

Paul Poured Out
2 Timothy 4:6-22
Pastor John Miller

Let's go back to 2 Timothy 4:1 and begin there. Paul says, "I charge thee therefore before God," the "thee" is a reference to Timothy. His name means one who honors God, but the epistle is not just strictly for Timothy. It had application to all the believers there in the church at Ephesus. This was Paul's final charge. It's a solemn charge. It's a charge of being brought into a courtroom and put under oath. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick," or alive, "and the dead at his appearing," and here's the charge (verse 2), "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Paul tells Timothy why he should preach the Word, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts," or desires, "shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

We spent all evening on this passage (verses 1-4), Paul's final charge, and he is exhorting Timothy in light of the Lord's return and the witness before God that he should preach. The word "preach" is the word *kerysso* which means to herald or to proclaim, so he's not to debate or discuss the Word, he's just to proclaim as a herald, *kerysso*, preach the Word. He's to do it, "...instant in season, out of season." In other words, it's always "in season" to be preaching the Lord. Always be ready no matter what the circumstances. He's to do it by reproof, rebuking, exhorting, and with patience, "longsuffering and doctrine." The word "doctrine" means teaching. As I said, he tells him the reason, "For the time will come when they will not endure," or listen or put up with, "sound doctrine; but after their own lusts," desires, "shall they heap to themselves teachers," who will tickle their ears, "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

I'm trying to avoid the temptation to expound on this again, and I think we did a pretty thorough job. If you missed it, go back on our website and listen to the archived sermon about preaching the Word and the problems that we face today. It was after I preached this two weeks ago, I just became so aware of what's going on around in the church today of people who are not preaching sound doctrine. They are not teaching the Word. It's almost like pastors are doing everything but teaching the Word of God; and this command, this charge, holds true for all pastors today. Their priority and calling is to preach the Word.

In verses 5-8, we have Paul speaking of his certain death that is coming. This is one of the most moving of all the Pauline epistles, all the Pauline teachings, as he knew he was going to die. Remember, just quickly, Paul is in prison, the Mamertine dungeon. He knows he's going to die. He has already come before Nero in one of his trials, his preliminary hearing, and he knew he was going to be executed. Now, being a Roman citizen, he would not be crucified because the Romans citizens could not be crucified on a Roman cross; but he would be taken out and beheaded. It's believed (church tradition holds) that Paul was found guilty, taken outside the city

of Rome, and beheaded. The moment he was, of course, he was in the presence of the Lord.

Let's look at verses 5-8. Paul says, "But watch thou in all things," the term "watch thou" means to be sober-minded. Every minister needs to be sober-minded. "...endure afflictions," so be sober and be vigilant, but watch because of the afflictions that will come, that you, "do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry," which means fulfill your ministry. It doesn't mean that he has to be an evangelist, but it means that he should be evangelistic. I do believe as well that every pastor should be, kerysso, preaching the Word, every pastor should have a burden for the lost, and there should be an evangelistic emphasis in his teaching and preaching. You don't want to forget the sheep, that they need to be fed, but you don't want to forget those that are goats and they need to be preached the gospel so they can be saved and come into the Kingdom. That's another thing that is lacking, I believe, in our world and church today is that a lot of pastors have abandoned evangelism. They don't preach the gospel to sinners. They don't preach on sin, on faith in Christ and repentance, judgment of God, sermons on hell if you don't repent, and how to be saved—you must be born again. It's kind of what I just call good ol' Bible preaching is what it is. Would to God that we had more pastors that just did good ol' Bible preaching.

Remember that I've said before: If it's new, it's not true; if it's true, it's not new. John Miller, if he's teaching the Word of God, he's not teaching anything new that hasn't been taught before. It's all in the Scriptures. There should be an evangelistic emphasis, and it was so awesome this past Easter Sunday to see so many come forward and to pray to receive Christ. We trust that they'll grow now in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We need to also have a burden to do evangelism on our one-on-one basis personally as we go out about our business. We should carry tracts in our pockets and gospel leaflets and invites to church. We should strike up conversations with people and tell them about Jesus Christ as we go out into the highways and to the hedges. So, fulfill your ministry and do the work of an evangelist is Paul's exhortation to Timothy. The reason he says this is because he knows he is passing off the scene and is going to pass the torch to Timothy.

One of the things that concerns me is the next generation. Will they be faithful to the gospel? Will they preach the Word? What about the leaders of the church after I'm gone. Will they be faithful to do the work of ministry? Paul says, "For I am now ready to be offered," verse 6, he's speaking about his death, "and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight," not "a good fight" but the good fight, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

This verse is used quite often in a funeral service, and rightfully so, but Paul is speaking about his life and does three things. First, he looks around at his circumstances in verse 6, "I am now ready to be offered." He's talking about his death, and I like the fact that Paul says, "I am now ready." We must all be ready to die. You're not ready to live until you're ready to die. I want to ask you all the question tonight: Are you ready to die? Not that you're going to die tonight or in

just a few minutes, by the way, but are you ready to go? Is your heart right with God? Are you ready to see God? Do you know that your sins have been forgiven and you have lived for Him? Are you ready to die? Paul says, "I am ready." Paul wasn't afraid about dying. He says, "I am now ready to be offered."

The first word picture, metaphor, he uses is out of being offered. Notice that. That phrase, "be offered" literally means, I am ready to be poured out. The imagery is that of in pagan cultures they used what they called a libation. They would have an offering in a wine glass and would pour it into the ground. It would be an offering poured out. In the Old Testament the Jews had a drink offering, and they would offer the lamb upon the altar but they would take a glass of wine and pour the drink offering out over the sacrifice on the altar. That pouring out of that sacrifice on that altar—that drink offering—was a picture or a type of our Lord Jesus Christ who was given for us or poured out for us that He gave everything voluntarily to die on the cross. It's also a metaphor or an image of the believer's death, "I'm being poured out like a drink offering." Then, he says, "...and the time of my departure is at hand."

When Paul wrote to the Philippians, he talked about being ready to depart or ready to be poured out. He knew that when he was absent from the body (2 Corinthians 5) that he would be present with the Lord. He uses this other image (verse 6) the word "departure is at hand." This is one of my favorites because it has the idea literally of to exit or to leave. When you die, you are leaving your body. Physical death is the soul and spirit separating from the body, so he says, "I'm ready to go out." The word was actually used for the children of Israel when they were in Egypt and went out in the Exodus. They were in bondage, they were slaves, and they were set free. They came out in the Exodus. It's also used for the opening of a prison door and letting prisoners go free. It was also used (and this is my favorite, perhaps) for a boat that had been tied to a dock and was loosed from its moorings and set sail on the sea and would disappear off in the distant horizon. It has the idea, "I'm ready to be loosed from my moorings. I'm ready to be set free on the sea." I think that's a great picture.

When you die, we say goodbye here. When you're at the shoreline and you watch a boat go off out into the sea, you say goodbye and it gets smaller and smaller and smaller and then it literally will disappear off the horizon. We know it hasn't disappeared, it's not gone, it's just separated from us. It's just out of our sight. That's a picture of the believer's death. It's a glorious picture. It was also used, by the way, for the loosing of tent stakes. Tents were quite common in the ancient world, and they use the imagery here of, "I'm ready to have my tent taken down, my tent stakes." You kind of strike tent and pull the tent up and I'm ready to be transported.

In 2 Corinthians 5, I've already alluded to it, there's a very clear passage...and we're going to be going into 1 Corinthians 15 this Sunday starting a new series called: Hope Beyond the Grave. We're going to be talking about the believer's resurrection hope. In that passage, Paul said, "...to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." There are all kinds of crazy ideas about what happens when you die. I'm going to talk about some of the secular ideas about what happens after death on Sunday morning, so I'll save it for that; but when the

Christian dies, this is one of the most common questions I get: What happens when you die? If you are a Christian, you go immediately into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen? What a glorious hope that is! To be absent from the body, BOOM! instantly present with the Lord. You'll be looking at Jesus face to face. Faith will be turned to sight. You can reach out and touch the face of Jesus Christ. What a glorious hope that is! Certainly, it isn't something we need to be afraid—death has lost its sting, the grave has lost its victory.

You say, "Well, what if you're not a Christian and you die?" If you're not a Christian and you die, then you will be separated from God in a place of torment for all eternity. Then, you will be resurrected out of that place of torment, stand in judgment before Jesus on the Great White Throne where the Books will be opened and your name will not be found written in the Book, you will be cast into what's called the lake of fire, which is the second death, and it is eternal separation from God. We'll talk more about that as well on Sunday morning. There are only two destinations after you die, you go to hell and the other you go to heaven. It's pretty simple. You talk about good ol' Bible preaching, that's what the Bible teaches. You don't become one with the universe. You don't get reincarnated, you know, as a race car driver or something like that. You don't come back in another form. You don't hover over your family. You're not in the room, you know, tapping on the walls, lifting the table, and speaking through a medium. That's demonic activity. That's a deception, and millions of people are deceived by that. You don't go down a long, narrow tunnel and there's light at the end of the tunnel and it's all peaceful, you know. That's not what the Bible teaches. If you're a believer, you're with Jesus; if you're not, you're separated from God. Read Luke 16, the story of Lazarus and the rich man. He talks about what happens after a person dies.

Paul says, "For I am now ready to be offered," poured out, "and the time of my departure is at hand," my exodus is at hand. In verse 7, he looks backwards. He looked around and he's ready to die, and he looked back without remorse and said, "I have fought," and as I pointed out, my King James Bible has, "a good fight," it's actually a reference to "the" good fight. Paul isn't talking about his fighting so much as "the" fight in general, and it's the fight of faith, "I have fought a," the, "good fight. He's in a spiritual battle. He's in a spiritual war. Paul has been saved and serving the Lord for at least 30 years. Some Bible students think 35, some say 40, I read one that said maybe even 45 years that Paul has been serving the Lord. Paul says, "I've been fighting the good fight." There is a spiritual battle, and if you're a Christian, you are fighting the good fight.

In verse 7 Paul says, "I have finished my course." The first imagery is that of a boxing or wrestling match or a fight. It could be speaking of the Greek Olympics where they fought and wrestled. Then, he says, "I have finished my course," the imagery there is that of a foot race. In the Greek Olympics they were big on foot racing, so "I have run the race. I have finished my course." I believe that God has a race and a course for us to follow, and we need to finish that, not give up. Then, he says, "I have kept the faith," notice that in verse 7. Notice it's "the" faith. Jude tells us to, "earnestly contend for the faith...once delivered unto the saints." He didn't turn away from the faith. He didn't dilute the faith. He didn't give up on the faith. He kept the faith, and what he wants Timothy to do is to hold tightly to the faith as well, to fight the good fight, and

to finish the race. He wants Timothy to follow his good and godly example.

Notice in verse 8, after looking around, after looking back in verse 7, now he looks ahead and says, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," that word "crown" in the Greek is the *stephanos*. It's not the diadem, the king's crown, it's the victor's crown. In the Greek Olympics, which Paul had just been alluding to, they would fight in a boxing or wrestling match or they would run in a race. If they won, they wouldn't get a gold, silver, or bronze medal. They would get a laurel wreath, sometimes made out of pine, and it would be placed upon their heads. They just had this kind of hippie headband of leaves on their head. How exciting is that? In the Greek ancient world it was the height of glory to have this laurel wreath put on your head.

In other places Paul alludes to this in the New Testament about that they're doing it for a corruptible crown, this laurel wreath, we're serving the Lord for an incorruptible crown—one that will fade not away, that's reserved for us in heaven. So, "I'm going to get the victor's crown." It's called here in verse 8, the crown of righteousness. I'm not sure what that is implying. We have already been made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ, so he's not trying to say that, "I'll be righteous then." There is the sense that when we get to heaven it'll be the third stage of our salvation—we go from justification to sanctification to glorification—and we will be perfectly righteous. There are some Bible students that think that's what it's referring to, the state of glorification, that I'll be glorified, but I believe in context Paul is talking about some kind of rewards, not for salvation but for our service.

Did you know that as a Christian you will actually be judged? The word is *Bema*, the rewards seat of Christ for your service, for living for Christ. You're not going to be judged for your sin, that's already taken care of on the cross, but you are going to be judged for, "I gave you this gift. I gave you this opportunity. What did you do with your time and your talent, your treasure? Did you trust Me as Savior? Did you live selfishly for yourself or did you use your time and your talent to bless and serve others and to advance the Kingdom of God?" We're going to actually stand.

When we say it's the *Bema* Seat, Paul talks about it in 1 Corinthians. He talked about the wood, hay, and stubble, the gold, silver, and precious stone, and our works will be tried by fire. If we did it for the wrong motives and in the energy of the flesh, then it's wood, hay, and stubble and will be burned up. We won't get any reward. We'll go to heaven and be saved, but we won't get any heavenly reward. If we do it in the energy of the Spirit, according to God's Word, and especially for the glory of God, then when we get to heaven, we're going to get a reward. The word "*Bema*" actually has the idea of rewards seat—not being judged by or condemned but being rewarded for our service. Again, another thing that I think is lacking today in the church is we very rarely hear that taught or talked about or sermons preached on that we will have to give an account to God for our service. We want to be faithful and hear those words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord," so Paul says, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," and I'm going to get the "crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." That day is when

the Lord comes and rewards His servants, the judgement of Christ for the church. "...and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

You don't have to be a pastor or an evangelist or a full-time missionary, you just have to be faithful to serve the Lord in whatever capacity God has given you, and you'll be given a crown and God will give you rewards. I think some people will be given rewards in heaven more than even some that are known and are more prominent here when they get the veneration and the recognition—they get their rewards. There are going to be people that were serving God in obscurity and unknown to anyone. They're going to be in the front row of heaven with a big crown, and people are going to be saying, "Who's that little lady up there in the front row?" "Well, God called her to pray, and she faithfully prayed," so she's got this big crown. The pastor is going to be in the back row because he got all the recognition while he was here, but she didn't get any; so maybe he lost some of his rewards but she got all her rewards. Don't be discouraged. Whatever God calls you to do, do faithfully. We should actually be motivated in our service for His reward not for the recognition of man. It's not so that, "I want my picture in the foyer: Servant of the Month," you know, "and everyone will know how wonderful I am." I want the Lord to be the One that recognizes that. He's faithful and He sees and He knows. There's no service that we do that goes unknown and unrecognized to Him. The smallest thing done in the name of Jesus for the glory of God...you give somebody a glass of water in the name of Jesus, you'll be rewarded for serving others.

Notice it says, "...them that love is appearing." What a great motivation for serving the Lord, "I want to see Jesus. I love His appearing." We need to be careful that we don't lose that expectation and that hope of the coming again of Jesus Christ. Again, this is another trend that I see happening, that is, the church is losing its expectation of the coming of the Lord, of the return of the Lord. I believe that Jesus is coming back first for the church in the rapture to catch the church up to meet the Lord in the air, and then He'll come back about seven years later in the Second Coming; but we're looking for the rapture and the Bema—the rewards—Seat of Christ when we will be caught up to be with Him.

Now this gets very personal (and we won't tarry), but notice in verses 9-13, Paul begins to talk about what he's going through in this dungeon in Rome and part of his loneliness and the difficulties that he was facing at the end of his life. He says, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me." Later on he's going to say (verse 21), "...come before winter," probably because ships can't sail in the winter on the Mediterranean; so if you don't come soon, you're not going to be able to come. Paul wanted the companionship, the fellowship, and the friendship of Timothy, and I think that's kind of cool that he wanted this friendship and companionship of Timothy. Paul was not a lone ranger. Paul was not somebody that thought he could do ministry on his own. He recognized the need to work together with others and says, "Timothy, come shortly to me."

Then, sadly, Paul describes, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. 12 And

Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. 13 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.” Some people are amazed by this, but it has always touched me how practical and personal and how warm this is when Paul speaks so dearly about Luke and, “Bring Mark,” and “I’m needing a coat, bring my coat,” and “Would you bring my books and my parchments?” It’s a very practical section of this epistle, but go back over it with me just quickly. “For Demas hath forsaken me.”

Demas is mentioned three times in the New Testament. In Philemon 1:24 where it says, “... Demas my fellowlabourers,” he was someone who was working with Paul in the ministry. Then he’s mentioned in Colossians 4:14. All you have is the word “Demas.” It’s actually, “Demas, greets you.” In 2 Timothy 4:10, our passage tonight, “Demas hath forsaken me.” We can’t speak with certainty, but it almost seems to be a progression there. First you have Demas, who is my fellow laborer, then you just have the name “Demas.” It’s almost like Paul is starting to be concerned about him and what’s going on in his life, and then sadly he says, “Demas has forsaken me.” Now, I do want to note that Demas has forsaken Paul, but it doesn’t tell us that Demas has apostatized or turned away from the Lord but that seems to be the implication. There’s a lot that’s not said about Demas, and we need to be careful that we don’t read more into the story than what is in the Bible. When the Bible speaks, we can speak; when the Bible doesn’t speak, we can’t speak. It doesn’t really say why Demas has forsaken him. The common view is that he loved the present evil world, Paul mentions that, but we don’t know the implications or the details of what that means.

The world is described here as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life in 1 John. It could be that he turned away from the Lord and went back into a life of sin. Maybe he wasn’t truly converted or maybe he just backslid, I don’t know. Some feel that maybe he got discouraged, maybe it was finances, maybe it was the love of money, maybe he was afraid of the Roman government. Paul is under arrest, “I don’t want to be arrested and put into jail, so I’m going to turn away from Paul.”

John Bunyan in his spiritual allegory, *Pilgrim’s Progress*, pictures Demas as the keeper of a silver mine at a hill called Lucre. I think that’s interesting. He pictures him as a keeper of a silver mine on a hill called Lucre, so Bunyan’s implying there in his spiritual allegory that Demas’ problem was money and that he turned away from Paul and from the ministry back to the world. The word “world” there refers to the evil world system apart from God.

Luke was with Paul. It’s possible that Luke signed on with Paul as his personal slave or assistant. This is Dr. Luke who wrote the book of Acts and the gospel of Luke, so a large part of our New Testament was written by Dr. Luke. What a great friend he was to the Apostle Paul and traveling companion with Paul in ministry. So, “Only Luke is with me,” he says, “Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.” Mark is the fellow we know as John Mark. John Mark appears in the gospel of Mark where when Jesus is arrested, he runs away naked. His clothes are grabbed by the Roman soldiers and he runs away, but he had a mother who had a house in Jerusalem where the early believers gathered together. Some believe that the upper room where they had the last supper was actually the home of

John Mark, and it may be that the upper room on the day of Pentecost, where they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, was the upper room that belonged to John Mark's mother.

John Mark went with Paul and Barnabas, who was his uncle. They took off on the first missionary journey in the book of Acts. Halfway through the journey, John gave up and went back home. Again, we don't know why, but whatever caused him to go back, Paul wasn't happy with him. When it came time for the second missionary journey, and they wanted to take off on the second trip, Barnabas says to Paul, "Let's take John Mark, my nephew, along with us." Paul said, "No, he flaked out on the first trip. I'm not going to take him with me on the second trip." Barnabas says, "Look, he's my nephew. I want to take him." Paul says, "No. We're not going to take him." "Yes, we're taking him." "No, we're not." It says there was a contention between them. These two great men of God actually locked horns in disagreement over the issue of John Mark. Paul took Silas and went one direction, and Barnabas took Mark and went the other direction out to the island of Cyprus. Instead of one missionary team, now you have two missionary teams. They split and went two different directions. Now what we find is years later, evidently Mark made good with Paul and Paul says, "I want you to bring him, he that was unprofitable is now profitable." There are a lot of implications here, but one is, even after failure, God can still use us. Even after you have failed in your service to the Lord, if you'll reconsecrate, rededicate your heart and life to God, God can forgive and restore you.

How about Peter. He denied the Lord three times, yet Jesus appeared to Peter and commissioned him (John 21) to, "Feed my sheep, feed my sheep, feed my sheep." If you're here tonight and say, "I tried to serve the Lord, and I fell flat on my face. It didn't work." Then try again. Just give your heart back to the Lord and say, "Lord, I want to serve You. Use me for Your glory. Forgive me for my failure and use me in a way that glorifies You." God will use you once again. He'll restore the years the cankerworm has eaten.

A second lesson is that we need to forgive those who have let us down and disappointed us. "I'm not going to talk to them! I'm not going to fellowship with them! I'm not going to work with them! They flaked once, that's it! It's all over! It's through! I'm not going to serve the Lord with those people." We should be forgiving and tenderhearted and kind, "...forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Don't build walls, build bridges. If they repent and get right with God, you can find that they want to restore the relationship, then be willing to forgive and find restoration and serve together.

Paul asked Timothy to do three things. He says in verse 11, "Take Mark, and bring him," and in verse 13 he says, bring "The cloke." The closest thing that we would have to that "cloke" today would be a poncho. It was a big garment with a hole in the middle you put over your head, and it was just a big robe or cover. Sometimes it was made out of animal skin; and Paul was a tentmaker, so he probably had a really fine poncho that he wore! He says, "You know that poncho that I made? Bring it to me." Evidently, he was cold down in this damp Mamertine prison, so he wanted something for his body. He wanted John Mark for fellowship and companionship, he wanted his coat for his body to be kept warm, and then he says, "...bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments."

I don't know that we can be absolutely sure what the books and the parchments are, there are different opinions, but it's possible they are both a reference to Scripture. At least one of them is a reference to Scripture, so there would be the scrolls that would have Old Testament Scripture, and there would be the parchments and the animal skins that would have writings or books on them. Paul was in this dungeon knowing he's going to die, but think about that. He wanted to study the Word of God. Isn't that commendable? We never outgrow our desire, the hunger, to study God's Word. "I'm old. My eyes are bad. I've read it before," no. He, "I want to read. I want to study. I want to go deeper." He says, "I want you to bring these things to me." "...when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments."

This is reminiscent of 1500 years after this when one of my church history heroes, a man by the name of William Tyndale...if you really want to get inspired, write that name down and do some Google search or read some biography on William Tyndale. He was a Catholic priest who was born again and converted to Christ. He had a passion for God's Word and wanted to get it into the English language. He wanted to be able to translate the Bible into English so that even the common laborer, the plowman in the field, could read the Word of God. He was persecuted by the Roman church in England for translating the Bible into the language of the people. They felt that it was only for the priest to read and to interpret, so they had to go to Germany and print these English New Testaments. They smuggled them back into England, and he was actually arrested and brought back to England to stand trial. He was put into prison, but he wrote this letter when he was in prison. He said, "Send me, for Jesus' sake, a warmer cap; something to patch my leggings, a woolen shirt, and above all, my Hebrew Bible." I love that! He was, by the way, executed. He was put to death. His crime? Translating the Bible into the language of the people so the people could read it.

There were people that were actually put to death if they were caught reading the Bible. If parents taught their kids to pray the Lord's prayer, they could be put to death. They were being put to death by the Church. There was a real need for the Bible to be brought into the language of the people. We owe our modern English Bibles to so many who gave their lives in sacrifice to get out the Word of God.

Paul says, "Will you bring me these things?" The third movement in our study tonight is verses 14-15 where he says, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil," so Paul knew he was going to die. He was being poured out. He was going to exodus out of his body. He was forsaken by most of his friends, only Luke (verse 11) was with him, and he was opposed by his enemies (verses 14-15). "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: 15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words." We don't know a lot about Alexander the coppersmith other than he opposed Paul. Now, it's most likely that he opposed Paul for preaching the gospel and people turning away from idolatry. The idols were made out of copper, so he lost money. He was being hit in the pocketbook. Remember when Paul was preaching in Athens and the Athenians worshiped the goddess Diana? They had little statues of Diana, but because the people turned away from Diana to the True and Living God they weren't buying these little statues anymore so the silversmith started a riot. He grabbed Paul and brought him into the court and made a big

hubbub about it? Evidently, Alexander followed Paul around and opposed his gospel preaching. If you're preaching the gospel, you will find opposition. Satan will be sure to bring people who will oppose you, and if you want to serve the Lord, you'll find people will oppose you.

It's interesting. Paul says in verse 14, "...the Lord reward him according to his works," or it could be translated, "The Lord will reward him according to his works." Now, I don't believe that what Paul is doing is praying for God to smite or to judge him, he's just saying as a matter of fact, "God will take care of him." He's not praying judgment on his enemies. He goes on later and says, "I pray the Lord will forgive them." Now, he's just saying, "You know, the Lord's going to take care of them." A lesson for us is so clear. When people oppose and come against you and are your enemies, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Amen? You don't go beat them up in the name of Jesus. You don't slice the tires on their car. You don't gossip or backbite about them. You just say, "Lord, I put this in Your hands."

Paul is forsaken by friends. He's opposed by his enemies, and in verses 16-18 he's unsupported at his trial. You think about that, Paul's under arrest. He's going to be tried. He's already had a preliminary hearing, and he had to stand in the courtroom all by himself. He couldn't get anyone to even stand with him or help defend him. Verse 16, "At my first answer," this was his preliminary trial, "no man stood with me." Whenever I read these words, it really truly saddens my heart to think that this great man of God that has done so much for the cause of Christ and been a blessing to so many, that everyone has forsaken him and no one is standing with him. He said, "...no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. 17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Paul said, "Everyone forsook me; no one stood with me." Have you ever had friends flake on you? The answer is yes, right? Every one of us has experienced that, and every one of us has flaked on others. Sometimes we get all upset, "Everyone's flaked out on me." Well, you've never flaked out? Sure you have. Paul says, "I looked around and there was no one to stand with me." It was a very dangerous thing to be affiliated with a Roman prisoner who was going to be executed. I love it, he says, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me," so take note of this. He had the Lord's presence. Do you know that Jesus said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you," (Hebrews 13) which, by the way, is an interesting thing. That's where it appears in the Bible. It doesn't appear in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. It appears in the book of Hebrews where the Lord has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," which indicates that Jesus said a lot of things that aren't recorded for us. What we need to know that He said is recorded, but the writer of Hebrews recorded that.

If you are a Christian, you are never alone. Whatever you go through, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. When you go through the fires, I will be with you." When you're in

the hospital sick or you're in jail (I hope you don't get in jail for doing anything evil, but if you get persecuted and thrown in jail), the Lord is with you. You'll never be alone.

John Bunyan, I just mentioned a minute ago, who wrote that spiritual allegory, *Pilgrim's Progress*, do you know where he wrote that book from and many considered (I do as well) to be second to the Bible as the greatest piece of literature ever produced? He wrote it in prison. He wrote it in the Bedford Prison, and he was in prison for preaching. He had a wife and children. One of his daughters was blind, and they would come visit Bunyan in the jail. If he would just say, "Okay, I promise I won't preach," he could go home to his family. His wife and his little children would say, "Daddy, don't recant. Don't give up preaching. Don't stop. The Lord will take care of us." Bunyan said this, "In times of affliction we most commonly meet with the sweetest experiences of the love of God." How true that is.

Jesus said...by the way, that's Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Paul has His presence and also has His power. The Lord stood by him, "and strengthened me," isn't that awesome? God is with us; God is strengthening us, "that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." Most likely, this is a reference to the Roman authorities or magistrates.

Then Paul says, "And the Lord shall deliver me," so he has His presence, His power, now he has His protection. "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion," and verse 18, "And the Lord shall," future tense, "deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." There are four things that Paul said the Lord did, "He gave me His presence, His power, His protection, and He gave me His preservation." When he says, "He gave me His protection," you say, "Well, how much protection did he get, he was taken out and beheaded." What did Jesus say? Jesus said, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body," "Yeah right, got that, Lord. All they can do is kill us." "...and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell." Now, if we fear God, we won't be afraid of man.

One of the reasons why we're afraid of man is because we don't fear God. If we have a reverence for God, we're not going to be afraid of what man can do unto us if we fear the Lord. Paul had all these working for him—the Lord's presence, the Lord's power, the Lord's protection. It doesn't mean he wouldn't be hurt or he wouldn't go through persecution, but it means that God would protect him and preserve him. How about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, when they were thrown into the fiery furnace? They weren't delivered from the furnace, they were delivered in the furnace, right? In Romans 8, "...all things work together for good," and then it closes with nothing, "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." So, when we go through the fires, He has promised to protect, to be with us, and to preserve us. We don't need to be afraid.

Charlotte Elliott wrote a beautiful poem. I'd like to read it to you. It's called, *Friend Unseen*. It's one of my favorites:

O holy Savior! Friend unseen,
Since on Thine arm Thou bid'st me lean,
Help me throughout life's changing scene,
By faith to cling to Thee!
What though the world deceitful prove,
And earthly friends and hopes remove;
With patient, uncomplaining love,
Still would I cling to Thee.
Though oft I seem to tread alone
Life's dreary waste with thorns o'ergrown,
Thy voice of love, in gentlest tone,
Still whispers, "Cling to Me!"
Though faith and hope may long be tried,
I ask not, need not, aught beside;
How safe, how calm, how satisfied,
The soul that clings to Thee!

That was Paul. Paul was in a prison. He was in the Mamertine dungeon. Up above him there was a little opening, and you could look out and see the light. They would drop the food down through the hole in the ceiling and underneath him the river ran. It was cold and damp. There was no fresh air, and he didn't have his coat. He had no companionship, and he was going to be executed. Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." I don't know where the health and wealth preachers were then. It certainly wasn't Paul. He was brought as Jesus was brought. This was actually kind of Paul's Gethsemane. This is Paul's moment before he was going to be killed for his faith.

In verses 19-21, Paul closes with his greetings. "Salute Prisca and Aquila," he used a different version of her name. He has her name first. It's the husband and wife couple always mentioned together, Priscilla and Aquila or Aquila and Priscilla. They were the husband and wife team tentmakers who traveled with Paul. They're mentioned six times in the Bible. "Give them a hello," they were in Ephesus evidently with Timothy, "and the household of

Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but," notice verse 20, "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." It's interesting that Paul perhaps prayed for him, you would assume Paul would pray for him, but he wasn't healed. It's not always God's will to heal the sick, and we don't have any guarantee that God always heals our sick bodies.

Verse 21, "Do thy diligence to come before winter." Many give that as a beautiful title for the book of 2 Timothy: Come Before Winter. "Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia," is a woman, "and all the brethren." These are some general believers and Christians evidently that were there in Rome, the Roman church, greeting the believers there in Ephesus. Then he closes with this benediction (verse 22), "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen."

How fitting that in this closing letter to Timothy, the last letter that Paul wrote exhorting Timothy to be faithful to the charge to preach the Word, to fulfill his ministry, that he closes with, "Grace be with you," and if you back up in the text, he uses the word "glory" in verse 18. In verse 18 he says, "...to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." He closes in verse 22 and says, "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit," by the way, "be with thy spirit" is singular. It's a reference to Timothy alone. Then, "Grace be with you," is plural. It's a reference to the believers there in Ephesus where Timothy was, so he's writing not only to Timothy but to all the believers. He closes with the grace of God and the glory of God, "Timothy, be faithful. Continue in God's Word, preach the Word; and live by God's grace, and bring God glory." That's so important.

We're saved by grace, we're sustained and kept by God's grace as we serve by grace, and then we are going to bring God glory when we are living in the grace of God. We're saved by grace, we're sustained by grace, we serve by grace, and all of it brings glory to God. Amen?