

Text: 2 Timothy 4:9-15

Title: Men of Character

Truth: Be a person of excellent character to meet needs of fellow Christians.

Date/Location: Sunday October 9, 2016 at FBC

Introduction

Here we meet nine men, with seven defining character traits. The main point of these verses is that Paul is appealing to Timothy to come quickly and bring several things with him when he does so.

I. Unfaithful Demas

- A. Demas had deserted Paul. Abandoned. Left in a lurch. Left behind. Ditched. See Matthew 27:46 for a use of this same word that is very powerful. After the death of Christ, God did not abandon Christ's soul in Sheol (Psalm 16:10). Note that what God did to Christ, He will never do to the believer (Heb. 13:5). It should be fair then that we do not forsake assembling together to worship God and learn about His word (Heb. 10:25).
- B. See also Philemon 24 and Col. 4:14.
- C. Here's a summary from my notes on Colossians 4:12-14: Paul says that Demas left "because he loved this present world, and has gone to Thessalonica." This does not sound good at all. When none other than the apostle Paul diagnoses the problem and concludes that someone's inner motivation is "love of the world," this means that Demas left behind any semblance of profession of faith in Christ. He departed not just from the apostle, but from Christ, by which it became evident that although he professed to know Christ, he did not actually ever possess eternal life. Here are some verses on this concept: 1 John 2:15-17; John 3:19, 12:25, John 15:19. One cannot love the world and at the same time love God the Father and Jesus. This truth makes the radical nature of Christianity clear. It is a massive departure from the world.
- D. You might make a case that he did not have to depart from Christ to exhibit a temporary love for the world. I could not be very confident about that view, but if you take it, just realize the seriousness of that, and the even deeper seriousness of not persevering in the faith.

II. Busy Crescens and Titus

- A. It appears that since no reason is given for their leaving, and there is enough of a grammatical distance between Demas and the other two,

Paul is not saying the latter two have forsaken him. They have simply left on other business. Although we are not told specifically what these men were doing in Galatia and Dalmatia, it is more likely than not that they were busy with ministry responsibilities.

B. We can say nothing else about Crescens since he is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture.

C. We can offer some information about Titus, since his name appears in 12 Bible verses. Paul had earlier written from or near Nicopolis a letter to him, which we know by his name. At that time, Paul was evidently between his first and second Roman imprisonments.

1. Titus 1:4 informs us that Titus was a fine believer. He was a dear brother to Paul and ministry co-worker (2 Cor. 2:13).
2. Paul could not find Titus at one point, and left for Macedonia to find him. This was probably because he had sent Titus to Corinth to deliver some needed correction in the church after false teachers came there. Titus later returned to Paul in Macedonia (2 Cor. 7:6) and reported that the Corinthian church was doing better (7:13-14). Titus apparently traveled back to Corinth to help with the offering that was being gathered (8:6) and as courier of 2 Corinthians.
3. Paul could depend on Titus and gave a glowing commendation of him to the church (2 Cor. 8:16, 8:23, 12:18).
4. Titus travelled with Paul to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1) and came under pressure by the Judaizers to be circumcised, but he did not cave in and thus do damage to the gospel message by subjecting himself, a Greek, to the Law of Moses as a supposed means of grace (Gal. 2:3).
5. Titus had spent significant time on the Mediterranean island of Crete in order to get churches organized there.
6. At the time of writing, Paul tells us that Titus is in Dalmatia. This is hundreds of miles away from Crete. In fact, it was a Roman province along the eastern coast of the Adriatic sea, which covers an area today that contains Croatia on the northern end, Bosnia and Herzegovina in the middle, and Montenegro on the south, just above Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia. The same region is known by an earlier name, Illyricum, of which we read in Romans 15:19. There Paul explains that he had preached the gospel from Jerusalem in the east, halfway around the Mediterranean to Spain. Paul's ministry extended quite far into Europe, and Titus was continuing that work.

III. Dependable Luke

- A. Verse 11 simply reports: “Only Luke is with me.” Everyone else had physically departed for one reason or another. But Luke kept at it despite the others leaving. He was Paul’s personal physician, no doubt (Col. 4:14), but also a companion of many years.
- B. Luke was also a writer. He wrote two large books of the New Testament and in fact is the human author whom God used to record more of His revelation in the New Testament than any other. [He edges out Paul in terms of number of Greek words written \(by 600 words\). In English, their total words are within 1000 of each other, with Paul having slightly more in the NKJV.](#) God used Luke mightily in recording the history of the early church, and in keeping one of its foremost missionaries going through all kinds of persecution.

IV. Useful Mark

- A. We spent some time studying Mark back in January when we examined Colossians 4:10. We will not reprint all of that here. But we must emphasize that Paul considered Mark useful in ministry—helpful, beneficial. He had been not-so-useful (Acts 12:25, 15:37-39). What a change had been wrought in his life!
- B. We learned a lesson from his life, that even when we mess up badly, God can still use us for His glory!

V. Reliable Tychicus

- A. Tychicus was a regular traveler with and courier for Paul. Maybe he liked traveling (Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21, Col. 4:7, Titus 3:12).
- B. There is a possibility that Tychicus was carrying 2 Timothy to Timothy. It seems that maybe Timothy was along the way or not in Ephesus. He had been there (1 Timothy 1:3), but that was some years earlier. Tychicus may have been Timothy’s substitute there while Timothy visited Paul.

VI. Trustworthy Timothy

- A. This is a sudden request. Timothy is asked to “come quickly” in v. 9. We do not know if he made it in time. We can only imagine what he would have experienced and felt if he did make it in time, or if he just missed Paul because of death. We do know Paul loved this young minister (2 Tim. 1:3-4) and wanted to help him as much as possible with his ministry, and his increased responsibilities as a result of Paul’s death.
- B. He is to pick up Mark along the way and bring him to help Paul (v. 12).

C. He must stop at the home of Carpus in Troas to bring a cloak, books, and parchments (v. 13).

1. This little verse gives us an interesting insight into Paul's prior travels. To have left a cloak with Carpus—and a bunch of books—means that Paul was staying in Troas with Carpus for some amount of time. *Perhaps it was from there that he was arrested and transported to Rome again, and was prohibited from bringing his personal belongings. Perhaps I should add a section on "Hospitable Carpus" since he helped Paul that way.*
2. The cloak was a heavy over-garment, perhaps made of wool, that could be used as a winter coat and blanket to sleep under. This would be particularly helpful in the coming winter (v. 21).
3. The books were scrolls, probably of papyrus (reed paper). These could have been part of Paul's library of Old Testament books.
4. The parchments were of special interest to Paul. These probably were written on a more expensive material made of animal skins (called vellum, the writing material made from calfskin). *These could have been blank, or copies of his letters, or copies of other Scripture. We could only speculate. But what we know is that they were important enough for Paul to ask for despite his impending death.*

VII. Dangerous Alexander, v. 14-15

- A. This is not the same as Demetrius the silversmith in Acts 19:24, whose motivation against Paul was economic and religious. I don't think it is the same as Alexander from Acts 19:33 who tried to calm the mob. It is much more likely that this is the Alexander who was friends with Hymenaeus, who both had rejected the faith and were facing big trouble before God (1 Timothy 1:19-20). But some doubt that identification since "coppersmith" is not attached to his name there.
- B. Whatever the case, he may have been an idol maker, and he likely had religious reasons for hating Paul, if not also economic reasons. The fact is clear: he did Paul much harm. This could be physical harm, but it could also be that he got Paul jailed or harassed him in other ways. The harm was "much evil."
- C. Paul reports his prayer that the Lord will repay Alexander for his works.
1. We cannot say just how God would answer Paul's request—whether by judgment in this life or eternal judgment. *That depends on whether God chooses to save Alexander or not. If he becomes a*

believer, then the eternal weight of his sin would be laid upon Christ, but there may be temporal consequences, and perhaps restitution that he should make to Paul. But if he does not become a believer, judgment both now and later may be his portion. We just don't know how God handles that in every case—but we know He does right and that's all we really need to know.

2. The Bible is clear that each human will be JUDGED according to his works (Revelation 20:13, 2 Cor. 5:10). What people often mess up is that they turn this around and say that they are SAVED by works. No! We are judged by works, but not saved by works! [Another angle on this is that the Bible teaches you are either SAVED by trusting Christ, or JUDGED by God according to your works. You need to repent of sin and trust Christ if you are to have hope of avoiding the proper justice for your evil works!](#)

3. An imprecatory prayer or text is one which wishes bad on enemies. For instance, there is one in Psalm 137:8-9. This text from Paul is about as imprecatory as it gets in the New Testament. (There are others: Matthew 23:13, 26:24; 1 Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:8-9; Gal. 5:12; Rev. 6:10.) Should we pray the same way? We ought to be very careful, but we do have to keep in mind that vengeance belongs to the Lord (Romans 12:19, 2 Thess. 1:8, Hebrews 10:30) and that we have NT examples of this sort of thing. We should pray "Father, forgive them" like Jesus did on the cross, but Paul's imprecation here is not a sin, so there may be times in which we can follow this apostolic example as well. [We also have to remember that we are not working under a miraculous, superintending work of the Spirit of God like Paul was in his writing.](#)

D. Paul warns Timothy about Alexander. Stay clear of this guy! He not only caused trouble for Paul personally, but resisted the words of truth that Paul spoke. Somehow this fellow was an outspoken adversary and critic. Timothy had to be warned about him—by name. [No polite or politically correct speech dancing around the issue.](#)

1. When there is a danger, the Christian must not hesitate to explain it clearly to those he can help.

2. Example: a 2004 book and a 2016 book just coming out by Sarah Young (*Jesus Calling* and *Jesus Always*). Those books claim to be recording words of Jesus transmitted to the author. Stay far, far away from that dangerous stuff. Read your Bible and you will get all the words of Jesus that are recorded for mankind!

Conclusion

I trust you want to be faithful, dependable, busy serving Christ, useful, reliable, trustworthy, and doctrinally sound, like the good examples above, and unlike the bad ones.

We cannot miss one more key item: Paul was in a desperately needy situation. He was basically left alone. Luke probably could not tend to his needs 24x7. Besides emotional strain, Paul had physical needs: simple things like *warmth*. He wanted to continue his ministry and study of God's word as much as possible. Perhaps he wished to continue writing. He was troubled about what people had done to him, and his upcoming execution. Because the apostles and prophets knew when they were writing under God's superintendence, perhaps he had a sense that this was over and his last letter was done. That must have been a strange feeling. Having the friendship and companionship of another Christian is critical in such times.

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