

**Women's Bible Study – Winter/Spring 2011**  
**A Spiritual Legacy: Passing On What You Know**



**April 27, 2011**  
**Say Goodbye For Me**  
**2 Timothy 4: 9-22**  
**Jann Wright**

Good morning/evening. It is a privilege to be your guest teacher. As most of you know I have taken a sabbatical from teaching this year to spend additional time with my oldest daughter, who is graduating from high school. When Gretchen asked me to do the final lecture in this series, I was delighted. I have missed you and I have missed teaching.

Recently, Michelle Harris and I were discussing this last book in our series and noting the difficulty of applying our usual expository teaching strategies to a book that is a personal letter. I have thought about that a lot, and I wonder in these days of texting, Facebook, and quick one or two sentence e-mails, can you remember the most personal letter you have written or received?

My husband and I wrote each other frequently when we were engaged. Those exchanges were personal and from the heart, but it occurred to me that I have another letter in my possession that is even more personal. Well, to say I have it in my possession is a bit misleading, it is in a safe deposit box. I suppose I should keep important documents there like wills, mortgages, and tax returns, but to me this letter is of far more value than any of those. It is a letter I wrote on the plane returning home a few weeks after my mother's funeral. I was alone except for the newborn I cradled in my arms and it was to her that the letter was directed.

Still grieving from my mother's death, I poured out the rawest of emotions. I emphasized how much my mother had wanted to be a part of her life, she was after all the first grandchild, but the only thing that mattered in life was our relationship to Christ. I wrote that it was my fervent hope and prayer that one day she too would choose Christ. Ashley has never read the letter, it remains locked away for an appropriate time.

Paul was a letter writer himself. We have thirteen of his letters in our possession. Most of those letters were to churches. You remember Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Corinthians. The letter in our study today, 2 Timothy, belongs to a very small category of Paul's letters. It was written to a person, not a church.

It contains some of the most personal thoughts and feelings expressed by Paul. At times it seems we should turn away and not intrude on the very sacred conversation between a spiritual father and his son.

This passage; however, is included in the scriptures for our benefit. Just a few weeks ago, Angie taught on 2Timothy 3:16 which says, <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, . . .

## Scripture Passage: 2 Timothy 4:9-22

Our passage this morning/evening is 2 Timothy 4:9-22. It is the last few verses of this book, and it is Paul's good-bye. Please follow along in your Bibles if you have them with you. Otherwise, the passage will appear on the screen.

<sup>9</sup>Do your best to come to me quickly, <sup>10</sup>for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. <sup>11</sup>Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. <sup>12</sup>I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. <sup>13</sup>When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments. <sup>14</sup>Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. <sup>15</sup>You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.

<sup>16</sup>At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. <sup>17</sup>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. <sup>18</sup>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.

<sup>19</sup>Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. <sup>20</sup>Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. <sup>21</sup>Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers and sisters. <sup>22</sup>The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all.

## Background

It is approximately 67 A.D. Nero is the Roman Emperor and is engaged in wide scale persecution of Christians. Paul now "languishes in a cold dungeon chained like a common criminal".<sup>1</sup> He is near the end of his life and he knows it. He has

---

<sup>1</sup> The NIV Study Bible. 10th Anniversary Edition. 1995. Zondervan Corporation. page 1844

ministered to many people and churches throughout the known world. This is his final farewell.

## **Lessons from the Passage**

This is our last session of Women's Bible Study for the year. We have covered a lot of ground with the Apostle Paul. We will wrap up our series by identifying some lessons we can apply as we build and pass on a spiritual legacy.

### **Relationships are Important**

The first lesson is about relationships. Relationships are important. The fact that they were important to Paul is easily discernible even if you are just skimming through his New Testament Letters. The letters are filled with the names of people. In this passage alone, Paul lists 16 people. Here are some other excerpts from: Colossians 4:7-18 and Romans 16. (Slides)

Paul highly valued relationships. Yet, he was obviously very strategic in his work. He carefully planned his travels, planted many churches, set up leadership structures, checked their progress, and administered encouragement, rebuke, and outright chastisement when necessary. There were many "activities" that were necessary to conduct his ministry. However, he never loses sight of the importance of relationships.

We shouldn't either. Our roles in ministry may require activities and events. In our culture, especially as women, we often need to be very efficient to handle all of our daily responsibilities. We multitask, we use slivers of time productively, we work from a list. However, we need to be careful that we don't lose sight of the people that are the purpose behind what we do.

Relationships are important. I am drawn to the fact, however, that Paul doesn't say this in a generic, theoretic, or warm fuzzy way. He provides clues and sometimes outright instruction on what we can expect from relationships. Through the examples he provides, we learn that being engaged with people in relationships contains the elements of risk, reward, reality, reconciliation, and redemption.

Let's delve a little deeper into the roll call of relationships in this chapter. I am indebted to the writings of Dr. William Barclay in his commentary on 2 Timothy for the historical details that deepen our understanding of this passage.<sup>2</sup>

## **Relationships Involve Risk**

Paul's first examples in the passage teach us about risk in relationships. He mentions Demas. He has forsaken Paul for the world. That in itself would be stinging enough, but perhaps, the sting was even deeper. This name, Demas, is recorded in only three places in the New Testament. In Philemon 24 he is identified as a fellow worker. In Colossians 4:14, he is mentioned without comment. Finally, Paul warns Timothy about him in this passage. If this is the same person, how difficult it would have been to have someone shift from being a co-laborer in the gospel of Christ to deserting you and the priority of the gospel because they love the world more.

Next, Paul describes his relationship with Alexander. It appears Alexander, identified here as the metal worker, has done a great deal of harm to Paul. We are not told the specific transgression, but from the Greek words that are used it is likely that the harm was in spreading lies about Paul and his ministry.<sup>3</sup>

Relationships involve an element of risk. We can be deeply hurt. We can be disappointed. As Christians we are not immune from these risks. Paul wasn't immune and neither was Jesus.

## **Relationships Involve Reward**

So what motivated Paul to keep investing his life in and with other people when he faced these risks in relationships? Ephesians 6:12 tells us, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. I think that was one motivation. Paul knew the battle was launched in the spiritual realm. We would do well to remember that as well.

Another motivation for continuing on in this difficult business of relationships was reward. Relationships can be very rewarding as demonstrated by Luke in this

---

<sup>2</sup> Barclay, William. The Daily Study Bible Series: The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Westminster Press, Philadelphia. 1975. pp 212-223.

<sup>3</sup> Barclay, William. The Daily Study Bible Series: The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Westminster Press, Philadelphia. 1975. p 219.

passage. Paul says, "Luke alone is with me". Luke was the writer of the Book of Acts and in it we see a firsthand account of his journeys with Paul.

In fact, historians believe that when a person was arrested and sent to Rome to be imprisoned only two slaves could accompany him. It is probable that Luke, a physician, became Paul's slave to accompany him. What an incredible sacrifice for a friend. That is a precious reward of relationships that no money can buy. In our Christian walk, we too have opportunities to develop relationships that are that rewarding. Sometimes we are the sacrificial givers and sometimes we must humble ourselves to be the recipients.

### **Relationships Involve Reality**

Relationships also involve reality. In this passage, Paul illuminates to us some of those realities. He notes that several of his trusted colleagues have been dispatched to the churches across the continent. He says Crescens has gone to Galatia. Titus has gone to Dalmatia. Tychicus has been sent to Ephesus. Erastus stayed in Corinth. Trophimus got sick and so had to stay in Miletus.

These are not deserters, they are co-laborers, who are under Paul's authority. He is responsible for sending them to the various churches in the region. He too must deal with the necessary realities of spreading of the gospel. He must also deal with the fact that people get sick.

We too face the realities of relationships. People move, they get married, they have babies, and relationships change. Friends get sick, have surgery, need to care for aging parents, their interests and even values can change over the years. Sometimes we are lonely because reality has changed the nature of our relationships. Paul dealt with this difficulty and so must we.

Even though relationships on this earth can be very rewarding and nourishing to our souls, we must never forget that they are simply a shadow of the greatest relationship in our life, our relationship with Christ. Paul says at his first defense he was deserted. Scholars believe this was an earlier trial and imprisonment from which he was released. At that time he was deserted. It was not very safe to be friendly to someone accused by the Roman Government. Whatever the circumstances or reason for the desertion, Paul was alone.

In that fragile state he was clearly reminded that there is one person who will never desert, His Lord. Jesus stood at his side and gave him strength. Jesus will do the same for us. He is not tempted by the world's enticements, nor frightened by its threats, nor tied up with current commitments. He is always available to stand beside us and give us strength. The question is are we willing to stand beside him and receive it?

## **Relationships Involve Reconciliation and Redemption**

Finally, relationships involve opportunities for Reconciliation and Redemption. The subject for this lesson is Mark. I want to read from Dr. Barclay's commentary because every word he chooses is significant to tell the story:

"Mark had a curiously chequered career. He was very young when the Church began, but he lived at the very centre of its life. It was to the house of Mary, Mark's mother, that Peter turned his steps when he escaped from prison, and we may take it that this house was the central meeting place of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 12:12).

When Paul and Barnabas set out on their first missionary journey they took Mark with them--John Mark was his full name --to be their assistant (Acts 13:5). It looked as if he was earmarked for a great career in the company of Paul and in the service of the Church. Then something happened. When Paul and Barnabas left Pamphylia and struck inland on the hard and dangerous road that led to the central plateau of Asia Minor, Mark left them and went home (Acts 13:13) His nerve failed him and he turned back. Paul took that decision very hard."

Let's pick up the narrative in Acts 15:35 <sup>35</sup>But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord. <sup>36</sup>Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." <sup>37</sup>Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, <sup>38</sup>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. <sup>39</sup>They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, <sup>40</sup> but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord.

We don't hear about Mark for a long time. Then in Colossians we learn Mark is with Paul and Paul recommends him to the Colossian Church. Now that Paul is near the end of his life, he desires Mark's company, describing him as helpful. The original word used here describes a wide range of service capabilities. The man who had little to contribute at one point in his life now had a wide range of capacities for service. Mark and Paul have obviously reconciled.

I wonder who in your life and in mine do we need to extend the ministry of reconciliation? Is there someone in your life now or from many years ago that needs a second chance? Is there someone that needs a new beginning in a relationship with you?

I realize not all relationships can be reconciled. Some relationships need a great deal of time and even change to bring them to a point of reconciliation. However, we can't ignore the example of Paul reconciling with a person whom he refused to work with years ago, but now esteems as a trusted colleague.

Relationships involve reconciliation. They also provide opportunities for redemption. Relationships with others provide opportunities for us to share our faith story. We are witnesses for Christ. Through our relationships some may come to receive the ultimate relationship, one with Jesus Christ.

## **Return to the Basics**

Relationships involve a lot and they are a very dominate theme in Paul's life, but there are two other lessons from this passage to consider. The second lesson is Return to the Basics. Paul teaches us to focus on the basics. This is good advice to keep in mind always, but especially in times of trial. There is not a new formula for growing in our faith that we as teachers can present each week. It is the foundational things like reading your Bible, praying, witnessing, serving, and walking by faith.

Paul, in an incredibly personal way, demonstrates this lesson. He is concerned about three things. Two of them he asks Timothy to bring to him. He wants his cloak, a very basic need. The cloak was a large circular garment, like a rug. It had a hole in the middle for your head. It was long enough to reach the ground. It was almost like a small tent. It was a piece of clothing for winter.<sup>4</sup> This was one of the reasons that Paul tells Timothy to do his utmost to get there before winter.

Next, he wants his scrolls, his parchments. The word used here is biblia, which means papyrus rolls. These rolls could have contained some early forms of the gospels, more likely they were copies of the Hebrews scriptures. He wants his copy of the scriptures. The scriptures, in times of difficulty, provide a comfort that passes all understanding. We would do well to remember their importance daily, in good times and in bad.

The final basic thing, is not a thing at all, thankfully, because it cannot be taken away from him. It is not something from which he can be separated, but something of which we all need to be reminded. It is the hope of eternity. As

---

<sup>4</sup> Barclay, William. The Daily Study Bible Series: The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Westminster Press, Philedelphia. 1975. p 219.

each of our lives draw to a close one day, it is this basic hope of eternity which will carry us through.

Paul was under no delusion about the dispensation of his case, in verse 18 he says, <sup>18</sup>The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. . . He knows the hope of eternity is a gift no one can take away.

## **Run the Relay**

The final lesson we learn from this passage is that we are to Run the Relay. Several different teachers have emphasized this illustration to us through the course of this series. It is such a good mental picture for us to contemplate while we build a spiritual legacy to pass on.

No matter who we are or what our assignment in the kingdom, we are to run with perseverance the race that is marked out for us. We are in a relay race. We do not run the race by ourselves nor do we run it from the beginning of time to the end. We all eventually must hand off the baton. That is what Paul was doing. He had run his portion of the race and now he had to hand it off well to the next generation.

## **Be Prepared**

How do we do that? Gretchen gave us some great tips last week. One I want to reiterate is: Be Prepared. 1 Peter 3:15 says, <sup>15</sup>But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, We can all nod our heads and say of course we need to do that, but how? Here are a few ideas:

- We can memorize this verse, so we can bring it to mind when needed.
- We can write down our faith story, so we have a little practice.
- We can outline the key points of our faith story on an index card and keep it in our purse, so we have a ready reference.
- We can practice our gentle and respectful response when one of our children, or grandchildren says, “Why do we have to go to church?”
- We can look intently for opportunities that God gives us to answer those who ask us the reason for the hope we have.

## **Be Intentional**

We need to be prepared, but we also need to be intentional in the Hand Off. Gretchen talked last week about running together in the relay for a while. We

have chances everyday to run together for a while. We do life with others in our small groups, we are around friends and family at important milestones like: holidays, weddings, births, birthdays, graduations, and funerals. For those of us who still have children at home, we have ample opportunity to run along side them for a while. These are all opportunities for us to share our faith.

They are also opportunities for us to begin the hand off, the hand off may last for years or even decades, but that is o.k. After all, we may not have much warning about our deaths, so we need to be in a continual process to hand off the baton. Here are a couple of ideas:

- Rather than insist that family traditions (like Christmas and Easter, birthdays, and vacations) be done your way, allow others younger than you to have input into the traditions. They will be much more invested if they have input. What value is a tradition, even a good one, that falls apart when you are gone?
- Even though you are an excellent scripture reader, or usher, or Sunday School Teacher, or cafe worker, or whatever mentor your children and other young people to take those roles with your guidance, encouragement, and blessing. I am not advocating retirement from Christian Service, but mentoring, and changing up your roles sometimes. Run beside them, or consider another opportunity for service, one will always open up. There will be plenty for you to do. But, if we don't help young people find their role in the church, we may be training them to just attend worship services and leave.
- Let someone else offer the blessing at some meals.
- Let someone else occasionally read the scripture passage for evening prayers.
- Encourage older teens and young adults to talk about ways they want to organize their homes and raise their children. Give Godly Counsel, but encourage them to come and begin to hang onto the baton, so they are ready when you let go.

Intentionally invest in others to whom you want to hand off the baton. Paul invested in Timothy and many others. Who are you investing in?

We are going to close with verses from Hebrews 12. These will be both our prayer and our commitment. You will then be dismissed to your small group. Please stand.

Hebrews 12:1-3

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, <sup>2</sup>fixing our eyes on Jesus, the

pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.  
<sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

**WBS is a ministry of Autumn Ridge Church – Rochester, MN 55902**  
**Questions: email [wbs@autumnridgechurch.org](mailto:wbs@autumnridgechurch.org)**  
**[www.autumnridgechurch.org](http://www.autumnridgechurch.org)**