

Sermon Title: **We are Not Alone!**

Written: **November 11, 2017**

Preached: **November 12, 2017 at Waterville FBC**

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Scripture Reference: **2 Timothy 4:6-8 & 16-18**

Thesis: **Paul encourages Timothy that when facing loneliness and death that God is near;**

Purpose: **Here we learn that Christians are never really alone when facing a spiritual battle or even in the face of death.**

Key Word: **"Alone"**

I) Scripture Reading is: **2 Timothy 4:6-8 & 16-18** (*Black 213 / Red 260*)

A) The Setting:

1) **This is Veteran's Day weekend.**

(a) A time when we honor those who have sacrificed themselves to protect the Freedoms we enjoy.

(b) It is a time to remember those sacrifices which come at a cost.

2) **Many veterans come home having experienced immense loneliness.**

(a) The odd thing is that they often come home and even though they are safe and back with their loved ones they are still experiencing immense loneliness.

(b) Often times they don't feel like they can share the horrors of what they have experienced while defending our freedoms.

(c) Many feel as though they cannot share it or talk about it or that anyone can understand what they are feeling.

(d) Sometimes, they don't even understand what they are feeling or how to deal with it themselves.

3) **Veteran's Day kicks off the Holiday season that quickly takes us through Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's.**

(a) It is meant to be a season of family, fun, and food.

(b) Yet for many, the joy is not there either because they don't have much to share or someone to share it with.

(c) Perhaps a loved one has passed on and this time reminds them of a lot of great memories; but leaves them feeling alone.

(d) Bad memories from their past family situations.

(e) We need to be sensitive to this in others during the Holidays and do what we can to comfort and minister to them.

4) **Loneliness can leave people feeling depressed or other anxiety problems, even Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. (PTSD)**

(a) It can lead to other medical issues such as blood pressure, stomach ailments,

(b) And if not treated properly even suicide attempts or death.

5) **Paul was a veteran in God's army who sacrificed himself even comparing himself to being like a soldier;**

(a) Paul was fighting to free all from the bondage and grasp of sin.

(b) He knew what it meant to give his all for this freedom.

(c) Paul had faced persecution, rejection, and threats of death,

(d) He had faced being shipwrecked and what it was to feel alone.

6) **This message is based on Paul's Second letter to Timothy.**

(a) Timothy was left in charge on the battle front of Ephesus to lead the church started by Paul.

(b) From Paul we learn that Christians are never really alone when facing a battle be it physical or spiritual or even when faced with the possibility of death.

7) **Many people, including Paul don't like being alone.**

(a) And as Paul is facing the end of his life the sense of loneliness comes through his writing in the last chapter of Second Timothy.

(b) Paul is writing from a cold, clammy Roman dungeon, chained like a common criminal.

8) **We can learn a lot about a person who is facing their death.**

(a) Whatever is on their heart will show through in their last days.

- (b) We are complex beings who struggle with our emotions and Paul is no different.
 - (c) However, we can see that Paul finishes strong encouraging Timothy in his faith right to the end.
- 9) **The first 5 verses of Chapter 4;**
- (a) Paul strongly encouraged Timothy to bravely Preach the truth of God's Word.
 - (b) And now Paul is giving his final greeting as he senses the end of his life is near.
- 10) **So, let us pick up our reading as we turn in our Bibles to 2 Timothy 4:6-8 & 16-18.** (NIV)
- (a) I looked at this passage in several versions of the Bible and today,
 - (b) I felt the best version that brings forth the clearest meaning was the NIV.
 - (c) So, please listen or follow along as I read.

B) *Sermon Prayer*

C) (The Hook)

1) **Illustration: Letters are Better than Money¹**

- (a) An elderly woman on a fixed income was visiting her brother one time and ran short of money; so, she borrowed \$50 from him.
 - (b) After she returned home, she wrote him a short letter every few weeks, enclosing a five-dollar check.
 - (c) Her brother called her to tell her how much he enjoyed her letters with the money she sent.
 - (d) Apparently, she had never written regularly before.
 - (e) **Finally, she sent off a letter with the last five dollars.**
 - (i) In her mailbox the next week she found an envelope from her brother.
 - (ii) Inside was another \$50 dollars.
 - (f) Apparently, her brother in his loneliness, enjoyed the companionship of his sister's letters more than the money.
- 2) **Loneliness is a common ailment that we all face from time to time.**
- (a) Some more than others.
 - (b) As I think we can sense from our reading, Paul too, felt alone at times.
- 3) **Paul, teaches us that we Christians are never really alone.**
- (a) God sends His Spirit to dwell inside us filling the spiritual void we all have.
 - (b) Not to say we won't ever feel alone; but our feelings cannot always be trusted.
 - (c) Paul wants us to take comfort knowing that the great Comforter is always with us.
- 4) We will see from Paul's teaching that when facing a spiritual battle or even when facing death . . . Christians are never really alone.

TS: **So, let's begin with Paul's experience of his. . .**

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **Departure (2 Timothy 4:6-8)**

- 1) **Paul says he is being poured out like a drink offering.**
 - (a) This is a type of sacrifice from the Old Testament.
 - (b) **This shows that Paul views his death as certain;**
 - (i) His (life) was being poured out as a drink offering.
 - (ii) The Old Testament Reference is from **Numbers 28:7** "**The accompanying drink offering is to be a quarter of a hin of fermented drink with each lamb. Pour out the drink offering to the Lord at the sanctuary.**"
 - (iii) When the offering has been poured out it is gone.
 - (iv) When Paul's life has been poured out he too will be gone.
- 2) **Paul is using this metaphor in that the Christian's martyred life-blood is a drink offering being poured out to God.²**

- (a) Though he was about to be executed, Paul chose to regard this as an offering to God.
 - (b) Paul had given his life to God and trusted God to do what was best with it even if that meant his death and departure from this life.
 - (c) This is a natural conclusion of his belief that the whole of life is to be regarded as "**a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable, spiritual act of service.**" (Romans 12:1)
- 3) **Paul then uses a second metaphor of his death closely linked with the preceding statement with the words, "and the time has come for my departure."**³
- (a) This is another of those Greek words capable of various meanings.
 - (b) **Two are the most cited.**
 - (i) The word is used of the loosening of the ropes when taking a tent down.
 - (ii) It is also used of the release of the lines when a ship leaves the dock.
 - (c) **Paul sees himself as a soldier, gathering his tent for the next stop, and as a sailor launching out on a new journey.**
- 4) **What might be seen as the end of Paul to Timothy;**
- (a) Appears to Paul as the beginning of a glorious new era.
 - (b) One where Paul will be released from all his present restrictions.
 - (c) And one where he looks forward to receiving his rewards for a faithful life.
- 5) **This should be the Christian's view of death.**
- (a) Where Death is not the end; but a new beginning.
 - (b) A journey from this life to the everlasting life to come.
 - (c) One where we can be rewarded for our faithfulness; some obviously more than others.

TS: So, now that we have seen Paul's view of his departure; let us look at why Paul says he has experienced . . .

- B) Key Point #2: **Desertion (2 Timothy 4:16)**
- 1) **Paul's first defense spoken of in verse 16, evidently refers,**
 - (a) Not to his first Roman imprisonment which Timothy would have already known about.
 - (b) But to a preliminary hearing leading up to his present trial and imprisonment.
 - 2) **At such hearings it was a common practice to hear advocates for the accused;**
 - (a) But in Paul's case, no one came to his support,
 - (b) Everyone either deserted him out of FEAR that they would be imprisoned;
 - (c) Or they were not aware when the hearing took place.
 - 3) **We can understand the wide spread desertion because unlike the period of Paul's first imprisonment,**
 - (a) It had now become dangerous to be a Christian in Rome.
 - (b) **Acts 28:22** tells us that as early as 5 years before this letter to Timothy, Luke wrote "**that people everywhere are talking against this sect.**"
 - (c) The thought of one identifying themselves with the fearless and outspoken Paul must have been more than the Roman Christians or Paul's companions could face.
 - 4) **You know that Paul isn't the first believer to face being alone.**
 - (a) **The prophet, Elijah, felt alone after defeating 850 false prophets of Baal and was threatened by Queen Jezebel who wanted to take his life! (1 Kings 19)**
 - (i) Elijah ran for his life and hid at Mount Horeb.
 - (ii) He told God that he thought he was the only one left who was faithful to God.
 - (iii) God told Elijah that there were 7000 who had not worshipped false God's.
 - (b) **Daniel must have felt he was alone in Daniel 6.**
 - (i) When he refused to worship or pray to the King's statue,
 - (ii) He found himself being pitched into a den of hungry lions.

- (c) **Even Jesus must have felt alone while hanging on the cross.**
 - (i) For Matthew records that he cried out,
 - (ii) **"My God, My God, Why have YOU forsaken me!"** (Matthew 27:46)
- 5) **But even though Paul is feeling alone and abandoned here . . .**
 - (a) He seems to understand as he is ready to forgive asking, **"May it not be held against them."** (verse 16)
 - (b) This is reminiscent of Jesus' own words from the cross, **"Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."** (Luke 23:34)
- 6) **Paul may have felt abandoned by his friends; but understood that God was with him.**

TS: **So, having looked at Paul's view of his departure and his experience of Desertion; we now see Paul . . .**

- C) Key Point #3: **Delivered** (2 Timothy 4:17-18)
 - 1) **Paul's courage in proclaiming the gospel was not dampened by the weakness of those around him.**
 - (a) **No, the secret to his ministry was in his dependency on the strength of God!**
 - (b) He wrote to the Philippians, **"I can do all things through him who gives me strength."** (Philippians 1:12)
 - (c) And in 1 Timothy 1:12 he wrote, **"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service."**
 - 2) **And now even when no one remained with Paul, he said,**
 - (a) **"The Lord stood at my side and gave me strength. . ."** (2 Timothy 4:17)
 - (b) I think that Paul clearly must have been remembering Daniel when he referred to having, **"been delivered from the lion's mouth."**
 - (c) This was only the latest time that Paul put his own life on the line stating, **". . . so that, through me (Paul) the message might be fully proclaimed and all the gentiles hear it."**
 - 3) **Paul knew that his fate in the Roman courts was sealed and he was ready to die.**
 - (a) Yet, Paul saw his death NOT as a victory for Rome . . .
 - (b) But as a rescue by God from the toil of this life only to ushered into his new heavenly home!
 - 4) **Despite every evil attack,**
 - (a) Paul had confidence that God would bring him safely to his home in heaven when the time came.
 - (b) Because of this confidence, even in the face of his own death, Paul could do nothing except praise God, **"To Him be the glory forever and ever, Amen! (So be it!)"**

TS: **So, as we bring this message to a conclusion; the question to ask is . . .**

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

A) **Are you feeling alone?**

- 1) **There are 2 types of loneliness: Geographical Loneliness and Loneliness of Spirit.**
 - (a) Geographical Loneliness is when someone is separated from a loved one like our soldiers from their families what serving in some remote location.
 - (b) Loneliness of Spirit is being in a crowd, but knowing no one.
 - (i) A husband and wife under the same roof, but distant.
 - (ii) An elderly person who waits for a call . . . a letter, or a visit.
 - (iii) A soldier who feels no one can understand the horror of their pain.
 - (iv) Or when someone is separated from God.
- 2) **God understands our loneliness for it was God who said, "It is not good for man to be alone."** (Genesis 2:18)

- (a) God did not create us to be alone.
- (b) God wants to fellowship with us in a right relationship.
- (c) God can do this through our worship, prayers, reading and learning about the mind of Christ through His Word.
- (d) God's Word says let us not give up meeting together; we need each other.

B) What can cure our loneliness?

- 1) Paul could have just felt sorry for himself wallowing away in prison.
- 2) But instead of focusing on his own situation he was concerned for Timothy and the continued spread of the Good News.
- 3) Paul wrote letters to the churches not to complain about his situation but to encourage them in theirs.
- 4) **What we can learn from Paul is that we need to get involved in a meaningful ministry.**
 - (a) Doing activities for others is very therapeutic for the soul especially when it comes to curing loneliness.
 - (b) **Illustration: Dr. Karl Menninger, the famous Psychiatrist, once gave a lecture on mental health and was answering questions.**
 - (i) One Man ask, "What would you advise a person to do if that person felt a nervous breakdown coming on?"
 - (ii) All thought that he would say, "Consult a Psychiatrist."
 - (iii) But, to their astonishment he replied, "Lock up your house, go across the railroad tracks, find someone who is in need, and do something to help that person."
- 5) **The best treatment for loneliness is to DO SOMETHING FOR OTHERS!**
 - (a) Don't say you can't do anything; you can write, call, pray, visit, or any number of things to get involved.
 - (b) The Texas Road House offered a free lunch yesterday to veterans.
 - (c) When Debbie and I arrived to be seated they gave me a card from a local school child thanking me for my service.
 - (d) I can't tell you what that little act of kindness meant.

C) Paul also remembered the true source of his strength.

- 1) Paul reminded himself that he knew he was NOT ALONE because God was always with the believer through the Holy Spirit.
- 2) Therefore, we as Christians need to remind ourselves that we are never really alone when facing spiritual battles or even in facing our death.
- 3) In other words, KEEP AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE of the situation.
- 4) Memorize what Paul taught the Philippians, "**I can do everything through him who gives me strength.**" (Philippians 4:13)

D) Many veterans and many people feel alone especially towards the end of this life.

- 1) Find a way to visit or send a card of thanks.
- 2) Let them know that they are valued for their service.

IV) Invitation: **Let Us Pray!**

V) **Bibliography**

¹ 1001 More Humorous Illustrations, Michael Hodgin, Zondervan, Grand Raids, Michigan, 1998, #168

² The Communicator's Commentary (1, 2 Thessalonians, 1, 2, Timothy, Titus), Lloyd J. Ogilvie, Word Books, Publisher, Waco, Texas, 1985, PP.289

³ The Communicator's Commentary (1, 2 Thessalonians, 1, 2, Timothy, Titus), Lloyd J. Ogilvie, Word Books, Publisher, Waco, Texas, 1985, PP.289-290