

## **THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS**

### **III. II Timothy: Church Ministry Amid Hardship M. Ministry To The Church Under Worldly Duress (2 Timothy 4:9-22)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. We increasingly hear of the departure of pastors from expounding Scripture and a waning spiritual vitality in churches. In such a time, pastors and teachers can easily be tempted to reduce or cease their ministry efforts.
- B. However, 2 Timothy 4:9-22 exemplifies how God's servants are to keep ministering even when the Church itself is under duress from the world, and we view the passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

#### **II. Ministry To The Church Under Worldly Duress, 2 Timothy 4:9-22.**

- A. 2 Timothy 4:6-22 reveals that Paul was ministering to a Church that was under duress from the world:
  - 1. He had explained in 2 Timothy 4:6 ESV that he was "already being poured out as a drink offering," referring to his imminent death under persecution by Rome's Emperor Nero (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1716, "Introduction to the Second Letter of Paul to Timothy: Background"), and the stress the Church faced from that persecution is evident in remarks Paul made about believers in 2 Timothy 4:9-11a:
    - a. Paul urged Timothy to come to him quickly, for Demas had forsaken the condemned Paul, loving this present world more than the life to come so that he had decided to quit living the Christian life under Nero's persecution and instead travel to Thessalonica and live for this life, 2 Timothy 4:9-10a, 21a.
    - b. Other coworkers of Paul had left to minister to distressed believers under Nero with Crescens going to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia and Tychicus to Ephesus, what left only Luke with Paul, 2 Timothy 4:10b, 12.
- B. Paul thus exemplified effective ministry to a Church that was under duress from the world, 2 Timothy 4:11b-22:
  - 1. Paul edified another believer who was gaining spiritual victory in his life and ministry, 2 Tim. 4:11b-12:
    - a. He told Timothy to bring Mark with him since Mark was profitable to Paul in his ministry, 2 Tim. 4:11b.
    - b. This is a remarkable request, for Mark had abandoned Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey so that Paul had refused to take him with them on their second missionary trip, Acts 15:36-40.
    - c. However, Mark had since rebounded from spiritual defeat, and even with the Christian Church under duress, he was remaining faithful to Christ and to Paul, so Paul wanted Mark with him at this trying time!
  - 2. Paul kept on studying and ministering God's Word in his divine calling, 2 Timothy 4:13:
    - a. He asked Timothy to bring the cloak he had left at Troas with Carpus, for winter was coming (v. 21a) and he was cold in the Roman prison. Paul sought to protect his health though he was close to martyrdom!
    - b. The reason Paul gave attention to his health despite his imminent martyrdom was his desire still to minister to others: Paul's "books" (KJV) were "papyrus rolls," and his "(p)archments" (KJV) were "(s)kins of vellum, used for . . . personal copies of the Old Testament," Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to 2 Tim. 4:13. Paul still sought to study Scripture and write letters on papyrus rolls to other believers, so he wanted to stay healthy by staying warm with his cloak and thus equipped with his books and papyrus rolls to continue to minister!
  - 3. Paul warned Timothy as a pastor to beware of an ungodly persecutor he would face, 2 Timothy 4:14-15.
  - 4. Paul kept on faithfully witnessing to unbelievers, 2 Timothy 4:16-18:
    - a. At his preliminary hearing, no fellow believer stood with Paul, but all deserted him out of fear of being thrown to the lions as a fellow Christian, the penalty for the faith under Nero, 2 Timothy 4:16a, 17b.
    - b. Paul graciously refused to feel bitter over being abandoned by fearful fellow believer, hoping God would not charge them with sin, and he testified how the Lord had stood by him to equip him to witness the gospel at his hearing and gave him a temporary reprieve from being fed to the lions, 2 Tim. 4:16b-17.
    - c. Indeed, Paul trusted that God would keep him from every evil work until he was in heaven, 2 Tim. 4:18.
  - 5. Paul encouraged faithful supporters in the faith, longtime coworkers and supporters in Priscilla and Aquilla and the household of Onesiphorus, 2 Timothy 4:19, 21b-22 with Acts 18:2-3; 2 Timothy 1:16-18.
  - 6. Paul told Timothy as a pastor of a believer in need for Timothy to address after Paul's death, 2 Tim. 4:20.

***Lesson:* With the Church itself facing duress from the world, Paul exemplified a ministry marked by edifying a believer who was gaining spiritual victory in his life, continuing to minister God's Word, warning a pastor of an ungodly persecutor, faithfully witnessing the gospel to the unsaved, encouraging long-time, faithful supporters and entrusting to a pastor the ministry needs of another believer he could not help due to his imminent martyrdom.**

***Application:* If the Church itself faces duress from the world, may we follow Paul's example in ministry.**