

THE CHARGE

A STUDY IN 2 TIMOTHY

Week 9 - 2 Timothy 4:9-22

TEXT –

Do your best to come to me soon. For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus. Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.

The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

INTRODUCTION –

This is the end of Paul's letter to Timothy. Paul has taught him so much and has charged Timothy with upholding the faith, remaining steadfast, and to teach the Gospel to all who have ears to hear. But even this final farewell can teach us things about God's character and especially how people will respond to the Gospel.

Paul tells Timothy about the people who have abandoned him or outright opposed him in his ministry, while also giving an update on the ones who have remained faithful to Jesus. This is not something that should catch followers of Jesus by surprise! In Matthew and Luke, Jesus gives us a parable about how the Gospel will be received differently by different people. Jesus says,

Matthew 13:3-9

"A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were

scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear.”

In this parable the seeds are the message of the Gospel. The growth of faith and salvation depends on the kind of soil they meet, just like there are different kinds of people. When Paul describes Demas as being “in love with this present world” and tells Timothy that Alexander, the coppersmith, is “strongly opposed our message”, we see two examples of “seeds” that were trampled, eaten up, withered, or choked out. Demas, who at one time wanted to spread the Gospel, walks away from Jesus! He decided that the things the world had to offer were more important to him than sticking it out with God’s plan. Alexander never accepted the Gospel and opposed the people who did so much that he cheated them out of money.

But we also see examples of those who took the initial message of the Gospel, grew their faith, and multiplied it! Just in this short passage, Paul references Timothy, Crescens, Luke, Mark, Tychicus, Carpus, Prisca, Aquila, Erastus, Trophimus, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers. All of these people were on mission to serve Jesus and spread the Gospel alongside Paul. God is gracious to give us friends to lean on in ministry.

But what happens when we really are alone and don’t have anyone to help us? Paul teaches us about that, too. Paul remembered that the power of the Gospel doesn’t come from him, it comes from God! No amount of strength that Paul could have mustered up on his own would compare to the strength that the Lord gives him. He strengthens us to be able to speak boldly, to preach, and to fulfill the ministry that He has planned for us in our lives.

When Paul says, “The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom” he doesn’t mean that hard things will never happen. It means that, by the power of Jesus, we can withstand the hardships long enough to make it to the end of the race that is our lives. This is the charge we have been trusted with: preach the Gospel with boldness and don’t stop. When things get hard, lean on the Lord. Lean on your friends who also love the Lord. Know that God’s Spirit and His grace is with us always.

QUESTIONS:

Q1 - What does it mean that Demas was “in love with this present world”?

Q2 - What things in your life do you put ahead of Jesus?

Q3 - Who are your friends that you can lean on when having faith gets hard?

Q4 - How do you feel about the “charge” that we have to preach the Word?

Q5 - How does the Lord give someone strength? Has God ever given you strength?

APPLICATION/ACTION -

What is the Gospel? Knowing the Gospel is the first step to being able to tell someone about it. Write out what you think the Gospel is. Look at what you've written and ask: Is there anything missing? Anything untrue? Anything too difficult to understand? Spend this week refining your definition of the Gospel. Share it with someone in your life who does not know Jesus.

PRAYER -

God, thank you for all you have done for me! Thank you for being a good Father. Thank you for Jesus who saves us and for the Holy Spirit who secures our salvation and guides us. God, show me how to honor you and your Word. Give me courage and strength to complete the charge I have been given. Help me identify the people in my life who will walk alongside me in faith. I love you, Lord, help me to love you more and more every day!

Worship

THIS WEEK, CONSIDER LISTENING TO:

No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus by Steffany Gretzinger