

### Some Personal Remarks from Paul to Timothy

#### 2 Timothy 4:9-13

2 Timothy 4:9-13: *“Be diligent to come to me quickly; <sup>10</sup> for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. <sup>11</sup> Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. <sup>12</sup> And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. <sup>13</sup> Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.”*

#### Background Notes

2 Timothy is a personal letter that the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, his younger co-worker and “son in the faith.” When he wrote this letter, Paul was enduring his second Roman imprisonment. In his first Roman imprisonment, about five years before this time, Paul was held under good conditions of house arrest. Now, however, Paul was writing to Timothy from a dungeon.

Timothy was in Ephesus when he received this letter. Tychicus probably carried this letter from Rome to Ephesus. Verse 12: *“And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.”* Paul used the past tense, “I have sent Tychicus,” rather than the present tense, “I am sending Tychicus,” because this was typical of letters in those days. Sometimes the writers used a time reference from the reader’s perspective, when the reader received the letter.

It appears that Paul may have sent Tychicus to Ephesus specifically to cover for Timothy, so that Timothy could come to Rome. Remember, Paul had assigned Timothy to help pastor the church at Ephesus, but now Paul urgently requested Timothy to come to Paul in Rome: *“Be diligent to come to me quickly” (v9)*. It was about 1,000 miles by ship from Ephesus to Rome.

Along the way, Timothy was to bring Paul’s cloak that he had left behind in Troas, as well as Paul’s books and parchments. *“Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments” (v13)*. Possibly Paul was suddenly arrested when he was in Troas, and he may not have had time to pack his belongings before being brought to Rome as a prisoner. So Paul requested that Timothy pick up these things and bring them to him in Rome.

By the way, “Dalmatia” (where Titus was sent) is located in Albania today - part of the former country of Yugoslavia.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. Serving Christ involves loneliness at times.

Why did Paul want Timothy to make every effort to come to him quickly? Certainly one reason was that he missed Timothy. Dr. Luke was there (v11). Remember, Paul described Luke as “the beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14). Faithful Luke was with Paul right to the end. But Paul greatly desired to see Timothy, his “son in the faith.”

“... *the time of my departure is at hand*” (4:6). Paul realized that the time was short, and he longed to see Timothy before he was martyred for the sake of the gospel. We don’t know whether Timothy got to Rome in time - but we’d certainly like to think so, because it’s clear that Paul longed to see him again.

Paul suffered from loneliness. It is not a sin to be lonely. When you’re away at college and you’re homesick - you’re lonely. When you’re deployed in military service and you’re suddenly shipped halfway around the world - you’ll experience loneliness. At times, serving Christ involves separation from the ones you love – and you’ll experience loneliness.

God has reasons for allowing Christians to experience loneliness at times. If you’ve ever experienced loneliness, watch for others who may be feeling the same, because you can empathize and help others who are feeling alone. And loneliness certainly makes you appreciate Christian fellowship all the more!

I’ll never forget my first couple of weeks of summer training in military service. I was on an Army base quite a ways from home, and I was starving for Christian fellowship. I was lonely! I finally found some Christian believers on the base, and what a blessing that was!

God may permit you to go through a period of loneliness as you serve the Lord Jesus. Serving Christ involves loneliness at times.

### 2. Serving Christ involves disappointment at times.

Five of Paul’s fellow workers are mentioned in verses 10-12: Demas, Crescens, Titus, Luke and Mark. Four of the five were still faithfully serving the Lord and helping Paul in the ministry. But one had deserted: “*For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica*” (v10). What a disappointment!

Verse 19 doesn’t say that Demas forsaken the Christian faith. No – Demas had deserted the ministry. Why? He loved “this present world.” Maybe he got a lucrative job offer in Thessalonica. Maybe he received an inheritance and wanted to take advantage of his new wealth. But his love for this present world in verse 10 is certainly a contrast to the love of the believers in verse 8. They were longing for Christ’s appearing rather than loving this present world! The desertion of Demas must have been a great disappointment for Paul.

It's a big disappointment when someone deserts you in the ministry. Over the years we've had a number of promising students at Emmaus Bible College – young men and women who started out well in their service for Christ. But later they “threw in the towel.” They didn't deny Christ or forsake their faith, but they deserted the ministry. They became entangled in their career, or distracted by the allure of material gain, or absorbed by some other interest. This is a great disappointment, particularly for us as Bible teachers. There are wonderful blessings and joys in serving Christ, but serving Christ involves disappointment at times.

There are other kinds of disappointments in the ministry as well. Just this morning, a student came into my Old Testament class with a drop slip. He wanted to drop the course. When I mentioned that he needed this course to graduate, he said that he wasn't going to graduate anyway. So I asked him, “But what about the value of studying the content of the Old Testament?” He said that he could get more by studying on his own! How disappointing! That was like a knife to my heart. Serving Christ involves disappointment at times.

### **3. Serving Christ involves inconvenience at times.**

Verse 13: *“Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.”* Why did Paul want his cloak? Because he was cold! Remember, Paul was not staying in the Holiday Inn; he was in a cold and damp dungeon - an “inconvenience,” for sure!

What about the books and the parchments? These probably included personal papers and letters but almost certainly included portions of Scripture. Paul was certainly inconvenienced without these. Have you ever been without a Bible for a while? That's much more than a minor inconvenience!

Serving Christ involves inconvenience at times. God permits us to be inconvenienced for many reasons. It certainly keeps us humble and dependent on Him. I've never had to go through the misery and inconveniences that Paul went through in that dungeon, but I've experienced enough inconveniences in the ministry to appreciate a little bit of what Paul experienced.

A few years ago I was the speaker at a weekend conference in a small country church. It was winter, and it was really cold - and very snowy. In fact, we had to cut an evening service short because the roads were rapidly becoming impassable! The farmhouse where I stayed had no insulation and very little heat, and I must admit I didn't sleep very soundly. In the morning I found some snow that had gotten into my jacket pocket the night before – and it hadn't melted! A weekend with lots of inconveniences!

However, that short weekend of minor inconveniences was *nothing*, compared to the severe hardships that some Christians have gone through in serving Christ. Serving Christ involves inconvenience and hardships at times.

## Practical Applications

### 1. It's better to be "a Mark" than "a Demas."

Verse 11: *"Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry."*

What do we know about Mark? This is the same John Mark who went with Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey - but Mark did not complete the journey. He deserted the ministry. Acts 13:13: *"Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John [John Mark] departing from them, returned to Jerusalem."*

We don't know why John Mark deserted the team and returned to Jerusalem. Maybe he was sick. Maybe he was burned out. Maybe he couldn't take the hardship of travel. But Paul considered that Mark had deserted the ministry.

So when Barnabas wanted to take Mark on the second missionary journey, Paul said No! Acts 15:37-41: *"Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God."*

But now, many years later, Mark was back, and he was "useful for Christian service" (v11). In fact, as early as the time of Paul's first Roman imprisonment, Mark was back in service for the Lord (Colossians 4:10). God had picked up the pieces in Mark's life in a big way! In fact, God selected Mark to write a book of the Bible - the Gospel of Mark. Mark started out as a deserter - but he ended up writing Scripture!

Demas, on the other hand, started out well. He was a trusted servant of the Lord. Paul mentioned Demas as a fellow worker in both Colossians and Philemon. But Demas ended up a deserter, because he was lured away from the ministry by love of this world. 1 John 2:15-17 warns us: *"Do not love the world or anything in the world... For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever."*

Which would you rather be? A Demas - or a Mark? It's better to be a Mark than a Demas!

### 2. Let's be students for life!

Paul knew that the end was near, but he wanted "the books and the parchments." Paul was a student of the Word - right to the very end of his life! Even though his departure was drawing very near, Paul still wanted to study the Word of God. What an example for us.

Let's be "professional students" when it comes to the Bible! Never stop studying the Word of God. Let's be students for life!