

“Grace Be With You”

2 Timothy 4:9-15, 19-22

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(Sunday Lord’s Day Service, November 3, 2013)

⁹ Do your best to come to me soon. ¹⁰ For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹ Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. ¹² Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. ¹³ When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. ¹⁴ Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. ¹⁵ Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message.

¹⁹ Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. ²⁰ Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus. ²¹ Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.

²² The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Intro

Prison was different in Paul’s days than now. It was much worse. But in the scripture, we can see that he is not focusing on the difficult circumstances he’s in, but he’s focusing on redemptive history in the world and Timothy doing his ministry and he’s looking at the world through the eyes of grace and we need to learn how to do that. Grace is very important, and he finishes his letter with the word grace. This whole chapter covers the topic of grace [refer to whole book of 2 Timothy. It’s used 4 times].

1. Grace is the beginning and the end of the Christian life [1:2, 4:22]

Grace is the beginning of Christian life, which is why the letter is begun and ended with grace.

2. Grace enables us in our calling and for the fulfilling of God’s purpose [1:9]

Grace enables us in fulfilling our calling

3. Grace is absolutely needed for our perseverance [2:1]

We are compared with soldiers and farmers and athletes

4. Grace is absolutely needed in the passing of the gospel torch [2:1, 4:22]

Before he talks to Timothy about how he should train leaders, he gives blessing and grace, meaning grace is absolutely necessary

Paul mentions names as he says goodbyes and hellos, there's atmosphere of grace in Paul's thinking process. We can learn about grace through these people. There are five people through whom we can learn about grace.

I. Demas - Grace that is available [10]

*2Tim. 4:10 For **Demas**, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.*

Through him, we learn that grace is available for all of us. He left because he loved the world. There are some things we can learn about him.

A. He had potential

*-Philemon 24 - And so do **Mark**, Aristarchus, **Demas** and **Luke**, my fellow workers.*

*-Colossians 4:14 - Our dear friend **Luke**, the doctor, and **Demas** send greetings.*

In these two passages, we learn that Paul honored Demas by referring him as fellow workers, and putting Demas shoulder to shoulder with Luke and Mark. The letters were sent from representatives from the church, suggesting that Demas wasn't a lightweight person. He had been with Paul in many ups and downs, even when Paul was in prison.

B. He could not handle the hardships

*2Tim. 4:10 for **Demas**, because he loved this world, has **deserted** me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.*

But he could not handle much hardship. Paul's situation in Rome was too much for him. Paul was in an infamous prison in Rome, not like prisons before, and he was facing death. Demas packed up his bag and took off. Can we say that he was not a Christian, then? We are not sure. There are many Christians who leave their calling. We can say either two things about cases like these. One, they were never Christian, or they are going on a spiritual bungee-jumping. We don't really know if Demas is saved, but there's a possibility, and he can always come back because grace is always available. But to reach to the fruition of your potential, you need to persevere to the end.

C. He was divided in his heart with love for the world

*2Tim. 4:10 For **Demas**, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.*

Thessalonica was the problem, that's where his love was. We don't know what was in it. Was it a girl? Business offer? Comfort? Was that his home? But what we know is this; Demas did not leave to be faithful to Jesus. He left Jesus to embrace pleasures of the world. That happens a lot in ministry. The saddest thing is that some never come back. Are you weary of being where you are and tired of doing what you are doing? Sometimes in life, you will be in places that seem useless for you to stay in and doing the tasks that seems you labor in vain. But if you are not clearly called to go to another place, you need to do your best where you are because He is forging your character. That's why you need to be faithful now.

But Demas was in love with the present world. If you do not have this perspective, then you will seek higher pleasure. If you are pleasure-oriented, then you will not stay faithful to Christ and go towards something else. You need to stay where you are to experience the greater and highest pleasure which exists in Christ. There is joy now, but not always. That's why we're not always joyful because of the sinful nature.

There's always this kind of danger. The 'years' have a way of taking ideals away, making us satisfied with less standard of man's spiritual ideals, our kingdom dreams. In the 'years' you lose what you were passionate about. You become worldly. That's the scary thing. The real danger of worldliness is not that you sin (which is indeed dangerous, but you can always be forgiven), but it's that it makes you mediocre and makes you less effective worker, not that you sin. What can we do?

Luke 9:23. - And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

Self-centeredness is the cause of this sin, so always check the direction of your journey.

1. Always check the direction of your journey

Are you following the narrow, unpopular path? Are you following the way of the cross? Are you going to Thessalonica or going to Rome?

2. Always fight daily and moment by moment

We've got to be spiritually feisty. If we don't fight moment by moment, we are going the wrong way. The propensity in our hearts is so strong that if you don't do anything, you will be going the wrong way.

3. Always be in love with Jesus

To be able to go upstream, you need strength, and love is strength. If you love, you will do anything for the ones you love. Many parents would do anything to their children except withhold their anger from them.

Grace was available with Demas and it will be until his death. Grace is always available to us until our dying breath, and we need to receive it. Keep on walking.

II. Luke - Grace that is dependable [11]

2Tim. 4:11 Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

A. He was dependable

Sometimes the phrase, 'only Luke is with me' sounds like Paul is complaining and that Luke is not good enough. But Paul is emphasizing how dependable Luke is compared to the others that have left him. Luke is Paul's biographer, who wrote Acts and Luke. Many times Luke writes in third person in Acts, but many times he writes in first person (using "we"), meaning that he was with them (with Paul). Through the passages, it indicates that Luke was with Paul during the most difficult times. Luke's strongest work was done with his pen.

-Philemon 24 - And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

I believe that Paul is comparing Luke and Demas. Faithfulness and dependability of Luke is mentioned here. Luke's grace made him dependable because he took the grace of God. God's grace can make us dependable.

-Colossians 4:14 - Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.

Luke and Demas are compared again.

-2 Timothy 4:10-11 - 10 For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

He is intentional of comparing Demas who left and Luke who stayed with him. Demas and Luke are constantly mentioned together. Paul could not get rid of him! Luke, can you get away from me? No, Luke was so dependable. He was always there. He was the antithesis of Demas.

Demas, grace was available. For Luke, he received that grace and it made him dependable.

B. He followed God daily

In the gospel of Luke, Luke followed Jesus, and in Acts, he followed the Holy Spirit. Luke is constantly investigating, recording all the works of Jesus, and then he recorded the disciple's ministry, following the work of Holy Spirit. He followed daily, and did not rest.

C. He served with his talents

Luke was probably taking down even this letter (the book of 2 Timothy). Luke was affected a lot by teachings of Paul in the gospel of Luke and traveling with Paul in the books of Acts. The point is this; do what you can do for God. There is a good probability that Luke was not an athlete or good singer, but he wrote and walked with his pen all the time. He did what he was able to do for Christ. He was not fancy, but he was faithful. In the kingdom of God, we need both people; Leaders, kings, prophet, priests, because they picture Christ, but we also need faithful ones. We might think they are nameless people who do mundane things, but we need them so that redemptive history can carry on picturing the church of Jesus Christ. We need the highlights, great miracles and amazing things, but we also need the ones who records the highlights, even though their names might not be in it. We need both in the kingdom of God. We need leaders, senior pastors, co leaders, king, but in God's eyes, nobody deserved greater reward because of their titles, but according to their faithfulness. He doesn't say, my good and successful servant, or my good servant with a great title, but he says my good and *faithful* servant. If there's one thing that you can do for the Lord right now, do it for God. If you can't do anything, you can pray for the Word. Just remember one thing that you can do for the Lord. Maybe it's just praying, maybe setting up the chairs, but if there's one thing, at least do that for the Lord. Be faithful.

III. Mark - Grace that restores [11]

*2Tim. 4:11 Luke alone is with me. Get **Mark** and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.*

A. The first failure

Mark had accompanied Barnabas and Paul on a first missionary journey, but he went back home, probably not for a good cause. But Barnabas, Mark's cousin, wanted to give Mark another try. Paul refused, leading to split between two great missionaries, Barnabas and Paul, and we can see from the scripture that Barnabas's patience paid him off.

-Acts 15:36-38 - 36 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." 37 Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, 38 but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work.

After the first missionary journey, Paul wanted go back to the places to see how they are doing and plant new churches. Paul wanted go without Mark because he deserted them. If you think about Mark, he's a blessed man. Mark's mother's room had been one of the centers of Jerusalem church. He probably had known all the apostles since he was young. Mark accompanied during the first journey probably because they knew him. But for some reason, Mark left, and Paul considered it as desertion.

B. The second chance

*-Acts 15:39-41 - **39** They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. **Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.***

Paul and Barnabas had a great disagreement. And they parted company and went to two different places. So Paul did not want to take Mark because he quit. To give credit to Paul, he didn't not want to take Mark for selfish reasons, but he thought it was not wise to take someone who might hinder his calling. Paul thought it was not wise, because he was focused on the mission. But Barnabas (his name means son of encouragement) is more of a relational person, and he's also the one who first accepted Paul because people used to be scared of Paul and distrust him since he used to persecute Christians. God gives Mark a second chance through Barnabas. You can't say Paul was right or Barnabas was right, but they both had different missions, and each carried on their focus.

C. The final evaluation

*-1 Peter 5:13 - She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does **Mark**, my son.*

*-2 Timothy 4:11 - Luke alone is with me. Get **Mark** and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.*

Both Paul and Peter, two great apostles, give approval about Mark at the end of their life. Mark was actually really close to Peter, and he recorded his life, and became a representation of church as well. To Paul, Mark was also helpful. Mark could have been known as a quitter, but he was not a quitter. He quit once, and had an experience of quitting, but that was not his identity. Many times we are not like that. When someone sins, we identify them as their sins. But according to the bible, if we believe in the redemptive history, we were_(name your sin)__, but the gospel changes the people. We can be forgiven and we are going to change. As Christians, we always change, because God is in progression of changing us. In CFC, we always believe in giving a second chance. According to the Bible, we all failed with our first chance in the first Adam. We now live in the life of the second Adam, and that's why our whole life is a second chance. Show off the grace of God by going back to him again and again x100.

We are both sinners and saints. But being a sinner is a temporary identity. Being a saint is a permanent identity. Therefore sin is a temporary action, not identity of a person for those who are in Jesus Christ. Sin is not a mistake, but a deliberate choice (there are consequences and judgment), but never look at a person permanently, yet with the view of it being temporary sins or addictions because people can change by the grace of God. If not in this life, in the next life. You might be addicted to something for your whole life time, but it will change. If I don't believe in that, I should quit my job. Why spend months preparing a message? But I believe God changes people. I know some people don't believe it, but your kids can change by the grace of God. Believe, even though you don't feel like it.

There's something peculiar in Mark; he writes actions really briefly, but when he writes Peter's failure in chapter 14, he writes extensively, not to shame Peter, but to show how he was forgiven, as Mark himself was also forgiven.

It's important how you start. It's more important how you finish. But the most important is the growth in between. Don't dwell in your success (spiritual, society, etc), and don't worry too much in your failure either. Dwell in your growth. Christian life is really about the progression in between, not the flair in the end. From a deserter, Mark became an indispensable helper. Don't remember just the failures in your life, but forgiving grace!

IV. Alexander - Grace that is opposed [14-15]

God's grace is always available, dependable, faithful, but it's always forced because there's another group of beings that is opposed to God. Satan and evil forces are using the people to follow him. We all unconsciously chose to follow, even people in the church of Christ, because there's sinful nature you. And one of those guys was Alexander.

2Tim. 4:14-15 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. 15 Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message.

The harm mentioned in the passage likely might be Alexander informing Paul to the Roman government, and that he's the primary reason for imprisonment. Harmful people's actions result in some hindrance in ministry, and we need to warn other people if they do not repent. There will be some who leave you, but some who stays and harms. Many talented people and also leaders can harm the church. Even Peter, he when he said to Jesus to not go to cross, Jesus said, "get behind me, Satan". Don't say that to people around you, but we need to be discerning when someone tells you not go to Morning Prayer or something like that. There are some people who divide the church, but don't be like them. Have nothing to do with them.

A. We need to know that sometimes people will hurt us [14]

2Tim. 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.

Alexander personally attacked Paul. Paul says "Alexander did *me* a great harm".

B. We need to learn not to take attacks personally [15]

2Tim. 4:15 Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message.

But we need to learn not to take attacks personally. It hurts because you are proud! The attack to Paul was personal, but Paul was not in selfish retaliation. He warned Timothy because Alexander was hindering the gospel, and not necessarily himself. We must distinguish between personal conflict and kingdom conflict.

C. We need to discern and be wisely careful in dealing with them [15]

2Tim. 4:15 Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message.

In personal conflict, you need to deal with them, but in kingdom conflict, you need to do something about it because it hinders the message of God. Sometimes you need to persevere the attack if it's hurting your pride and it's personal. But sometimes if it hurts the kingdom or other people, you need to confront it, maybe not by yourself, but through a third party, if that person will not listen to you. If you warn them, but are not repentant, then you need to warn other people so that they won't be affected. Alexander, in this case, is mentioned in a public letter to warn the church of Ephesus (Timothy was a pastor at Ephesus).

D. We must leave judgment to the Lord [14]

2Tim. 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.

Paul is afraid that he might sin against God, so he lets the Lord repay him instead of retaliating Alexander. When someone attacks you, leave the judgment to God. We will have these kinds of relationship in our lives because grace is opposed.

But let's go to the last point.

V. Timothy - Grace that is shared [9, 13, 21]

2Tim. 4:9 Do your best to come to me soon.

2Tim. 4:13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.

Paul is like me probably, I leave everything everywhere.

2Tim. 4:21 Do your best to come before winter.

Look at the warmth and the relationship. There's personal touch in this letter.

A. The grace of friendship [9, 21]

2Tim. 4:9 Do your best to come to me soon.

2Tim. 4:21 Do your best to come before winter.

There's grace that Paul needed from Timothy. "Do your best to come to me soon." How can we interpret this? Paul is probably saying, "Timmy I miss you. Come soon. I want to see you. But also be careful, come before winter, because you would have to walk, and winter is almost impossible to travel". Another insinuation is, "I need you because I'm about to face winter of my life, the persecution". Some criticize that Paul was being selfish, asking pastor of Ephesus to leave his ministry for 6 months to come. But I think Paul wanted to pass on the torch of gospel and teach him more. Paul wanted Timothy to come and experience, see him face to face, so that he might teach how to live and pass on the torch of

gospel, and make sure how important the gospel is, the passing onto other people, and praying. He really wants to do well to pass on the torch. But also he is saying, “before my death, my last wish is to see you”.

B. The grace of mutual sharing [13]

Interesting thing about this letter is that he’s writing to him personally, but sometimes the ‘you’ is plural, addressing to audience in Ephesus.

2Tim. 4:13** When **you** come, [Timothy] bring **the cloak** that I left with Carpus at Troas, and **my scrolls, especially the parchments.

When you [singular] come, bring your clothes,..., this is a great verse because it shows what Paul wanted to have before his death. Bible, traveling cloak, and a friend.

Yesterday I was fine tuning the sermon, checking the sentences. And yesterday I was watching TV and multitasking and seeing the 95th birthday celebration of Billy Graham. And anyone who was anyone was there to congratulate him. Someone I was touched by was the words of Kathy Lee Gifford. She once asked Billy Graham, is there anything I can give to you? I’ll give you anything you want. And he got really excited, really can I get anything? And he said, really? Can I get a Big Mac? That was funny. It was symbolic of how he lived his life. Just simplistically.

Paul was a man of simplicity, of a single minded devotion. This is just a symbol of how he lived his life. He was a man of single minded devotion of discipleship. He taught, fed, and clothed Timothy with the Word of God. Everything he knew he gave to Timothy, and he asks Timothy to bring the three things. Not much of a request. We each receive different aspects of Christ, different aspect of grace/gift. Paul needed Timothy’s and Timothy, Paul’s. That’s why we serve each other with different gifts, so that as a stronger people, we can go forth as a full of picture of Christ and become a powerful force for Christ to the world.

C. The grace of “wishing for the best” [22]

***2Tim. 4:22** The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.*

Grace be with ‘y’all’. It’s plural. Lord be with your spirit, this is “your” is singular. Paul is sharing in his last moments the best he could: [to Timothy] in the core of your being, have more of Jesus more than anything. Paul wished for the best, which is having the Lord in your heart. I don’t wish for you to have more money, more comfort. I want the best for you. I want you to have Jesus.

I feel so satisfied thinking about grace. Grace is dependable, always available, able to restore us, and it is indeed also opposed, but as you share the grace of God, we can be a church of Christ, being redeemed for His glory.

Conclusion

[Showing a video clip of orchestra that uses recycled material from trash]

Instruments made out of trash. My goodness. They said, we don't throw out trash. I say, we don't throw out people either in the Church of Jesus Christ. He picks up the trash and redeems us. We are all recycled, redeemed for glory of God. If our minds are in tune with the Creator, as we play each note through our hearts and lives, people would listen to the tunes of this redemption, and people would want to join. Each of us are different types of instruments, but as we play our tune, people would listen as we sing and praise (that's called evangelism), people would be attracted and want to join the orchestra because the tune of redemption would be so beautiful (that's called discipleship). And the church of Jesus Christ the recycled orchestra increases, God carries out His redemptive plan. What a great God we have! Let's be thankful as He is in process of redemption, as He never throws us away. And continue to play the tunes of redemption for the glory of God, for the people in the world do not even know what the music is. Let's continue to spread Word and His name for His glory. Let's pray.