

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
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## Preparing to Die Well

2 Timothy 4:9-22

Keywords: Death, Dying, Sacrifice, Hope, Perseverance

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb:

- I. Introduction.
  - A. Read 2 Timothy 4:9-22.
  - B. We have the final words to Timothy in this letter but more importantly we have the chance to consider how a dying man who loves Jesus and His Kingdom thinks.
    1. In the prior sermon I taught on how to die well.
      - a. You die well when you learn to see it as worship
      - b. You die well when you see it as a departure
      - c. You die well when you rightly understand this life
      - d. You die well when you realize what is waiting for you
    2. Perhaps you thought the topic of death was finished but I want to give one last message on it today.
  - C. Picture the setting:
    1. A dark place, Paul is old and broken down.
    2. No furniture, merely chains and filth.
    3. Time..... a lot of time.....so much time to think or to fret, to pray or to complain, to hope or to regret, to sulk or to teach.
    4. A man on his knees bent over a piece of parchment or papyrus. His old fingers are ink stained as they hold the quill and he thinks.
    5. A man who once had many standing by his side, who is now alone, visited only by Luke on occasion.
    6. A man who traveled throughout Asia Minor preaching a counter-cultural message of the true Lord. A man who

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performed miracles. A man who wrote under the power of the Spirit, now shivering and weary.

7. If you watch him you would see him shift his body on the floor to ease the many pains. There would be times he would pause and pray and then pick up the quill and begin to continue to scratch out this final letter.
8. What is his attitude? What state do we find him? Bitter and angry? No, a man full of confidence as he faces execution. Confidence because he hopes not in man but in the Lord of creation.
9. And now he comes to the end of the letter and the final words need to be written down.
  - a. What does he write and why?
  - b. Words that are simple and yet reflect a human who has actually lived.
  - c. And he gives us insights in these final words on how to prepare to die so that when we die we leave a legacy, whether to millions or to just one.

## D. How do you prepare to die well?

1. Nice to talk about the idea but implementing it is another thing.
2. The point of facing death is one thing, but the events that will eventually lead to it is another.
3. How do we train our minds and lives to live with the reality that if Jesus does not return in our lifetime that we will die?
4. How does living as a people who call Jesus “Lord over all” live with death facing us?
5. This passage helps us think through these things.

## II. Nine ways to for a Christian to prepare for death in no special order.

- A. Develop real friendships with other Christians.

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1. Note vs 9. Back in 1:4 he expresses his longing to see Timothy, not it is a command, speaking of the sense of urgency in the man.
  - a. Paul is a man who has suffered in many ways. And he is a man who is not afraid to face death as a criminal for the sake of the gospel.
  - b. But he is also a man who recognizes the need for other people.
  - c. It is a sad thing to watch a person who made no real effort establishing real friendship then move into the end stages of life. They are alone.
2. Notice the names scattered through this section for they speak to a man who valued people. Just let this list flow over you for a moment.
3. They are not just names, these are people who are on the mind of Paul as he is shivering in a dungeon hoping that Timothy comes with his cloak. They are people he invested in and who invested in him.
4. It is a perfect example of how he taught the church. It is not a one man work, it is not about him, it is the Body of Jesus Christ and it is precious.
5. We see here also the long term work of a man committed to passing on the faith. Every Christian has someone who impacted them with at least the gospel. But the fortunate ones are those who have those who drew them along into maturity in the Lord.
  - a. Timothy.
    - (1) We know enough of him to skip significant comment.
    - (2) He was Paul's child in the faith.
    - (3) He was dear to him and one who was found to be incredibly faithful and useful for Paul's work.

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- (4) Without men like Timothy Paul would not ever have accomplished what Paul did in Christ's name.
- b. Crescens.
  - (1) We know nothing of this man.
  - (2) Reminds us all that not everyone is remembered in the work for the Lord—by men. We give thanks that the Lord knows who are His.
  - (3) But he was not like Demas, he was instead in Galatia laboring.
- c. Titus.
  - (1) Here is one we know more about.
  - (2) Sent to Crete to set things in order there. Would have to be a solid man since that was a very young church. This is the setting for the letter to Titus.
  - (3) He was a consistent companion who Paul looked to much like Timothy.
  - (4) Now he is in Dalmatia.
    - (a) Little known about it. In Romans 15:19 Paul speaks of bringing the gospel to that area.
    - (b) Likely what is going on is that it too is a young church needing strong leadership and so Titus goes to serve.
    - (c) I would argue also that he was a man gifted in developing leaders. This was a key task in Crete and I suspect that is why he went to Dalmatia.
- d. Luke.
  - (1) Was in Rome and was able to come to see Paul on occasion.

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- (2) Little about him is written but we know he is called twice by Paul (Colossians and Philemon) the “beloved physician.”
  - (3) I imagine he was a great help to Paul in his times of physical suffering.
- e. Mark.
- (1) If this is the Mark we know in Acts then this is an interesting comment.
  - (2) In Acts 13 Mark abruptly left Paul and others and went back to Jerusalem. In 15:37ff Paul and Barnabas get into an argument because Paul wanted nothing to do with Mark.
  - (3) Ten years later in Colossians he is mentioned in a more positive light.
  - (4) And now here we see Paul seeing the value of Mark and desiring him to come with Timothy.
- f. Tychicus.
- (1) This is the man who likely brought the letter to the Ephesians to them. He was well known in the churches under Paul’s influence.
  - (2) What we know of him indicates a faithful man with tremendous character and loyalty. Which is why he is being sent to Ephesus, to replace Timothy.
- g. Prisca and Aquila.
- (1) These are very old friends of Paul’s. They were tentmakers like Paul and had been recently expelled from Rome by the Emperor.
  - (2) They are the kind of people who simply help and serve in whatever way they are needed. They loved truth and were eager to share the gospel.
- h. Household of Onesiphorus.

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- (1) Was a run-away slave who was converted under Paul.
    - (2) Many think he is dead now which is why it is his household that is greeted.
  - i. Erastus, Trophimus, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus and Claudia.
    - (1) Not a lot that is to be said here. All friends, all precious. Some of them (21) had sought out Paul at some point.
    - (2) Notice Trophimus, he was a traveling companion of Paul's so he was a man of faithfulness. But notice how Paul left him sick at Miletus. This is one of those passages that seem to indicate that the giftedness of Paul in healings and such were passing away.
  6. My point in all of this is that though Paul was alone now and facing death, he was also a man rich in friends and fellow servants of Jesus.
- B. Don't be surprised by sin.
1. Demas (10).
    - a. Not everyone was faithful though. We know very little of this man, but it is a sad amount to know.
    - b. He was a companion of Paul but he didn't just leave, he deserted Paul. It carries the image of being left in a lurch.
    - c. Notice that this desertion is why Timothy needs to hurry up and get there. Apparently Demas was doing something important for Paul or very helpful and now he just walked away from it all, including the apostle.
    - d. This is the effects of sin and it is something you must factor into your life. People will abandon you, do you wrong and fail you.

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- e. If you grasp that then as you live your life it will guard you from the shock when it happens and the bitterness that can grip you.
2. Alexander the coppersmith.
  - a. Not only will people abandon and hurt you that way, you will develop actual enemies along the way.
  - b. What he did to Paul is not known, but it must be bad for him to be described in this way.
  - c. It was personal and likely involved Paul's imprisonment. We see him actively fighting against Paul's teaching.
3. Remember sin lurks in you so give watch over your soul. Where your heart wanders soon shall your feet.
- C. Warn those who follow of dangers that are ahead.
  1. Paul is not telling Timothy about Demas and Alexander just to complain or gossip.
  2. It was why Timothy was to hurry to Paul and Paul knew that Timothy was likely to come under the wrath and hate of Alexander.
  3. As you live your life you should gain wisdom and knowledge. Use it to warn others who are following behind you.
  4. I had times where it was like running into a buzzsaw. That was hard but what was harder was people who saw the person approach me and said nothing until afterward.
- D. Do not stop learning, especially of your Lord.
  1. Bring the books and the parchments (13).
  2. Here Paul is at the end of his life but he desires books and the Old Testament.
  3. Never stop learning. Young people, commit yourself to learn and keep learning.
  4. There is not a point where you don't need to learn more or can't learn more.

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5. If being locked up in the prison is no excuse for Paul, then we certainly have no excuse. Learn to squeeze it into every part of your day.
  6. Explain your strategy of books in your life.
- E. Remember that even when you are abandoned by all others you are never abandoned (16-17).
1. The promise given in Matthew 28, “. . . to the end of the age.”
  2. Twice Jesus actually appeared to Paul while he was in prison, so this might be a literal “standing with.”
  3. Notice the purpose though in vs 17. . . so that he could finish his ministry.
  4. We are not done until we are done. And until that point Jesus will work in and through us even in the most desperate of situations.
  5. In fact, for some of you it is very possible that you will learn the depth of the faithfulness of Jesus only through bitter disappointments by others.
- F. Finish the race (17 the proclamation . . . .fully accomplished)
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  4. Dr. Charles McCoy, a Baptist pastor whose denomination insisted that he retire at age 72. He was a single man, tall (6’ 4”), with white hair. He had earned two doctorates over the years. He dreaded the thought of retirement, thinking that surely there was more that he could do for Christ. About that time, a missionary from India invited him to come there and preach. Dr. McCoy had never traveled, even in the U.S., let



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alone overseas. But the missionary explained that in India they would respect his age. He tried to put the idea out of his mind, and he gave the Lord all of his excuses. He didn't have any money. But he felt that the Lord wanted him to go, so he decided to sell his car and go. People in his church thought he was losing his mind. The church chairman asked, "What if you should die there?" Dr. McCoy said, "It's just as close to heaven from there as it is from here." So he went. En route, he lost all of his belongings, including his wallet and passport. His missionary friend who invited him was not there, so he didn't know anyone. But God opened door after door for him to give the gospel to influential groups of people in the government and military. He started a Chinese church in Calcutta. He ended up having an itinerant ministry that lasted for 16 years, until he was 88! He had preached that afternoon and he had another speaking engagement that evening, when the Lord called him home.

5. Though you might suffer much evil you will never be overcome by it.

G. You cannot lose (18).

1. Note the confidence in the first line . . . "will . . . from every evil deed."

a. The question is how? And if you get this you will learn how to live well and prepare to die well.

b. Not through some miracle of protection.

c. It is not being saved from an execution, from enemies like Alexander, heartbreaks like Demas.

d. Rather it is through dying he would be saved from the very presence of evil. No longer could it touch him for he would be in the very presence of Jesus in his heavenly kingdom.

2. This is something we need to hear because we often want to remain here but be rescued from evil.

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3. Though that may happen in various situations it is not the ultimate reality for us. We will grow old and we will suffer the effects of sin—both from others and from ourselves.
  4. But regardless, in the end, we will be rescued as Jesus brings us to Himself. (Remember the snake metaphor from the prior sermon).
- H. Pray for others.
1. Sounds silly perhaps, but this is such a simple way to prepare to die.
    - a. In our times of strength and youth it is tempting to put off the spiritual discipline of prayer and intercession. But there is coming a day when you may be able to do nothing but pray, will you be practiced and prepared through a life of practice?
    - b. Paul writes much of prayer in his letters. We are called to pray for him and his ministry. We are called to pray in such a way that it is essentially unceasing.
    - c. And in this final section we have a couple of little prayers that may not look like ones at first glance.
  2. 14.
    - a. He is essentially giving over this man to the Lord.
    - b. It is significant to note that Paul makes no mention of praying for his salvation. He is simply giving him to the Lord for vengeance.
  3. 22
    - a. Another little prayer and it is a prayer of blessing.
    - b. Just as Jesus has been with Paul he now asks the same for Timothy.
    - c. And then the request for grace to be every upon this young man.
    - d. Grace, that little thing we forget about so much and yet need far more than we realize.

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## III. Conclusion.

- A. And here we come to the end of this letter.
- B. And we see a man who lived well in the presence of his Lord and Savior.
- C. A man who prepared to die well.
- D. And who leaves this world with his final words a prayer of blessing.
- E. May we be found as faithful.

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## Small Group Questions

- How often do you consider the reality of death and how are you preparing for it? Which, if any, of the points in the sermon help you rethink the way you live now?
- How valuable to you view relationships? Not just vague ones, but true, close, co-laborer type of friendships?
-