

COME BEFORE WINTER

Text: 2 Timothy 4:9-13, 21

INTRO: The 2nd letter to Timothy is the last of the 14 inspired writings of the apostle Paul. As he writes this letter, he is a prisoner of the Roman government. He is fully aware that his execution is just around the corner. The entire letter shows the urgency of a last request.

I. REASONS PAUL SENDS FOR TIMOTHY.

A. Paul is in need of spiritual companionship and encouragement, vs 10-12.

1. Since Paul had almost certainly converted him several years before, Timothy had been one of Paul's closest coworkers.
2. Also, Timothy was young. The older disciple had much to say to him that could best be said in person, face to face.
3. In the case of John Mark, Paul had earlier parted company with him because he found Mark to be unprofitable. In the intervening years, Mark has grown spiritually & Paul is a big enough man to realize that such is the case. Now Mark is profitable to Paul & the ministry & Paul leaves a witness for all the world to know that there has been a complete reconciliation. See Acts 15:37-40.
4. Paul is also in need of his books & parchments. Commentators have discussed a number of possibilities as to what these books were. The most reasonable suggestion would seem to be that they were copies of the Scriptures. The fact that Paul was inspired would not necessarily argue that he did not need a written copy of the revelations God had made in ages past.

B. In addition to these things of a spiritual nature, Paul also had some physical needs.

1. With winter coming on, Paul would need his cloak which he had left in Troas.

2. The suggestion that Mark was profitable for ministry may suggest that Paul was in need of certain personal services Mark could provide.

II. REASONS FOR THE URGENCY. “Come before winter.”

- A. It would not be possible to make the journey after winter set in, Acts 27:9-15. If Timothy did not go before winter, he would not be able to go until spring.

- B. But spring will be too late. READ 4:6-9.

- C. Come before winter, or not at all.

III. THE LESSON WE SHOULD LEARN: Redeem the time. There is much to do that must not wait.

- A. We need to attend to our soul’s salvation NOW.

1. We cannot do everything now but we must learn to put first things first. READ LUKE 9:57-62.

2. Felix, convenient season. Acts 24:25.

3. Before hardness of heart sets in. When I was a boy I used to take an old frying pan & melt lead in it to make sinkers to use in fishing. The lead had to be poured before it had time to cool. In the spiritual realm, there are thots & deeds that sometimes soften the heart, but unless we respond while these things continue to have their influence, it may be forever too late.

Heb. 6:4-6.

- B. Now is the time to show concern for others.

Luke 16:27-31; John 9:4

1. The “poor” (in general) you have with you always, MT 26:11. If there is someone in particular you want to show your love & concern for, the time is limited.

2. Dorcas, Acts 9:39. Had they shown their appreciation while she was alive?
3. How often have you heard of a death in the community & heard someone say, "It's so hard to believe. I saw him only yesterday coming out of the hardware store." Maybe so. But you won't see him coming out of the hardware store today or tomorrow, or ever again.
4. There is someone you know who will not be here next year at this time. Could be you.

The Spirit came in childhood & pleaded, "Let me in"
But, O the door was bolted by thoughtlessness & sin.
"I am too young" the child replied, "I will not yield today.
There's time enough tomorrow." The Spirit went away.

Again He came & pleaded in youth's bright happy hour
He came but heard no answer, for lured by Satan's power
The youth lay dreaming then & saying, "Not today.
Until I've tried earth's pleasures." The Spirit went away.

Again He called in mercy in manhood's vigorous prime,
But still He found no welcome. The merchant had no time.
No time for true repentance, no time to think or pray,
And so, repulsed & saddened, the Spirit went away.

Once more He called & waited. The man was old & ill.
He scarcely heard the whisper, his heart was cold & still.
"Go leave me. When I need thee, I'll call for thee," he cried.
Then sinking on his pillow, without a hope, he died.

CONCLUSION: If there is one verse of Scripture that admonishes the sinner to wait till tomorrow to repent, or that advises the Christian to wait till tomorrow to show love & concern for other, then I have no gospel to preach. Either the gospel is need NOW, or it is not needed at all.

La Porte, TX, October 29, 1978
Springhill, LA, October 20, 1980 (meeting)

Exton, PA, November 4, 1974
Exton, PA, October 20, 1991
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, December 15, 1991 (3 responses)
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, November 9, 1997
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, October 4, 1998 (1 response)
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, October 3, 1999
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, October 17, 1999
Fairfield, PA, October 31, 1999