

Paul's Last Words

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Preacher: Tim Doffing

[0 : 00] As you make your way back to your seats, thank you for attending our snowy, rainy, warm, I don't know what it is out there right now.

Oh, thank you. I got harassed for turning my heat on. It was by a particular individual that was standing over here during the music worship time. The last guy at the end was harassing me about turning the heat on. We go way back. So I love you, Roger. You love me, right?

Oh, yeah, I forgot my sweater. Oh, we're going to be talking about relationships. So that's a warming relationship that I had with you, Roger. Thank you for all these good years.

Let's have a little word of prayer. One other announcement, an important one, along with the great praise that Dave and Trish are going through. There's some sorrow as well.

Well, June lost her brother here a couple nights ago. We give our condolence to you and the family, and we want to pray for you. So I'm going to start by doing that this morning.

[1 : 36] Father, I want to pray for June's family, and all the preparations I know June's going to have to do at the funeral. We just comfort her in that time.

Amen. Let us to come alongside of her and just to feel loved, Lord. Feel loved. Thank you for today, Lord. Show us the truth and the word of God. Let it spring forth new things, new ideas, and new things we can do, new things to be. Come.

Lord, the word of God is such a powerful thing. We thank you for it today. Amen. I don't know if you've heard about this, but I saw it in the news. Maybe you have a comment about it, but I heard there's a Bible reading starting tomorrow morning, a nationwide Bible reading some organization has done.

I think you can go to americareadsthebible.com, and you can check that out, and maybe you can listen on as they read the whole Bible, I believe. That's exciting.

I think the president is going to read part of a little passage, so I'm excited for that. Well, we're going to look at Paul's last words. I have to have this straight in front of me, sorry. I just feel better that way.

[2 : 56] We're going to go to Paul's second letter. It says, literally, it's probably his last words that he speaks to Timothy, writing a letter to Timothy, and it's just packed full of a lot of really encouraging things that have inspired me to study this the last few weeks.

This is written somewhere during his second imprisonment. If you've studied a little bit about Paul and his travels, he went on three journeys as he started churches, and then he appealed to Rome, and they took him to Rome on, if you want to call it his fourth journey, not really, but he was brought to Rome, and that's the last we hear about Paul, and he even believes that he's about to be executed when you read the scriptures about this second letter.

He's probably around 60, early 60s of age, and we're going to look at this last chapter of 2 Timothy. Let me get my little clicker here. I really want to start with verse 9, but before we get to verse 9, I want to just read the first eight verses and just summarize that a little bit, as he's giving a charge to Timothy, and Timothy is, you might say, is kind of going to take over a lot of Paul's responsibilities, and Paul is going to give him a charge, if you will.

So let's, I don't have a slide for this, but let's look at that 2 Timothy chapter 4, and read the first eight verses. I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearance and his kingdom, preach the word.

[4 : 52] Remember now, he's talking to Timothy here. Be ready, in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and teaching. With the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth,

and will turn aside to miss.

But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I have already been poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.

We're coming in, this is again, Paul's last words. And as I was thinking about Paul, I was thinking about other Bible characters, people that have lived.

What were their last words? What was Moses' last word? It's something I'm going to study out.

Joseph's last word. Oh, that's amazing. Some of the last things he spoke from the Old Testament.

[6:13] Moses, Abraham, different ones in the scriptures. And what would your last words be? As we study this today, I want you to think about what would your last words be if you knew that you were about to be executed?

What would be the last things that you would say to somebody, write a letter to, or speak to somebody? Verse 6, Paul talks about his life being poured out as a drink offering.

He fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. I want to be able to say that. I think you want to be able to say that as your last words.

He's stirring up Timothy. He's stirring up his heart, charging him with some very important things that make sure it's clear to Timothy. In the passage that follows, starting in verse 9, we're going to be looking at a number of different people.

And I would just encourage you to think, ask yourself, am I like that person? Or could I be like that person? We're going to look at about seven different people, different walks of life, how they helped Paul.

[7:27] Paul surrounded himself with so many good people. It was not a one-man show. So think about that as we're going through this passage about Paul's letter to Timothy.

So let's go ahead and start with verse 9. And let's read this. Yeah. Oh, wonderful. When I first uploaded, I had small print. And then, wonderfully, graciously, I think Libby and a few people fixed my slides for me.

So, praise the Lord. Here we go. 2 Timothy 4, verse 9. Make every effort to come to me soon. For Damas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.

Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus till Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service. But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.

When you come, bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, with the books, especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm.

[8:37] The Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Be on guard against him, for he vigorously opposed our teaching. At my first defense, let's continue on there.

Sorry about that. At my first defense, no one supported me, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear, and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth.

The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to his kingdom forever, heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Greet Prisca and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.

Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus. Make every effort to come before winter. Abulus greets you, also Prudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren.

The Lord be with you. Grace be with you. Let's go back to the first verse on verse 9. Timothy.

[9:44] He's talking to Timothy. Make every effort to come to me soon. We know Paul is in prison, a Roman prison. It's probably dark, cold.

He wants his cloak. Not very good conditions. Do your best. Come to me soon, Timothy. Timothy. We've read how much Paul loves Timothy.

Look at the first chapter of this book. Go back to the first chapter. Verses 2-4. To Timothy, my beloved child.

That's quite a statement. To Timothy, my beloved child, grace, mercy, and peace from God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord. I am grateful to God, whom I serve as a clear conscience to the way my forefathers did as I unceasingly remember you in my prayers night and day.

That's endearing to Timothy. Longing to see you. Having remembered your tears so that I may be filled with joy. He had a phenomenal relationship with Timothy.

[10:58] Paul did. I can imagine how Timothy felt when he read the letter. Come to me soon. Make every effort. Very heartwarming and endearing.

Verse 10. For Damas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crassus has gone to Galatia. Titus to Dalmatia.

Damas, he has deserted me. It doesn't say he's deserted the gospel or deserted us. It says he's deserted me.

This is very personal. This is very personal to Paul. Who's Damas? Damas? Who is he? He's written in a, he's in Colossians, he's in Ephesians, and he's in Philemon.

Let's read a little bit about him. Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ, Jesus greets you, as do Mark, Aristarchus, Damas, Luke, my fellow workers.

[12:11] Damas was a fellow worker. He has deserted Paul, a fellow worker. that's painful.

That's painful. Paul's not a, Paul's not a superhero. Sometimes I think we play him out to be, he's a human being. He has the same heart, emotions just like you and I do.

That's painful. You know, there's something about spiritual relationships. Me and Roger, me and Tom, got many, many of you people here, I've got close spiritual relationships with.

My wife, my children. There's something about deep, strong, spiritual relationships that when someone leaves, it's just painful.

It's not like when I wasn't, before I became a Christian and someone leaves. The relationships I have now are just go, they go far deeper through, because of the uniting of the Holy Spirit and God's work in our lives.

[13:14] it's painful. He went to Thessalonica. I don't know, don't know why he went there, but it says, having loved the present world, that's why he left.

He loved the world. Love of the world, it's a huge snare, isn't it? There's so many things in the world that can just suck us away from following God.

It can happen to anyone. It can happen to anyone, any one of us. That's why we need each other. We need these relationships that go deep. Help us care for one another so we don't get caught up in the world.

Chapter 1, verse 15, talks about other people have deserted Paul as well. And then what about Crescens and Titus? It says, Crescens has gone to Galatia, Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

We don't know exactly what that means. Paul may have sent them there. It feels like. Not real sure. And we do know he sent verse 12.

[14:26] Verse 12 says, But Tychicus I sent to Ephesus, it says. So he's sending people. This is a good thing for various reasons. Verse 11, Only Luke is with me.

Pick up Mark and bring him with you for he is useful to me for service. Luke is with him. If you study the scriptures, Luke has been a companion of Paul for some time.

Very valuable to the kingdom. A travel companion of the gospel. In fact, in Colossians, Paul calls him a beloved physician.

my beloved physician. He was a great loyal friend. We know Luke goes on to do what? Writes the gospel of Luke. He writes Acts. As he's spending time with Paul, he's probably keeping track of all these things so he can write these books.

though we don't see a lot of what he does really. And you know, the truth is, in life, a lot of people don't see what we can do.

[15:32] But we can be so, so beneficial to the Lord. We can give someone a hug. Write them a note. Take someone out for coffee.

Bite them over for a meal. Go bowling together. I started going bowling with my wife. We're having a great time. We're just laughing and having fun getting gutter balls and all that.

Take someone bowling. So many great things we can do with one another. Use the gifts God's given you. Find out what they are. Use God's gifts to do his work.

Do the best you can in serving and ministry. Make it important. valuable. Pick up Mark and bring him with you.

I'm going to segue a little bit. I want to talk a little bit about Mark. Who Mark was. What's this about? Who's Mark? So if you've got your Bibles open there, let's go to Acts.

[16 : 35] What Luke wrote, right? Let's go to Acts chapter 13. Verse 13. We're going to read a little bit about Mark, also known by John Mark.

So you'll see the word John in there. So Acts 13, 13. Now after Paul and his companions set sail for Pappos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia, but John, known as Mark, left them and returned to Jerusalem.

Paul left the group. John left the group. John Mark. Go to chapter 15. Trying to get some insight in here a little bit. First two verses of 15, just to set the pace where things are happening.

So men came down from Judea and began teaching the brothers, unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved. There's false doctrine. Circumcision is not about salvation.

They're having a big meeting about it. And when Paul and Barnabas had not a little dissension and debate with them, the brothers determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

[17 : 52] They're going to have a, so they're going to Jerusalem to talk about this very important issue. Let's jump now to verse, same chapter, 15, verse 36.

So after some days, Paul said to Barnabas, let us return and visit the brothers in every city in which we proclaim the word of the Lord and see how they are.

Wonderful thing to do. And Barnabas wanted to take John, John Mark, called Mark, along with them also. But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them and Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.

And there was such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and they left being committed by the brothers to the grace of the Lord and he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches.

Paul thought he was a deserter. Mark was a deserter. I don't want nothing to do with that guy. You take him. They split. Sharp disagreements. We know things like this can happen in churches.

[19 : 20] It happens all the time. Pick up Mark and bring him with you now. This is good news. This is great news.

Whatever happened, Paul wants to be with Mark. He's useful to me. You know, letdowns don't have to continue. They can end.

Restored relationships that he had now with Mark, this is such a beautiful, wonderful thing. A restored relationship. We're no more like Jesus than when we restore relationships.

It's what we celebrated with breaking of bread. Our restored relationship with Jesus. He died for us because our relationship was broken. Our sin kept us from him.

He had to die so that he restored now. Our acceptance of him, our faith in him, allows us to have a relationship with him. It's restored. Coming back together feels so great.

[20 : 25] Even when we have kind of broken relationships, maybe not really bad ones. We work things out. It feels so good coming back together, doesn't it? Relationships, they're painful.

But restored relationships are so amazing. This is likely Paul's last chance to see Mark and Timothy. Bring Mark along with you when you come.

Are you in good standing with all your relationships? Do you need to visit with anyone about a broken relationship? It's hard. It's hard.

It's hard having to talk to people. It's very difficult. Very difficult. Some of us, I'd rather be cleaning a toilet than coming back to fix a relationship. I would just encourage you to, if you're in that situation that some sort of relationship is somewhat broken, get with that person.

Take a risk. It's worth it. It's worth it. But Tychicus, I have sent to Ephesus.

[21 : 39] There's another sending of another person. When you come back, when you come, Timothy, right, bring the cloak, which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.

Bring them with. So there's some discussion about what the books and parchments are. I'm not going to get into that. But I will say this. Paul is a very learned man.

He has books, parchments, whether he's writing things still or reading. He's a learned man. This is a good thing. This is a good thing. Reading, of course, I read my Bible.

I've got a goal to read. I read three chapters of the New Testament, three chapters of the Old Testament every day. That's my goal. And then I study some things as well. And then I read other

books.

I've read some really good books, some really godly men and women to help enhance what I've learned about scriptures. I would encourage you to do that in addition to the scriptures. I read some fun books too.

[22 : 44] I just happen to like the World War II, history of World War II, and I've read books on that. I read a real good one, The Forgotten 500, some down airmen in Yugoslavia.

It's really interesting. Some good books. Biographies I've read. Hudson Taylor, George Mueller, Moody. There's some really good insights reading about other Christians.

Christians of old, Christians of new. Get a balance. I can tell you, just us new people don't have a handle on everything. Get a balance of old time Christians and newer Christians. It's really good.

I read a book called The Other Half of Church. I've read a book called Lead by Tripp. One of my favorites. I read a book called With. With. Walking with God. I had some great insight in that.

I read a book about deacons and pastors. Alex Strauch. All good stuff. Helps me get a better grasp of scriptures. Some really learned men and women can help us in that.

[23 : 46] Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. The Lord will repay to him according to his deeds. Be on guard against him yourself for he vigorously opposed our teaching.

Another negative in Paul's life at the ending here. Guy's leaving him. Now here's the guy that's opposed to him. Vigorously. Another sad event.

It's a reality of when you walk strong with God. We see it all the time in the news. All the wicked things happening. Just doing good stuff. It's painful.

This is painful to Paul. Again, he's, this is tough stuff. We've, in various ways, we've experienced things like this. There's people come into the church trying to spread false doctrines and we've had people come and trying to get our money.

Get your money. We've got to guard each other. Be on guard against him yourself. We have to watch out for each other. Stay on track so we can stay on track too.

[24 : 56] It happened back then. It happened, it can happen today. This is important things Paul's writing in this last letter. Be on guard. Let's guard each other. We need each other.

More negative news. It keeps coming here. At my first defense, no one supported me. But all deserted me. May it not be accounted against them.

More tough, painful stuff. We read this in Mark the night before Jesus died. Right? They all deserted Jesus. The denial, all of it.

Paul's kind of going through the same stuff. May it not be counted against them. Boy, this is a powerful understanding of truth.

Paul has really, really grown in his walk with God. This is a response that is so godly. Paul's, Paul's all about restoration.

[26 : 08] We see it with Mark. He's about forgiveness. Even though we don't read the word forgiveness there, he's all about that. This is amazing stuff.

If you read here, let's go to Luke 23. about Jesus. This is what we know, right? But Jesus was saying, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.

And they cast lots, dividing up his garments among themselves. He was getting beat up. Forgive them. That's the first words coming out of Jesus' words from that event.

This is the first words coming out of Paul's event. Don't hold it against them. You know, the truth is, we all fail at times, right?

Friends and family. We forget birthdays. We forget anniversaries. We forget to call someone in time of need. Do we get bitter, angry at all those times?

[27 : 17] Friends fail us. Husbands fail us. Wives fail us. Parents fail us. And dare I say, pastors fail us.

I'm one of them. You probably felt a mistake. Hopefully it's not intentional, but I will fail you. Pastor John, have you ever failed anybody?

Oh no, never. We're going to have a long talk with Kara's wife after this. It's so true, isn't it? We all fail each other in various ways.

Paul says don't hold it against them. Yeah. Is forgiveness the first thing you think of when someone fails you?

This really challenges me. You can get upset right away, right? You did that to me again? What? Do I think of forgiveness as the first thing?

[28 : 25] Wow. Our friendship with Jesus is the centerpiece. He never fails us. That's the centerpiece of our relationships and that's what keeps all our relationships strong and long for a long time.

Finally, we get some really great news. After all that failure going on, Paul, writing is so awesome. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me so that through me the gospel might be fully accomplished and that all the Gentiles might hear and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Isn't that awesome? He's going to the one place that we all need to go. Hardships that we just read about. He has strengthened me. Why?

[29 : 35] So the proclamation might be fully accomplished sharing the gospel to the Gentiles. He's even got the mission correct. His purpose correct.

This is so important. In spite of the pain of people against him and leaving him, the Lord strengthened him. And the gospel is still central to his mission in life.

I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. We should be praying about this. The Lord's prayer, do not lead us in temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Deliver us from evil. We can pray that. Pray that. Pray for protection. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Paul understood this.

He understood this thinking. Asking God to deliver us from evil. This is wonderful. And in verse 18, he brings me safely into his heavenly kingdom.

[30 : 38] He knows where he's going. That helps. When you know where you're going, it helps us in our walk with God. We have to think about that. That's important. That's a joyful thing.

That's amazing. That's amazing. Oops. I think I missed something here.

Okay. Okay. Oh, there it is. Okay. Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Anesophorus. Remember I said we're going to talk about a lot of different people.

If you're counting, we're getting up there now. Three, four, or five people. This is kind of a P.S. in the letter you might think, might say. Greetings to his dear friends.

These are dear friends. If you know anything about these people, they're dear friends. I want to look a little bit at this. Prisca and Aquila, also known as Priscilla. We go to Acts 18.

[31 : 47] A little bit about those two folks. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome.

He came to them. And because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them. And they were working, for by trade they were tent makers. He stayed with these folks.

That's a wonderful thing. They're both tent makers. He stayed with them. And you can read more about those in other parts of the New Testament as well. They're wonderful people.

Priscilla and Aquila. How about Onesiphorus? We did a message on him a couple years ago. Another wonderful brother in Christ.

Let's read about him. This is really good stuff. Back to chapter 1 of 2 Timothy. You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are figalus and hermogenus.

[32 : 55] The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. But when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me.

The Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. And you know very well what services he rendered in Ephesus.

Boy, this is a guy you want to have around. Certainly pastors would need people like this. We need help. Paul's going through tough times and he had this guy here.

This is so encouraging to me. Can you identify with that guy? Want to be like that guy? He went through a great deal of trouble so Paul could have a great deal of comfort.

Boy, that's a good attitude. Going through a great deal of trouble so someone else can have a great deal of comfort. That's a servant's heart if I ever saw one.

[34 : 05] Yeah, I want to be like that. I want to be like that. I want to be like that. The last two verses. Erastus remained in Corinth but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus.

Make every effort to come before winter. Once again, Timothy, please come before winter. Bring my cloak, by the way. Ebulus greets you also, Prudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren.

The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Come before winter, right? Bring my cloak. Who is Ebulus? I don't know. But how wonderful it would be to be included in the letter.

Greet Timothy and Tom, John. Right? Wonderful to be included in that letter. Paul points out their involvement and how important it is to recognize these people.

We don't want to leave someone left out. It's not fun to be left out, is it? To include people. Another really great passage.

[35 : 11] Homework assignment here. I'm a teacher. By trade. The second half of Romans 16. Paul greets a whole slew of people.

My beloved. The great servant. And you just read through it. It's just so encouraging. Paul has spent so much time with people, he really knows them intimately and how good they are.

He encourages the people. The second half of Romans 16. Get a chance to read that. So in summary, we mentioned the importance of restored relationships.

Mark coming back. Wonderful. Beautiful. We mentioned about all his partnerships, his friendships. Especially Timothy, Mark, and Luke.

Close to Timothy. Close to Luke. And some close, dear friends. Jesus did too. You should do. A couple close, dear friends that you can spend time with.

[36 : 13] We saw Paul sending out people to do God's work. It happens. Hopefully, we'll have some short-term missions before too long. We're starting to talk about that at Tri-State.

We can send some people out. That'd be awesome. And then we saw some very sad partings today. People leaving, opposing. For the love of the world.

Wow. That's a good reminder what the world can do to us. It can just suck you dry. Why? And he ends the letter with great grace to you.

And the you, by the way, is plural. I think maybe Paul intended for this letter to be read to the church so they would know how to support their pastor, Timothy.

The letter starts with grace, ends with grace. It's an important thing to remember how it is to give grace to one another. Jesus calls us into fellowship with him and clearly with each other.

[37 : 23] We saw all those people in Paul's life, how important it is to be around godly people. Let's take a minute to just thank the Lord. I'm just going to just thank the Lord for a few things and then I'm going to pray.

Father, I just want to say thank you for all the relationships that we have here. It's really amazing, Lord, what you did for us and how you restore relationships.

We thank you, Lord. We praise you for your forgiveness. Thank you again, Lord, for this fellowship. Thank you for the ministries of this fellowship.

Thank you that we have a chance to serve people, help people. We just praise you and honor you today, Lord. And now I want to pray.

Father, I want to say I give you glory and honor today. Please help all of us. If there's anyone in here that has a relationship that needs to be restored, please help them be assertive to get that done, Lord.

[38 : 27] You come in the middle of it, bind them together. Lord, if there's anyone in here who learned something about some person from this scripture that I want to be more like that, help them to pursue that.

Serving in some fashion, loving people, getting together with them, helping them, listening to them, listening to their needs. Show us what that might be. Just give you the glory and the praise today, Jesus.

Amen. Amen. Amen.