

Content and Undaunted

The Life and Ministry of Paul—part 11

September 4, 2016

DAY 1: Living on the far side of suffering. (to see the other side of suffering)

1. Quiz A:

- a. Who are the last three Super Bowl winning teams?
- b. Who won the last three Oscars for “Movie of the Year”?

2. Quiz B:

- a. Name three people you admire, and in whom you try to pattern your life.
- b. Name three people you’d call if you were up to your neck in alligators.

3. What does it take to make an impact in someone’s life? Seminary degree? Decent salary? Life going pretty smoothly? As we finish up the life and ministry of Paul, we find Paul had none of those!

4. As we come to the last message of Paul’s life, he has not living in a retirement home. He doesn’t own a condo in the south of France. He’s not sipping a Mai Tai down at the beach in Maui. Luke records...

Acts 28:14 ...and so we came to Rome.

Acts 28:30 For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.

5. “Rented house” – Paul was under house arrest. He was paying for his own incarceration. He was chained to a Roman guard 24/7. He was allowed to see visitors.

*Acts 28:31 Boldly and without hindrance he **preached** the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.*

“Preached” – “proclaim” (not what we think of as “formal” preaching. He was sharing his faith.

*Philippians 1:12 Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to **advance the gospel**.¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴**Because of my chains**, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to **speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly**.*

7. He’s doing this while under “house arrest” and despite his chains!

8. What does that tell you about Paul’s attitude toward the whole mess?

9. If you were one of his visitors, what would you be thinking as you walked back out the door and into freedom?

10. No matter your difficulties, you are always on mission! Your purpose is not dependent on circumstances!

DAY 2: Contentment

1. Paul's attitude is anchored in his secure standing with God through the grace of Jesus, and not in his wavering circumstances! As you read this words from Paul's letter to the Philippians, remember that he penned this letter from prison!

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves.

⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

2. How would you describe Paul's attitude in Philippians 2:3-4?

3. How would that attitude help you in your daily life?

Philippians 2:5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

4. I wonder if Paul kept in front of him, in his mind, the sufferings of Christ, that were far worse than his own. How would that help him be content, even in prison?

Philippians 2:14 Do all things without grumbling or questioning,

¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

5. If anyone had reason for grumbling and questioning it would be Paul. Yet, that door is locked: not going there!

6. Paul sees reasons for not grumbling or questioning as related to his purpose!!! List the four reasons he gives for not grumbling:

7. Paul is near the end of his life. When that happens you wonder about what kind of impact your life has had. Is this how I wanted my life to end? Does anyone care? You don't get the sense that that's what Paul's thinking!

Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

8. Was Paul "mailing it in?" Was he "coasting on his laurels"? How would you describe his attitude?

9. He was clearly not hardened or bitter. You wouldn't smell a sour attitude in the room. I suspect an astounding irony occurred with every visitor. Visitors who came in bitter left softened. Visitors who came in proud walked out humbled. Visitors who walked in angry walked out more content. Visitors walking in moaning and groaning walked out grateful.

10. How are you challenged by Paul's attitude?

DAY 3: 2 Timothy 2

1. Paul was imprisoned, under house arrest for several years. During that time, he wrote several of his epistles and shared the Lord with the soldiers that were chained to him. So many of them became Christians that he tells the Philippians that the gospel was flowing through the Praetorian Guard!

2. We do not know the year he was released, and we don't know how long he was free before his second and final arrest in Rome.

3. After his second arrest in Rome he wrote the epistle called 2 Timothy.

4. There is not one drop of self-pity or angry resentment in the entire letter. As Paul has done throughout his ministry he is highly realistic about suffering, puts accurate words to the difficulties and hardships, yet is anchored even when the storms are howling around him.

5. As Paul mentors Timothy in the ministry, he uses six different illustrations that should categorize his work:

2 Timothy 2:2 ... and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

³ *Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him.*

⁵ *An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.*

⁶ *It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.*

¹⁵ *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*

²⁴ *And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, forbearing, ²⁵ correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth,*

6. From these verses, jot down the point Paul is making to Timothy:

a. Soldier-

b. Athlete-

c. Farmer-

d. Workman-

e. Servant-

7. Which of these five pictures/illustrations could you use more of in your life?

8. What is something you could do to put the "picture" into action?

DAY 4: 2 Timothy 3

2 Tim. 3 “A Warning List for Difficult Times”

1. One of the dominant themes in Western culture is a belief that “man is basically good.” While that sounds noble, it sets you up to have expectations of others and yourself that are inevitably going to disappoint you. The scriptures give us a more accurate view of human nature. Mankind is driven by self to fulfill self as top priority. That drive of self finds expression in thousands and thousands of ways. Paul identifies a number of them.

2 Timothy 3:1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.

² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,

³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good,

⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God--

⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

2. What most strikes you about that list?

3. Does your view of human nature square with Paul’s?

2 Timothy 3:13 ... while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

4. The problem of human nature is worse than imagined. It’s not just that we make a mess of ourselves, but we make a mess of others. How does Paul depict this in v. 13?

5. In the face of this realism about human nature, Paul gives Timothy two important pieces of advice. The first is in v. 14.

2 Tim. 3:14 Continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them.

6. Who are the people who have given you wisdom for living? Paul says to keep on that road!

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

7. The second piece of advice relates to the scriptures.

a. What does Paul say about the scriptures in v. 16?

b. What are the benefits of obeying the scriptures?

DAY 5: The unusual look of the Victorious

1. This is likely the last “page” of scripture Paul wrote before his execution. The first five verses are Paul’s charge to Timothy in trying to help people grow in the Lord. Underline what strikes you:

2 Timothy 4:1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:

² Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction. ³ For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. ⁵ But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

2. In these next three verses, underline the items you notice about Paul’s attitude about life, his legacy, and facing death:

2 Tim. 4:6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure.

⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

3. In this next section, underline the items that depict the difficulties and heartaches Paul experienced:

2 Timothy 4:9 Do your best to come to me quickly, ¹⁰ for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. ¹² I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

¹³ When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

¹⁴ Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done.

¹⁵ You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.

¹⁶ At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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.

4. We love storybook endings. We love when the hero finally is exonerated, gets vindication, is finally recognized and rewarded for his commitment and achievements. But for Paul, this is not how life HERE ended. It ended with his head resting on a chopping block.

5. In spite of his heartache, what stood out to you about Paul’s attitude at the end of his life?

6. As we finish our study on the life of Paul, how has your understanding of the Christian life changed?