**Sermon: Gospel-Guided Goodbyes** Text: 2 Timothy 4:9-22

9 Do your best to come to me soon.

10 For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

11 Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

12 Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.

13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.

15 Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message.

16 At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them!

17 But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.

18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

20 Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus.

21 Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.

22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Intro: Paul’s last letter, written by man and divinely inspired, God-breathed. His writing is surprisingly realistic and miraculously empowering, even in the worst of times. As Timothy, getting what is to be the last encouraging but sobering letter from his mentor, father in the faith, and church planter of his current ministry, Paul’s not painting with positivity, not glossing over hardship, but realistic in what is important and worth lasting; his life was given for Christ and our lives can & will serve the same message - the good new of Jesus Christ.

Q: How far does God’s promise go? To what extent will I trust and rely on God?

SiS: The Gospel message saves… Proclaiming Christ and Him crucified for you, risen for new life gives new life - to be lived for nothing less than His pure glory.

1. **Gospel-Guided Greetings->Goodbyes:** v9-15, 19-21 - The People
	1. v9-15 Paul desires Timothy to come visit soon: weather limits travel (v21) and he’s cold (cloak v13); he’s deserted on trial (v16) and values community
	2. Paul mentions 17 individuals: so we can zoom in on 7: v10 -Demas, v11+Luke & +Mark, v12+Tychicus, v14-Alexander, v19+Prisca & Aquilla
	3. v10 ‘Demas, in love with this present world’ ‘agape’ this ‘aion’ ‘age’ - in line with false loves by direction, degree, duration, here he adds by what’s ‘in fashion’ that day, or trending today. Compared to v8 love Christ appearing
		1. Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to the pattern of this ‘world’…” ‘aion’
	4. v11 Luke has stood by Paul, known him for 30 yrs, even before conversion. Mark, after Barnabas and Paul split ways, is restored and is useful for ministry (Acts 12-15). Tychicus has been sent to Ephesus, Colossae in Acts 20:4, “the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord”(Eph 6:21)
	5. v14 Alexander, who “strongly opposed our message” (v15) and “did me great harm” may be informer responsible for Paul’s 2nd arrest Acts 19:24
	6. v19 Prisca is the formal version, Priscilla the diminutive, like Liz, Acts18:24 mentioned first next to her husband Aquilla, Rom 16:3-4, as they both were tentmakers, and co-laborers in the work of the gospel, and “who risked

their necks for my life.” In community, household of Onesiphorus who “often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains,” 2Tim1:16-17 People matter to Paul, so Timothy needs to rely on community and be encouraged by them, and pray earnestly for them.

1. Our take-away: How do we categorize people, or lump them in with ‘those people’? Paul has more gracious nuance than what plagues us today: Critical Theory ‘mood’ of good/bad or overgeneralized characterization.
	1. The Good: represent each segment of category of society: not identifying rich and famous, influencers, stars or standouts, but ministers of Gospel
	2. The Bad: Demas, having deserted Paul (v10) he can pray, “May it not be charged against them” (v16)
	3. The Ugly: Even with Alexander, who did great harm to Paul, the Lord will judge and decide the repayment for his actions. v14
2. Paul’s final greetings gives insight into his Gospel-guided thoughts and heart attitude, gives instruction to Timothy and the church in Ephesus, and has given hope to believers for 2 millennia and around the world.
	1. v13 “Bring the cloak, books, and above all the parchments” - pass the mantel, but Paul’s not hanging it up yet. Urge to study, know God more

2. **Fully Proclaimed Gospel:** v16-17 The Message

1. Publicly calling out lives: Practical playing-out of ‘All Scripture being God-

breathed’ and profitable for: teaching, reproof (re-teaching when error is found), correction (even using negative example of others), and training in righteousness (being strengthened by the grace of Christ).

1. Positively: Gospel is not in chains: Even when Paul is on trial for his life, the Gospel is not diminished, but God is using the trial to put his Gospel on display, where Paul will declare the excellent glory of Christ is worth him dying for. Because Christ has died for us, we might live for him.
2. And so, the Gospel is not bound - as Luke concludes Acts where Paul is in prison

“proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.” Acts 28:31

1. Negatively: Even in prison the Gospel seems stifled, yet remains unbound
	1. v14-15 Alexander “strongly opposed our message” - Paul’s message to Timothy is to beware of false teaching. v15 “Beware” Not confidential detail: gives public warning: God judges hearts. Gospel draws lines.
	2. “the Lord will ‘repay’ him according to his deeds.”=judge will ‘award’ 4:8
2. Paul’s strong statement against Alexander also stems from his belief in the truth that The Lord, as the righteous judge is also who Paul longs, loves to see his appearing as he will fully and finally bring judgement to every evil, not just what happened to me, but justice to all.
	1. Ex. ‘Just Mercy’ by Bryan Stevenson, Rachel Denhollander’s intro chapter - fighting for justice b/c He will vindicate, justice will happen and a heavier vengeance will be had, “He will repay” Romans 12:19
3. Realistically: Practical Prison Proclamation: Paul knows the reality of life and ministry must be really, truly, thoroughly described so that the grace of God might also be really, truly, and thoroughly applied to life. Ex. MNA
	1. Example: v16-17“All deserted me… but the Lord stood by me and strengthened me” - so Timothy, and all yall, don’t be surprised when others desert you, even when they prove their love for the present world may be stronger than their love of Jesus and His Gospel.
4. The Lord’s Strength Guides the Gospel Message being Proclaimed:
	1. 2Tim1:8-9 “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,”
	2. v17 “But the Lord *stood by me* and strengthened me…” just as the Lord ‘*stood by*’ Stephen in Acts 7:56. Standing = posture of prayer: mediary
	3. v17b ‘so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed’ or ‘the gospel proclamation might be fully assured, or set on’ - established
		1. message confirmed even to the point of suffering, imprisonment, death = ‘fully assured’ the purpose of the message being boldly proclaimed and the actions in the lives of His saints to witness to the worth of Christ, even to death.

3. **Gospel Glory:** v17-18, 22 The Glory

1. v17 God ‘strengthened me’ to continue in the strength of Christ by His grace: even rescued from the lion
	1. v17-18 ‘Rescued’ isn’t teleport out of the mess, but promise to ‘bring me safely’ into heaven. ‘sozo’ - salvation: justification + sanctification
2. Believers need the gospel community to be reminded of God’s gospel glory.
3. v17 The ‘kerygma’ or message of “Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2), this is the central message of the church, the mandate to ‘fulfill the ministry’ is to ‘preach the Word’, to the ultimate end of exulting God’s glory
4. v18 ‘Doxology’-praise and worship flows out of Gospel message of salvation “To him be the glory for ages and ages”
5. ‘To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen’ gk lit ‘glory to him for ages and ages (aion)’ an exact doxology which Paul writes in Gal 1:5

Where we find value and glory, in this age/world, or in the fulfilled age in Christ to come for eternity is shaped by the governing love (agape) of Christ - as Demas in v9 chose to love another lesser thing in this age.

1. v22 “The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all” spirit lit ‘pneuma’ Connected with the Word of God as ‘God-breathed’ lit ‘theo-pneustos’

“Paul reminds his readers at the conclusion of every letter that they are dependent on Christ’s unmerited favor, forgiveness, and enabling power.” (George W. Knight)

* 1. Paul closes by connecting Timothy’s spirit with the Lord’s Spirit, and connecting the grace of Christ with you (plural, y’all): the entire congregation in Ephesus, and across 2 millennia and around the world.
1. Concluding Exhortation: Let me urge you not to just listen and forget. Follow in these examples, trusting in the Lord to stand by you, His Spirit to be with you, and His Grace will strengthen and empower you. Fame will not follow you, but faith will guide you, and His promise will not let you down.

Application:

* Where do I correct, control, or even encourage for my own glory, rather than for God’s glory alone? How can we urge one another to seek His glory above our own?
* Do I love the promise of Christ’s appearing so much that it shapes my life? The way I fight with courage? The way I run this race? The way I keep the faith?