

2 Timothy - Part 17

by John Hunter

In this sermon, John Hunter explores Paul's reflections on life, ministry, and the hope of eternal reward as he faces death.

Duration: 51:25

Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:16

Topics: "Worldly Distractions", "Prioritizing Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher warns about the dangers of becoming too attached to worldly activities, even seemingly innocent ones. He shares the story of a fellow preacher who became consumed by his love for fishing, to the point where it led him away from God and his church. The preacher emphasizes the importance of being careful about what we allow to take precedence in our lives, as even harmless hobbies can become distractions from our faith. He concludes by reminding the audience of the need to prioritize Christ over the world and to be prepared for the day when we will rest from our labors and follow Him.

Transcript

2nd Timothy chapter 4, reading and exposition begins at verse 6. Verses 6 to 8, the assessor in the dungeon. Paul is assessing life and death. The assessor in the dungeon.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

The assessor in the dungeon. Verses 9 to 13, the administrator in the dungeon. Paul is administering the service of God, albeit he is incarcerated in the dungeon.

Verse 9, do thy diligence to come shortly unto me, for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica, Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

Titicus have I sent to Ephesus. The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the booze, but especially the parchment. The administrator in the dungeon.

Verses 14 to 18, the apostle in court. The apostle in court. Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil.

The Lord reward him according to his words. Of whom be thou aware also, for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer, at my first defense, no man stood with me, but all men pursued me.

I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, that all the Gentiles might hear, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil one, and shall preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory forever and ever.

Amen. The apostle in court. Finally, verses 19 to 22, the apostle and his friends.

Salute Prisca and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. You're asked us aboard at Corinth, but Trofimus have I left at my little sink. Do thy diligence to come shortly, to come before winter.

Eubulus greeteth thee and Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren. The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you.

Amen. So Paul has reached the end of the road. We have read his very last words.

Written possibly just a few days or a few weeks before they led him out to the Ostian Way, around three miles outside the ancient city of Rome, where he was beheaded, decapitated. And the valiant spirit of the servant entered into the immediate presence of the Lord Jesus. Paul is writing with one foot on earth and the other in heaven.

He's writing from the very gates of heaven. And as he lifts his pen, verse 6, he looks at the present. I am now ready to be offered.

The time of my departure is at hand. Verse 7, he looks back. I have fought a good fight as a soldier.

I have finished the course as a runner. I have kept the faith as a steward. Verse 8, he looks forward to the judgment seat when he indicates that there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness.

I indicated in the reading that he was assessing life and death. It takes a big man to do that. To solemnly in the presence of the Lord look death in the face.

But I suppose that it's your outlook on such things that declare the profundity of your faith. We often tell sinners that they won't face up to the fact of death. To the fact that they may have to die.

I'm very sorry. I find that Christians are the same. I find that very few have faced up to the prospect that they might have to go or may have to lose a partner.

Very kindly, very often, they react much worse than do some ungodly people. I know that because of grace, the separation may be all the greater. Nevertheless, here it was.

To this man, to die was gain. You will notice what he says. He says, I am now ready to be offered.

The word offer there is the word that was used to be poured out as a drink offering. I am now ready to be poured forth. Way back in Philippians 2 verse 17 he says, If I be offered, but now that which was doubtful has become a certainty.

He says, I am ready to give my life. You will remember way back yonder when he met Christ on the Damascus turnpike. Then he engaged himself completely to God's Son.

He offered him his resources, his talent, his energy, his devotion, his love. Now he will offer him his life. He says, I am now ready to be offered.

You will notice like another, maybe in a lesser sense, but still true. No man was taking his life from him. He was going out to offer it to God.

That is always true of any martyr. They have voluntarily chosen to give their life for Christ. The drink offering poured upon the other offerings expressed the joy and delight and happiness of the offering.

Paul was happy to die. Quite content to leave this world forever. He uses a very remarkable expression.

He says, the time of my departure is at hand. Now the ideas behind the word departure are well known. It is the idea of loosening an animal from the shafts of a plough.

The day of labor is over, the time of rest has come. It is the loosening of chains or fetters in order to be free. One is being liberated and released.

It is the loosening of the tent peg in order to take the road that leads to God. It is the loosening of the moorings of a ship to sail out into the harbor of heaven. As far as Paul was concerned, it was to him to be a time of rest.

The days of labor and toil are over. Have you ever looked upon your loved ones and recognized that the time had come for them to go? They possibly had labored long and given everything to God and Christ. The time of rest had come, blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.

For they do rest from their labors, and their works do follow them. Tell me you good folks that read your Bible, have you ever noted that Mark, who presents the gospel of the perfect servant, that Mark alone says that when Christ ascended, he sat down. There's rest for the weary laborer and toiler.

But, says Paul, it's like being released. Being taken away from the confines of the body and the confines of the Roman juncture. He's now going to be liberated and soared to heavenly places.

Oh, everything that spoke of restriction will be gone forever. And he'll enter the expansion of heaven and the wonder and liberty of the Father's house. Death is a moving out to that which is bigger and greater and grander and loftier.

Again, it's like many a time he had moved out and walked the dusty roads of Asia Minor. Now he's taking his last walk on the road that leads to God. Now he's going to cut the moorings that bind him to earth, and he's going to sail out to the heaven.

For Paul, it all meant that everything in connection with life was over. He's going to take up residence in heavenly places. Tell me, have you ever thought about it? Have you ever thought of stepping onto a shore and finding it to be heaven? Have you ever thought of breathing fresh air and finding it to be celestial? Have you ever felt what it will be to feel the throbbings of life and find it to be the life that is eternal? Have you ever thought of reaching out to hold a hand and find it to be the hand of Christ? Have you ever thought of looking into a face to find it to be the face of Christ? Paul, Paul recognized, to live was Christ, but to die was gain.

Verse 7, he looks back. He says, Now I have fought a good fight as a soldier, I have finished the course as a runner, I have kept the faith as a steward. There had been some fight.

There he had stood as the warrior of the cross. He had fought against principalities and powers and the world rulers of this darkness. He had fought foes without and fears within.

He had fought against Jewish and Gentile violence. He had fought against division, litigation and fornication at Corinth. He had fought against Judaism at Galatia.

He had fought against Gnosticism, worship of angels, philosophy and vain deceit at Colossae. He had fought against sin and hell and the devil. And at the end of the road, he says, I have fought a good fight as a soldier.

He says, I have finished the course as a runner. My, that's interesting. He didn't say he had won the race.

Paul was happy just to have stayed the course. Many a one has fallen out in the last lap. He was quite happy that he had managed just to get to the end without mishap.

I have kept the faith. And he's now talking about the precious casket of truth that was committed to him. Time and again in these meetings I have spoken to you of it.

The Lord gave it to Paul, Paul to Timothy, others. And so it has come right down to our generation. And Paul says, I have kept the faith.

It lost nothing by his handling. It lost nothing by his teaching. It would retain its value and its quality at the hour of his death as it did throughout his life.

Brethren, that's a great thing. To be able to say at the end of the road, I have kept the faith. One would hope, one would hope, that the truth of God has lost nothing.

By its deposit with us and by its exposition through us. I have kept the faith. They are saved, he looks forward.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. You would expect this, wouldn't you? You would expect a crown to a soul winner. You would expect a crown for a shepherd.

You would expect a crown for those that endure severe testing. You would expect a crown to a martyr. And he's talking now about the crown that will be given to the righteous.

He says, watch how he puts it. There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give. You see, Nero had given his judgment.

He had gone against Paul. Now he says, I'm not interested in Nero's judgment, but I'm interested in Christ's judgment. And he says there'll come a day when he'll give his verdict.

And that will be the supreme thing. Now listen to me brethren and sisters. I want you to understand that this world is not the big thing.

We think it is, you know. 30, 40, 50 years, 60, 70, and then the other side. Eternity looms large before the paucity of time.

Brethren, the big thing's over there. The verdict of me is nothing. The verdict of Christ is everything.

Now listen to me, without being critical at all, the verdict of the brethren doesn't matter. The verdict of Christ is supreme. There's no true servant worth his salt.

Don't ever try to please others. You see, brethren and sisters, there's a day of account coming. I would to God the preachers would learn this.

And when we reach the end of the road, we won't be meeting a committee of brethren to give their judgment. We'll be meeting Christ. It won't matter very much then, brethren, about lots of things.

For instance, if in that day the Lord says to me, well done, good and faithful servant. Enter her, rule over so many cities, etc. Brethren, it wouldn't matter very much if you wouldn't have me on your platform.

It wouldn't matter very much if you didn't care for me. It wouldn't matter very much if you criticized me. It wouldn't matter very much in any way at all what you thought, if in the end Christ says, well done, good and faithful servant.

It might work the other way. And if Christ's verdict wasn't what we thought it would be, if he says, you know, your problem was that you could talk. My, you made it sound big and good.

But you know, it never wrought any moral fiver into my people. It never built and strengthened them. It never helped assemblies to live.

My brethren, if at the end of the road Christ said, you know, it sounded big, you know, it was just a load of rubbish, really. It wouldn't matter very much if you thought the world of me. Don't you understand, brethren and sisters, that at the end of the road, there's the righteous judge.

In the light of that, I would fear no man. Nor would I seek popularity and favour. Now, you maybe not excuse me for this.

You maybe not. You maybe say, I don't like these terms. Maybe you don't.

I just want to make it clear. I don't think that so-called tightness and looseness will gain big rewards. I believe that it will be faithfulness to God and Christ and his truth.

And we'll stand apart from the extremes of men and brethren. God help us, brethren. God help us.

If we're only promoting a spirit of sectarianism. And God give us grace to abide by the book. Isn't that right? And may God give us grace very humbly, for mind you, it's not a day for pride.

Oh, may God humble us. For mind you, brethren, we're nothing. And the more we realise it, the more God will bless us.

Isn't that right? And if you've known blessing here or elsewhere, it's only because of the grace of God and Christ. He doesn't give you. You're no better than anywhere else.

Except the fact that you're realising something more of the grace and power of Christ. And don't you think, please, that you're ever in a condition for God to bless you. For you're not.

The Lord constantly taught his disciples, when you've done all that you could, say, we're unprofitable servants. When you think you're ready for blessing, you're guilty of pride. Now come with me quickly, please, to verses 9 to 13.

I want you to note the selflessness of this man. You know, he's going out within days and weeks. He'll leave this world forever.

What do you think he's doing? He's sending somebody here, and somebody out there, and somebody else out there, until he's only got Luke. Now can you see how selfless that is? You see, when people draw near their end, brethren, they usually like the friends around them, the more the merrier. Isn't that right? And please, don't you think, don't think that I'm saying that you shouldn't have them.

But I think I told you one night before, it's a great thing. Just to sit down. As an elder or preacher, beside a saint that's dying, and help them through to the other side.

Have you ever done it? Whisper into their ears the word of God, and strengthen their faith when the devil's attacking them, just to help them through to the other side. And when you're leaving, they're hardly able to speak, and they'll just press your hand, and you know the messages go through. It's a big business, this.

Comfort the dying. Paul, Paul, knows the end's near. Instead of gathering all around him, he sends them out.

For the service of God is greater than man. He's totally selfless. And you know, brethren, that's a great thing.

To be prepared to sacrifice what's personal, for the good of others. You see, some of us find ourselves in lands other than the land of our birth. Now, I'll be quite honest with you.

I don't come here and elsewhere because I can't give meetings in Scotland or Britain. And I don't come here because things are unhappy in the Assembly of Kilmarnock. For I'm in 100% fellowship with every brother and sister in the Assembly.

And there's never any problem at any time, as far as engagements would be locally or in the area. But there are occasions when one feels that we should take a wider view. And we make our journey to these lands.

And we come to help you. We come to try and encourage you. We don't for one minute think that no one else can do it.

But you see, there's always a measure of sacrifice in this great business. Now Paul is sending them out. Now look at verses 9 and 10.

Now he says, Timothy, come quickly. For Demas hath forsaken me. Timothy, come quickly, for the fellowship has been ruptured.

Come quickly, for a man that once stood at my side is no longer there. Timothy, Demas hath deserted me. Literally, Demas hath left me in the lurch.

That's the fact, the reason he loved this present world. Now, I want you to note something. I want you to note that here was a man that backslid from the best of company.

That's right. Isn't that right? He accompanied with the Apostle and others. Here was an apostolic fellowship that was rich and fine and pure.

And yet this man backslid. Don't you think because you're in a good meeting and keep good company that you want backsliding? Come again. Would there be any significance in this, do you think? In Philemon verse 24, Paul refers to Demas along with others and he says, Demas, my fellow labourer.

In Colossians 4 verse 14, referring to Demas, he says, he just says, Demas. In 2 Timothy 4 verse 10, he says, Demas, the deserter. My fellow labourer, just Demas.

Demas, the deserter. Can you see the slide? Quietly, possibly unnoticed, he began to slip away. Did you ever read the fable of Sinbad the Sailor? Do you remember he was sailing in the Indian Ocean? And suddenly there arose out of the placid waters a magnetic rock.

And the magnetic rock drew the boat toward it. Silently, surely, inexorably, the magnetic rock drew the ship near. As the ship came nearer, the magnetic rock drew out the bolts and the clamps.

And the whole thing collapsed. Isn't that it? So there arises in all our paths the magnetic rock of worldliness. Slowly but surely it draws out the clamps of good resolutions.

And the bolts of your finest aspirations. Until, until you find that the attraction of a godless friendship, are you listening? The attraction of a Christless thought. The attraction of a something that hasn't Christ in it.

Slow but surely draws you. Until it's written, Demas left me in the lurch. The cry from a good man.

And Demas has gone down in the sacred text as a man who failed Paul in the hour when he needed him most. Ah, maybe he thought the cause was lost because Paul was going. Maybe he thought the thing was all over, I don't know.

According to Paul, he says he loved this present world. Now listen to me, will you? Your biggest danger is the things that you will turn to in your leisure time. That's your danger.

Oh yes. It's what the bent of your mind would be. And sometimes it's the so-called innocent things that do the damage.

Oh yes. I'm thinking today of a brother. And he was a good man.

An acceptable gospel preacher. Had a big bible class. God blessed him.

Blessed his labours. To cut a very long story short, the knife, the edge started to go off. Slowly but surely, he began to draw back.

He stopped going out preaching. He resigned from the bible class. Ultimately he left the assembly and took his older son with him.

Finally, they spent their weekends away from home, where they used to spend it at home in the assembly. Ultimately and finally, both he and his son died away from the Lord and away from his people. Tell me, what do you think was the cause? Fishing! Fishing! Fishing! Now brethren, there's nothing sinful in fishing.

Isn't that right? But what that brother never learned, that others could fish but he couldn't. Others could fish but he couldn't. Others could keep it in its place, but he couldn't.

Now do you understand what I mean? You just be careful what will take your natural benefit. Be careful that in the seemingly innocent thing you're finding there, the root of something that's worldly and hasn't got Christ in it. And so there came a day when he preferred comfort to hardship.

Preferred the way of the world to the way of the cross. Preferred the flabby road of materialism to the athletic heroism of a disciple. There came a day when he preferred the world to Christ.

Took time, for all the backsliders don't leave the meeting. There's nothing more sad than ultimately to see one turn away and go. As far as the record goes, Demas is the man that never came back.

Do you know any? Never came back. I always feel a touch of sadness when I read and speak about it. Let me tell you something.

You know, when I get to heaven, there are lots of people that I'm wanting to speak to. That's right. Lots of people I'm wanting to speak to.

For instance, I shall be deeply interested to meet the Apostle Paul. Oh yes. I'm sure quite certainly he'll get quite a shock at the interpretations that we put on the letters.

Quite certain about that. And I'm really looking forward intensely to meet him and talk with him. Tell you another man I'm looking forward to.

I'm looking forward to meet the man that we call the dying thief. Mind you, he had an amazing revelation. I'm looking forward to meet him.

And amongst many others, I'm looking forward to meet Demas. I feel sorry for him. Oh by the way, I should say to you.

If when I'm standing talking with these good brethren and you happen to pass by, just join us. You know, I would reckon I know Paul. I've never met him, never seen him, but I think I know him.

I've accompanied in fellowship with him for many a year. I've got to know him through his writings. I told you one night before, didn't I, that I know Christ better than any of you.

Well that's true. Because I don't walk with you every day and talk with you every day and fellowship with you every day, but I do with Christ. And I reckon I would know Paul better than most of you.

But he was a great man. Demas hath forsaken. It should read, Luke only is with me.

Luke only is with me. Interesting man, Luke. He calls him the beloved physician.

Calls him a fellow labourer. Do you find that interesting? You see, Luke was not only a doctor, but he found time to do work for the Lord as well. Oh yes.

He was more than a professional man. He was a dedicated Christian. I'll tell you what, he wasn't only a doctor, he was a writer.

You say, how do you make that one out? Well he wrote Luke's gospel and he wrote the Acts of the Apostles. So he was a writer as well as a doctor. I'll tell you what, he was the man that very often cared for Paul.

You see, Luke was a professional, he was an intellectual and Paul was an intellectual and they found common ground. Oh yes, found common ground. And they had many a conversation.

But you know, the times when the wee man was flawed, Luke would be there. Tenderly, skillfully, kindly. He would attend to him, not only with his physical afflictions, but with his thorn in the flesh.

Paul no doubt owed a great deal to the doctor that kept him on the road. Brethren and sisters, listen. Long after your brilliance and cleverness and oratory is forgotten, people will remember your kindness.

They'll never forget your kindness. I want to say this to you, be kind one to another. I reckon that not only a doctor, not only a writer, but Luke was kind and loyal.

He's there, he went with Paul on the first journey to prison in Rome. You say, how do you know that? Well, I'll tell you. Have you noticed in the Acts of the Apostles, there is what is known as a wee section? And whenever the writer begins to talk about wee, you know that Luke has joined the company.

And in Acts 27, on the great sail by boat to Rome, wee, wee, Luke was with him. And he's with him now at the end of the road. Listen, there are some people you can depend on.

They'll always be at your side. You see, here is Demas who let him down. There's Luke that always was with him.

Now, please, verse 11. Take Mark and bring him with thee. Who's Mark? Mark's the man that went back and came back.

You see, in life you'll always find people like Luke that will always be at your side. They'll never fail you. You'll always find people like Demas that will forsake you.

You'll always find people like Mark who will go back for a short time and then come back. And you've got to be prepared for these things. And got to be prepared to accept them and receive them.

Take Mark and bring him with thee. Mark's interesting. When Paul and Barnabas decided to go on their first missionary journey, Acts 13, they took Mark as their attendant.

You know, baggage boy. And there they were. Have you noticed in Acts 13? When they reached Pamphylia and decided to take the hard and dangerous road that would lead to the central plateau of Asia Minor, Mark turned back and went no more with them.

Now, I don't know why he went back. I don't know whether the road was getting a wee bit rough and the glamour had worked off of being a missionary. You know, people think there's a great glamour in this sort of business.

They only see you on the platform and think it's great stuff. And the glamour soon wears off. Whether the glamour wore off, I don't know.

Again. Whether his love for his mother, remember John Mark's mother, Acts 12? Whether love for mother and home, he got homesick and decided to give up, I don't know. All I know is this, he went back.

When it came to the second missionary journey, Paul wouldn't take him. When you come to Colossians 4, Paul says to them there at Colossae, now listen. If Mark comes, you're the seaman.

He says, don't forget, he's been restored. When you come here, Paul's wanting him back. He's profitable to me.

The man that went away backslid like the man that came back. If Demas warns you of a man that went and never came back, and if Luke delineates the man that's loyal to the very end, Mark will tell you of those who turn away. But remember this, the story of Mark is this.

Brethren, there's always a way back. There's always a way back. We believe in recovery.

Thank God, that when Mark got back, do you know what the Lord did with him? No, you see. Mark, the servant that failed. God used him to write the gospel of a servant that never failed.

Can't you see that Mark learned his lesson? Can't you see that Mark, at the end, came to realize and appreciate something of the glory of a servant that never failed? Brethren, there are those who turn away. Thank God for those who come back. There's a way back.

You needn't remain the way you are. There's no need to go on in coldness of heart. Thank God, there's a road back to fellowship with God and Christ and with his people.

Quickly now, please. Verses 14 to 18, the apostle in court. At my first answer, no man stood with me.

Tell me, please, have you noticed? Have you noticed the connection between 2 Timothy 4 and Psalm 22? Have you noticed the connection between Paul and the Lord? Listen to this. I'm down now, please, at verse 26. At my first answer, no man stood with me.

Psalm 22, there was none to help. All forsook me. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Verse 17, notwithstanding the Lord strengthened me.

O my strength, make haste to help me. That by me the preaching might be known and all the Gentiles might hear. Psalm 22, all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord.

Verse 17, I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. Save me from the lion's mouth. Will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.

The kingdom is the Lord's. Remarkable, isn't it? That Paul's last days seem to be something like the Lord's. And there he was.

The Lord knew what it was to be forsaken. Others to let him down. Others to stand by.

Paul seems to be treading the Calvary road. Interesting in verse 17 that he took the opportunity in that court to tell out the message of the gospel. He took the opportunity that all the persons present in that cosmopolitan city, present in court that day, might hear the gospel.

My first offence, no man stood with me. Two or three times I've mentioned this. He looked round for friends and nobody had arrived.

He was on his own in the court. But he says the Lord stood with me. And the Lord strengthened me.

Oh brother, it's a great thing. It's a great thing. When you're on your own.

It's then that the friendship and intimacy and fellowship with Christ that you've known in the sanctuary of your soul comes to your aid. That's right. It's then that the personal fellowship with Christ proves to be everything.

And so on that day, he says, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me. That by me. I was delivered out of the mouth of the liar.

The case was adjourned. Paul knows his days are numbered. He says the Lord shall deliver me from every evil one.

Now, just as we come to the close, please, one or two things. Would you notice the opening of verse 19? Salute Prisca and Aquila. Here's a husband and wife.

And if you follow through, they're mentioned about six times. You can follow them from Corinth to Ephesus to Rome back to Ephesus. You'll find this.

Wherever they went, they stood associated with the local assembly. You know, there are couples that move and take the opportunity when they move just to fade out. Do you know what I found moving around? Interesting to hear what you brothers find.

I find this. If you find an assembly that's active and virile and strong. They're doing a great work for God, whether it be small or big, the assembly.

I have found that one of the reasons for that is this. That all the young couples are actively involved. Generally, on the whole, they're the backbone of a meeting.

And I have found in going to assemblies where things are not active and not virile and not strong. It's because the younger couples are not involved in the affairs of the assembly. I just do think it out.

And they were always associated with the activities of their local church. Come again, the close of verse 20. Trophimus have I left at my return's sake.

So Paul didn't heal everyone, nor cure them. He had the gift of healing. Now watch.

He didn't heal Trophimus. He didn't heal Timothy's weak stomach. He didn't heal Epaphroditus when he was sick nigh unto death at Rome.

Now that's interesting. In fact, most of the healing seemed to have been done in relation to unbelievers. You see, there's no such thing in your Bible, your New Testament, as big faith healing meetings.

James 5 says they called for the elders. It wasn't a faith healing meeting. There's no laying on of hands.

It says that they called for the elders of the church. The man lying there had recognized that sin had laid him on his back. So it says that let them pray over him having anointed him with oil.

The anointing was first, the prayer second. The prayer of faith shall save the sick, the Lord shall raise him up. Now I want you to notice something.

I want you to notice in this situation in James 5, there is no question but what the person will be healed. Now pay no attention to the expositors and teachers that tell you that prayer in James 5 is according to the will of God. Now why they say that is just in case the business fails.

But in James 5 there's no question but the will of God is that the man shall rise. The prayer of faith shall save the sick, the Lord shall raise him up. Now that proves this, that James 5 is not general, it's exceptional.

If it was a general situation, it means every time you two kill, all you need to do is send for the elders and you'll be okay, you'll be healed. Am I right? But it's not a general situation. If that were true, nobody would ever die, unless you were killed by a bus or something.

That's right. The situation is abnormal, it's exceptional, it's unique. And the very fact that they sent for the elders and not for a man with the gift of healing, and they didn't send for the doctor, and they didn't send for an apostle, should have told you that in the reading.

They sent for the elders of the church who had received collectively no gift of healing. That should tell you that it's an administrative background, that it's a spiritual problem that the elders have to deal with. It was a question that the man had sent.

And amongst the other proofs is this. After he's told you about it, he says this. He takes your mind to Elijah.

And he says Elijah was a man subject to like passions as he prayed and it rained not. Why does he mention Elijah's prayer in the context? Why doesn't he mention Moses' prayer? Why doesn't he mention Daniel's prayer? Why doesn't he mention Samuel's prayer? Why does he mention Elijah's prayer? Because Elijah's prayer was in relation to discipline and the sin of the people. That's why.

The people had sinned. So Elijah prayed and brought the government of God upon them. He prayed again and the rain came.

That's why it's Elijah. Everything's calculated to tell you that the situation is not general. It's particular.

However, that'll need to do because I'm not dealing with James 5 on the principle of healing. Now, so he comes to the close, does Paul. He says, The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.

Grace be with you. Amen. And so we come to the end of it all.

Paul lifts his pen. He says, The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. What more could Timothy want? What more could each one of us want? What greater in life? The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.

No, he says, The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. And he's calling to Timothy.

Timothy, may you experience the personal presence of Christ. Now that's a great thing. Do you know anything about it? Listen to me, will you? Christ is a real person.

He's not an influence. He's not far away. Because of the indwelling spirit, you can know the very real presence of Christ with your spirit.

And as he looks forward to the time when he's gone, he says to Timothy, Grace be with you. Amen.

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