

## **“Unashamed Loyalty”**

### **II Timothy 4:9-22**

~ Delivered at DHBC on August 10, 2014 (Soli Deo Gloria)

#### **INTRODUCTION**

- **(SHOW SLIDE)** Please open your Bibles to II Timothy 4.
- It was a sporting moment that hardly anyone saw but none would forget. When he was 18 years old Bill Broadhurst suffered a brain aneurysm. The left side of his body was partly paralyzed.
  - Now Broadhurst had a hero named Bill Rogers who was a marathon runner. One day Rogers came to Broadhurst’s city to run a 10km charity race. Inspired by his hero, Broadhurst decided to enter the race. As the gun went off Rogers took off like a rocket and won the race in under 30 minutes. Average ability runners came in around the one-hour mark. The stragglers came in around two hours.
    - After two hours and twenty minutes Bill Broadhurst was still running. He was in a great deal of pain as he swung his stiff leg around for every step.
- The police took down the street barricades and Broadhurst was forced to run on the sidewalk. One kid who saw him running yelled, **“You missed the race.”** As he came within sight of the finish line he saw that the race organizers had dismantled the finish area. But a few people saw what was going on. They began to applaud him. **“You can do it! Keep going!”**
  - Then, almost like it had been planned for a movie, a group of people emerged at the finish line. Among them was Bill Rogers wearing his gold medal. Broadhurst collapsed across the finished line.
    - With emotions running high, Rogers was quick to see the significance of the moment. He removed his gold medal and placed it around Bill Broadhurst’s neck.
- Second Timothy is all about persevering in the Christian life. Paul, the old hero and apostle, is about to die. Timothy the young Christian leader is facing great trials in his race. Timothy doubts himself. Timothy faces opposition for Christ. He feels like quitting the race.
  - This whole letter is Paul’s encouragement to Timothy to persevere in unashamed loyalty to the good news of Jesus Christ. Just before our passage Paul had given himself as example of one who had finished the race. Look at verse 6. **READ 6.**
    - ***“The time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store 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 longed for his appearing.”***
- There is much that makes us discouraged as Christians. We face opposition from others. The battle against sin is hard. There are so many other views on truth. We can feel like quitting the race.
  - But Paul is encouraging Timothy, and by extension us, to persevere in the race. A day is coming when the struggle of the race will end. We will

cross the finish line and meet our hero, Jesus Christ. He will give us the reward. But in the meantime we need encouragement to persevere.

- Today we are looking at verses 9-22. This is the end of Paul's letter and includes his greetings and personal remarks. So often we just skip over these parts of Paul's letters but I want to show you that there is great instruction and encouragement here.
  - In verses 9-22 we see five things we must do to persevere in unashamed loyalty to the gospel. As your pastor this is what I want for you – I want to see each of you cross that finish line. So listen now to five things that will enable you to persevere to the end.

### **COMMIT YOURSELF TO CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

- **(SHOW SLIDE)** First, in order to persevere in unashamed loyalty to the gospel we must commit ourselves to Christian fellowship.
  - Fellowship is a biblical word that describes Christians sharing our lives together because of our common unity in Christ. It includes things like caring for one another, forgiving each other, partnering together for the gospel, and encouraging each other in Christ. Every Christian needs this.
    - In verses 9-13 we get several glimpses into the importance of fellowship.

### **BEING KEPT FROM LONELINESS**

- **(SHOW SLIDE)** First, fellowship keeps us from loneliness.
  - We sometimes think of the apostle Paul as superhuman but here we see him in all his humanness. What we see here is a man who is struggling deeply with loneliness.
- Look at verse 9. **READ 9** – *“Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.”*
  - Oh how I love this passage. It is so raw. It is so real life. The great apostle Paul is lonely. In verse 9 he desperately wants Timothy to come and see him while he is in prison. And quickly. The reason for this is that four of his traveling companions have left him for various reasons
- Notice that Demas has left him. Demas is also mentioned in Col 4:14 and Philemon 24 as a “fellow worker” with Paul. But something happened to Demas. He has deserted Paul and Paul is clearly hurt by this. The reason for this, Paul says, is because Demas loved this world. This word “loved” is set in direct contrast with 4:8 where true believers love, or long for, the appearing of Jesus.
  - So Paul loves something and Demas loves something. Paul loves Christ's future appearing and kingdom and lives his life for this. But Demas has fallen in love this present age. He may not have abandoned Christ but he became more concerned with his own personal comfort and so rather than suffer he abandoned Paul in his hour of need.



telling Timothy to bring Mark because *“he is helpful to me in my ministry.”* So apparently there has been reconciliation.

- No matter where your relationships are there will be conflict. But in the church, in committed Christian fellowship we encounter a power that no one else has. We encounter the reconciling power of Christ.

### **CARING FOR PHYSICAL NEEDS**

- Finally we see that **(SHOW SLIDE)** fellowship cares for physical needs. **READ 13 - “When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas.”**
  - Paul had left his cloak with this man Carpus. But if you look at verse 21 we see that winter is coming. Paul knows it will be cold and needs it back. In the race of life we need help with basic things like keeping warm and this is what Paul is asking Timothy to do for him.
    - Again, Christianity is not just high and lofty teaching about God and eternal life. It is teaching that works itself out in caring for the most basic needs of others. Christian fellowship cares for physical needs.
- Now put all of this together. What we see here is the Christian’s need for fellowship with other believers. Paul, the great apostle, admits that he needs it. We need it for loneliness. We need it for physical needs.
  - All of this then is a call to commit yourself to Christ’s people which is the church – to live not for your own comfort and ease but for others. So I simply ask you: are you committed to Christ’s people?
    - Are you investing your life into others in the church? The race is hard. This is why we need each other.

### **KEEP GROWING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**

- Second, **(SHOW SLIDE)** in order to persevere in unashamed loyalty to the gospel we must keep growing in the knowledge of God. I love this little phrase in verse 13. Look at verse 13 again. **READ 13 - “Bring my scrolls, especially the parchments.”**
  - Speaking on this passage, the great preacher Charles Spurgeon said this: *“We do not know what the books were about, and we can only form some guess as to what the parchments were. Paul had a few books which were left, perhaps wrapped up in the cloak, and Timothy was to be careful to bring them. Even an apostle must read...He is inspired, and yet he wants books! He has been preaching at least for thirty years, and yet he wants books! He had seen the Lord, and yet he wants books! He had had a wider experience than most men, and yet he wants books! He had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard things which it was unlawful for a man to utter, yet he wants books! He had written the major part of the New Testament, and yet he wants books!...Brethren, what is true of ministers is true of all our people...You may get much instruction from books which afterwards you may use as a true weapon*

*in your Lord and Master's service. Paul cries, 'Bring the books'—join in the cry.*"<sup>1</sup>

- If you want to persevere in unashamed loyalty to Christ and his message you need to grow, along with others, in your knowledge of Christ. Do you have a regular Bible reading time? Do you read Christian books? If you don't know what to read please come and speak with me. I can recommend some to you.
- Just as an aside before we move on, can you imagine what this meeting would have been like when Mark and Timothy arrived? Paul, who wrote around 30% of the New Testament, is there. Luke, who also wrote about 30% of the New Testament, is there. And Mark who wrote around 10% of the New Testament, is there. So here you have three men who are responsible for around 70% of the New Testament all together in one place.
  - What did they talk about? Oh I would have loved to listen in.
    - So in order to persevere in unashamed loyalty we must commit to Christian fellowship, and keep growing in our knowledge of God.

## EXPECTING OPPOSITION

- **(SHOW SLIDE)** Third, in order to persevere in unashamed loyalty to the gospel we must expect opposition.
  - Look at verses 14-15. **READ 14-15** – *“Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.”*
    - We do not know who this Alexander was but he clearly hates the Christian message and Christians. He opposed Paul and his message. But notice Paul's reaction: he does not seek revenge. He does not call down curses on him. He simply entrusts himself to God knowing that God is the ultimate judge. And he calls Timothy to be wise in how he deals with Alexander.
- This theme of expecting opposition has come up again and again. Back in chapter 2 Paul had told Timothy to *“endure hardship like a good soldier.”*
  - A soldier expects conflict. A runner expects difficulties in the race. If you expect that following Christ will make life easy you will inevitably be disappointed and will likely quit when you face opposition. But again and again we are told to expect opposition for Jesus said, *“If they persecuted me, they will persecute you.”*
    - People often follow the path of Demas because they don't think Christianity worked for them. They thought it would solve all their problems. There is no question that when you get God some things get easier but until we cross the finish line we are to expect opposition. Getting expectations right helps us to persevere.
- So, commit to Christian fellowship, keep growing in the knowledge of God, and expect opposition.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0542.htm>

## HERALDING THE MESSAGE

- **(SHOW SLIDE)** Fourth, in order to persevere in unashamed loyalty to the gospel we must keep heralding the message even if it means personal suffering.
  - This is similar to the last point but with the emphasis is now on speaking the message. Throughout the letter this has been Paul's theme. In chapter 1 he called Timothy not to be timid and reminded him that, ***"God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power."*** He said, ***"Do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord."*** He gave himself as an example of one who was ***"appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher"*** and stated that, ***"That is why I am suffering as I am."*** Then in chapter 4 he gave Timothy a solemn charge: ***"Preach the Word: be prepared in season and out of season."***
    - And now one last time Paul gives himself as an example as one who is speaking and suffering for Christ.
- **READ 16** - ***"At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them."*** So at the first stage of his defense trial in Rome, no other Christians supported him. Everyone deserted him. What? This is Paul. He has served everyone else for decades and yet no Christian stands with him. What a lesson here: if you want to live faithfully for Christ there may be moments when you will stand utterly alone. This should not be surprising for on the night he was betrayed Jesus was deserted by his friends.
  - I have noticed that right now we have entire generation of Christians who feel betrayed and abandoned by the church. They are angry because other Christians hurt them. I do not make excuses for any of this. Many a Christian has said these sad words: ***"no one came to my support."*** It is true that other Christians can hurt us.
    - But look at Paul. The church has deserted him and yet he still loves the church and says, ***"May it not be held against them."*** Is Paul not following Christ? The church abandoned Christ and yet he loved her to the end. The church may hurt you and you may be left all alone but follow Paul, follow Christ, in continuing to love her. After all, she is Jesus' bride.
- Listen to what Paul says in verse 17. **READ 17-19** – ***"But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."***
  - Do you hear the persevering courage of this man? He is focused on being loyal to the gospel message. He has spoken it. The Lord has rescued him from the lion's mouth – that is from certain death. Evil may attack him and even kill him but he will be brought safely into Jesus' kingdom.
    - This great truth causes him to burst forth in praise to God.
- Do you see it then? This is a call to keep heralding the message even if it means suffering. What keeps us persevering is that God gives us strength and even if we have to die for our faith we are safe – safe in the arms of God who will bring us into his kingdom.

- So do not be discouraged to speak. In order to persevere in unashamed loyalty to the gospel we must commit to Christian fellowship, keep growing in the knowledge of God, expect opposition, and keep heralding the message even if it means personal suffering.

## RELYING COMPLETELY ON THE GRACE OF GOD

- **(SHOW SLIDE)** Finally, in order to persevere in unashamed loyalty to the gospel we must rely completely on the grace of God.
- Let's be honest here. All that we have said is a tall order. As important as Christian community is, it can be hard. Facing opposition is difficult. Speaking for Christ, especially when we are alone and face the criticism of others, can be discouraging.
  - We may well agree that we need to persevere in unashamed loyalty to the gospel. We may well agree that we want to run all the way to the finish but the race is long and hard.
- That is why the close of the letter is so wonderful. If you have been a Christian for many years I bet you just breeze past the last verse. **READ 22 – “The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.”** It is like the flight attendant's instructions that you just totally ignore. It all sounds so cliché. You've heard it before and so you tune out. Don't do that now. This is massively important.
  - First, Paul says to Timothy, **“The Lord be with your spirit.”** After reading this letter Timothy must have said, **“Yes, oh how I need him to be with me.”**
    - After giving the Great Commission Jesus said, **“And surely I will be with you always until the end of the age.”** What strength there is for us here. Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to be with us.
- And then Paul says **“grace be with you.”** The “you” is plural so it includes not just Timothy but all Christians who hear this letter.
  - How will we cope with opposition? How will we speak when we are afraid? Not on our own strength. It is by the grace of God. In Jesus we have God's favour. He has earned it. Christ crossed the finish line and now gives us his Spirit to empower us to run the race.
    - Are you weary in the race? Keep running. For a day is coming when you will cross the finish line. And on the other side will stand your hero, the Saviour, Jesus Christ. On that day he will place the winners medal around your neck and will say, **“Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”**
      - Persevere in unashamed loyalty to the gospel.

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