Marshall wrote. I don't know how you call that.

They wouldn't be Martian. But Marshall's second epigram says that Claudia was a stranger to Rome. And it appears that she came from Britain.

And long story short, she is sent from Britain to Rome to stay. And this is where Pudens meets her. And often a foreign king, she's evidently the daughter of a guy who was a British guy that was defeated and subjugated.

And so to make peace, the British king's daughter, his name is Cogedubnus, his daughter Claudia is sent to Rome to be something of a hostage, but sort of a well-treated guest hostage. And so members of the family would be sent to Rome as a guarantee of keeping the agreement. And so she is staying in the house of someone called Aulus Plautius.

Long story short, Pomponia, who she would be staying with, Claudia comes to Rome and stays in this Roman house of Aulus Plautius. And Aulus's wife is Pomponia. And Tacitus says she was a lady that came before the tainted with a foreign superstition.

So it appears possible, at least from these sketchy Roman records, that Claudia is a foreigner that came from as far away as Britain, comes to this house in Rome to stay as sort of a guest hostage to assure the treaty is kept. And she comes in contact with Pomponia, who leads her to Christ. And she then marries Pudens.

And this could be the Pudens and Claudia that Paul mentions at the close of this letter. It's at least coincidental. And it's an interesting story just for its own sake, that according to early tradition, that's who these two might be.

Paul concludes by greeting all the brethren and then says, the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. More than a wish, we know what the conditions are for this to be true. How can the Lord Jesus be with our spirit? The Lord Jesus himself tells us, have his words and keep them.

Maintain a soul that is aware of and sensitive to our calling. All things work together for good to

those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose. Whether we abound, whether we are abased, we are content because our happiness is not determined by our circumstances.

It doesn't depend on the situation. It doesn't depend on what people think or what they say. It depends on the presence and the power of the Lord.

If the Lord Jesus is with our spirit, we can stand at a first defense. We can be delivered from the mouth of the lion. Regardless of how things turn out in circumstance, we enjoy deliverance.

We are free. We are blessed. We are enabled and empowered.

We have a witness that God will use beyond ourselves, a witness that can shine to the entire world. Think about Psalm 22. Yes, when we initially look at a situation, it is difficult and it seems as though God has departed and forsaken us.

But as we work our way through what we know, we end up praising him. And thanking him and enjoying his presence, his comfort, his encouragement, and his promise of present and future blessing. What a testimony.

What a witness from the Apostle Paul. We'll start the book of James next week. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the messages that we have received through these pastoral epistles. 1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy, so compelling, so full of wonderful practical guidance for us in maintaining our walk before you, in our dealings with each other, in the priority of focus on the truth and identifying and avoiding falsehood, opposing it, separating from it. We pray that as we think back over these exhortations, the encouragement and the example of the Apostle Paul, who echoes that of the Lord Jesus, who echoes that of King David in Psalm 22, that we can be found worthy to reflect your glory in a similar way, not defeated, not set back, not discouraged by circumstance, but being strong and of a good courage and not afraid, because you are with us wherever we go.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.