

2 Timothy 4v9-15 - Adversaries & Allies

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[0 : 00] Please turn with me to 2 Timothy 4, verse 9-15. That's page 1197. 2 Timothy 4, verse 9-15, page 1197 in the Church Bible.

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But I think, more than maybe any sermon that we have done throughout this entire series, that there is something in these verses for everyone in the room today.

[1 : 57] See, it doesn't matter where you are on the spectrum of faith, you've been a believer for a while, or you're coming into church for the very first time. I believe that you will be able to identify with one person in this message today.

So let's go ahead and dive in. Today we're going to look at two categories that Paul lists in this passage. Adversaries and allies.

And see, Paul lists two adversaries. These are people that were opposed to the gospel being spread in this passage. We will call them Demas the deserter and Alexander the antagonist.

See, and Demas, we'll start with him. He is called the deserter because, well, he deserts Paul. And I think it's important for us to look at this and understand this.

He is not just called the deserter because he leaves. There are many people that we will look at later in the sermon today that leave. But see, Demas is a deserter because if you look at verse 10 of what it says there.

[3 : 07] See, it says that Demas loved this world. Demas was no ordinary Roman. This was not a guy that Paul had just met on the street and become friends with.

No, Demas was important to Paul. In Philemon 24, Paul says that Demas is a gospel worker with him.

Twice in the New Testament, Demas is listed in the same breath as Luke, the gospel writer of Luke, and the book of Acts. See, through many trials, Demas has been with Paul.

He has experienced the highs of ministry. He has fought through lows. But in the end, when Paul is desperate, when he needs somebody to be by his side, Demas deserted him.

And I wonder if there is anyone in the room today that can relate to this. See, on the outside, you look like a Christian. You would be able to pass the test if there was one.

[4 : 13] You go to church. You do the golden rule. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. You will like that rule. You know the Bible stories. If there was a quiz, you would pass it.

But on the inside, your heart does not belong to God. Instead, it is in love with the world like Demas. See, you put more stock in what the world says than what the Bible says.

Maybe that looks like relationships. We say, I said what the Bible said about relationships 2,000 years ago. That is great. But that has no pertaining on what I do today.

See, I don't have to listen to what it says. I need to have sex before marriage now. Because, hey, the standards that the Bible puts in there, that's just not realistic anymore.

I mean, we got to make sure we're compatible, right? Would you drive a car without taking it for a test drive first? Or maybe it's not relationships.

[5 : 17] But maybe it's time. So you chase success at the expense of time with God.

You bargain with God and say, Lord, if there is any time left in the rest of the day, I will give it to you. But every time it comes to the end of the day, you end up not having any time for the Lord. And see, maybe it's not even your time, but maybe it is your family.

So the work-life shambles in your life may be, or the work-life balance in your life may be in shambles. You would look and define success, how the world defines success.

And you would define yourself more by what your boss thinks of you than your son. See, when push comes to shove in your life and a crisis comes, and trust me, there will be a crisis in life.

What is going to come out of you, Christ or the world? See, we are all like sponges. We soak up what is around us. It may just be a 30-minute show here that we know we shouldn't watch, but it's just 30 minutes.

[6 : 29] Or maybe 15 minutes of a website we know we shouldn't visit, but hey, it's just 15 minutes. Or maybe we participate in a conversation that we know we shouldn't participate in. It's like, hey, I won't participate in the gossip part.

I'll just listen. But like a sponge, we are soaking up what is around us. And so when we are squeezed, what comes out has occupied our heart.

See, I'm going to make an assumption here about the passage. See, I don't think Demas meant to be a deserter. See, we have another category that we're going to talk about here in just one second of a person that is openly hostile to the gospel.

So I don't think that's what Demas wanted to be. I don't think, was he running with Paul earlier throughout his ministry? He's going, ah, Paul, just you wait. Just you wait until you trust me. And then when you least expect it, when you need me the most, I'm going to stab you right in the back.

I don't think that's what Demas wanted to do. And yet, is that not exactly what happens? So we have to ask the question, why?

[7 : 37] Why did this happen to Demas? It goes to the illustration that we were talking about. You can skip to the next slide. Because we're soaking up what is around us.

See, Demas was surrounded by Paul. But instead of soaking up the rich doctrine that Paul was teaching, instead he was mesmerized by the ways of the world.

And when things got tough and persecution started to happen, Demas did what made sense to him. And he ran. So the question, friends, in the room today, what are we soaking up?

Are we going to be defined by the world's definition of success, and what the world wants to push on us? Or are we going to be defined by what Jesus says about us?

So that's the first category of adversary. Let's move now to the second category. And that's Alexander the Antagonist. See, unlike Demas, who is with Paul and he turns his back on Paul, Alexander is an open enemy of Paul's preaching.

[8 : 49] We don't know a lot about Alexander. Unfortunately, it was a really common name back 2,000 years ago. But we do know that Alexander was doing everything that he possibly could to make sure that the mission of God was not accomplished through Paul.

See, so much so that Paul, even in his letter to his young protege, Timothy, has to say, Hey, Timothy, watch out for this guy. He is not good. Do not trust him.

He is a snake. He wants nothing more than to see you fail. And once again, I would ask the question, Is this someone in the room today? Maybe you're here just because a parent dragged you here.

Maybe you're here because a co-worker invited you. Or maybe curiosity just got the better of you and you had to come in and see what it's all about. Can I say two things to you if you're in the room today?

And that is you. Number one, welcome. Genuinely. The church for centuries has been a place where people come to find answers.

[9 : 58] West Kilburn, this church, wants to be that place in this community. So welcome in. And the second thing I want to ask is, How's it going?

And not the how's it going that you say when you meet somebody, Hey, how's it going? You really don't care what their answer is. But the genuine, soul-searching question of how is it going in your life?

See, the writer of this letter, Paul, he would have an answer to that question. And his answer would be, It's not going very well. See, Paul, just in the message prior to this, in the few verses prior, he said, Hey, my time is near.

I've been beaten. I've been jailed. And I am about to die for the faith. He knows this. And yet, Paul's story makes even less sense when you realize that Paul went from a persecutor of the church to the position that he is in now.

See, Paul is in the same shoes as Alexander is in this passage. He was in the same shoes as Alexander is in this passage. And if you are an antagonist of the gospel, he was in the same shoes as you are today.

[11 : 16] So what changed? How did a persecutor of the faith become one of the faith's greatest martyrs? Paul met Jesus. On the road to Damascus, the Lord changed Paul's life, and he could no longer live for himself because he found something greater to live for.

And it changed everything. And now, when he is faced with the reality of death, Paul does not shrink back and hide, but instead he can sit there and proclaim the good news because it has changed his life, and he believes it can change yours too.

See, if you look at the end of verse 14, the start of verse 14 there, see, Paul does not take retribution for Alexander into his own hands. See, he knows that God is the ruler of all things and that he has power over all things.

And so, he says, Alexander, you are going to get what you deserve either in this life or the next. It does not matter to me. But there is one who is all-powerful who will take care of it all. And this begs the question, what would happen if we got what we deserved?

If you want to answer that question today with the hope and assurance that Paul does, then you have to meet the same person that Paul met, and that's Jesus. So that the next time someone asks you the question, how's it going, you can say, well, it doesn't matter my circumstances.

[12 : 51] They could be really great. They could be really bad. But it doesn't matter because my hope is not in them. Instead, it is in the God that created the universe and changed Paul and then indeed changed me.

So now we've looked at the adversaries. We've looked at the bad guys. Let's turn our attention now to the good guys because every good story ends with the good guys winning, right? Let's take a look.

Let's read starting at the end of verse 10. Back at the verse. So there's a few guys that are listed here in the end of Paul's letter to 2 Timothy.

So we're going to go through them and kind of get a better understanding of who they are. The first person is Crescens. And, well, sorry, we don't know a lot about him.

So we're just going to have to skip right over Crescens. But the next three, the next person listed is Titus. And Titus is a part of a group that I will call T, TLC.

[14 : 12] Titus, Tychicus, Luke, and Carpus. And yes, these guys did indeed go chasing waterfalls instead of sticking to the lakes and the rivers that they're used to. But see, if you look at the credentials of these guys, you realize that they are just ordinary people.

These guys were not Jews. They did not grow up studying under rabbis. But instead, they were just out in the world and started following Jesus. Through different circumstances. None of them would look exceptional in the eyes of the world.

But yet, if you look at their resumes after the fact, you see that they had a huge impact for the gospel. All right, so out of T, T, L, and C, Carpus, again, is one of those guys that we just don't know a lot about.

He's not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible. But the other three, Titus, Tychicus, and Luke, their legacies continue to this day. So let's start with Titus.

Titus wasn't Paul's protege. He did not get that title. Instead, when you look at where Paul sends him instead of where he sends Timothy, you kind of think, Titus, you kind of got the bad end of the deal here.

[15 : 28] See, Timothy gets to go to this global city of Ephesus. And while it did have some of its problems, Ephesus is known as a place where some of the titans of the faith came from. Titus.

Titus was sent as a messenger to the Corinthians. And if you've ever read 1 and 2 Corinthians, you know they had some problems. On top of that, Titus goes on a missionary journey with Paul to Crete.

And Paul's like, great, I'm going to continue on. Titus, you stay here in Crete. The problem is the people in Crete, they were described as liars, lazy gluttons, and evil beasts.

Not a great missionary assignment, huh? And then even in 2 Timothy here, while Paul is writing this letter, Titus is in modern-day Serbia, ministering and spreading the gospel to the people there.

He never had a position of grandeur. He was just an ordinary guy following the Lord and obeying Paul when he told him to go. What about Luke?

[16 : 35] Luke has kind of the same story. He's a Gentile doctor. He accompanies Paul on his second missionary journey, and Paul leaves him behind in Philippi. And then Paul continues on throughout all of his journeys, doing all the great things that are written about in the gospel of Luke.

You know where Luke is? Philippi. Paul doesn't come back and pick him up until his third missionary journey. Luke is just there. And then, you know what we hear about Luke after that?

Not a lot. He just accompanies Paul. Luke is a trained doctor turned sojourner, and now, by all accounts in the world, he would look kind of like a failure, right?

And then that comes to Tychicus. Tychicus is basically Paul's royal male. He takes a gift from the Corinthian church, takes it over to the Jerusalem church. He delivered various letters to various different churches.

He helped unite a former slave to his former master. And then Tychicus is the one who gives Titus a break on Crete.

[17 : 43] And again, I ask the same question over again on purpose. I wonder, as we look here at this passage, as any one of us in the room can relate.

See, we would just be going through life and feel very ordinary. Maybe it's a middling career. Life not quite going how we expected it when we were 25.

Maybe, in all the accounts of the world, we would be considered a failure. These men that we read about here, by the accounts of the world, the world would say the same things.

And yet, they are responsible for us being able to read approximately a third of the New Testament. See, because of Luke's proximity to Paul, he's able to write the Gospel of Luke in Acts.

Because of Titus' obedience to the Lord, he's able to get a letter, while he was on that island of Crete, that we can read to this day, called Titus. And Tychicus.

[18 : 57] You don't have a book of Tychicus, do we? No, but Tychicus is responsible for delivering the letters of Ephesians, Colossians, Colossians, and more than likely this letter here to Timothy.

Because of their obedience in the drudgery of life, we have the beautiful language of Jesus' birth in the Gospel of Luke. We have the rich theology of Christ, which can be found in Ephesians.

And we can have a better understanding of eldership because of Paul's letter to Titus. None of this is possible without their obedience. Christian, in the room today, if you feel like you are suffering in the drudgery of life, take heart.

Look around. There's a Canadian pastor, his name is Henry Blackaby, and he says, he's famous for saying this, watch to see where God is working and join him in his work.

If you are stuck or feel like you are stuck in the Christian life, just going through the ordinary, stop. Look around. See where God is working around you and join him in that work.

[20 : 20] If nothing has come to mind right now as we've been saying this, can I show you a few avenues where God is working right here underneath our noses in this church? See, just yesterday, Andrew went out with a group of people from this church to meet our neighbors.

They had conversations with people and were able to invite them to church. And people have come to church because of those conversations. Friends, join them in that work. What about this?

You want something to be excited about? Okay, apparently not. We can skip that part. Do you want something to be excited about, church? There it is. Do you know that we, the Sunday school happening right back here, do we have, no, we have more kids back there than truthfully we know what to do with?

Join them in that work. Where you are sitting right now, we have over, about 10 to 20 moms and nannies that come every Friday and hear the gospel in our time for tots.

Join them in that work. Or, just take a look around. Take a look around at who is here in the building today. We have more people coming regularly to Sunday mornings here at West Kilburn than in recent memory.

[21 : 46] But this is not an opportunity for us to pat ourselves on the back and say, hey, look at us. We did a good job, didn't we? But instead, this should spur us to look around the room, see that we don't know everybody in the room, and get to know people.

We should join community groups with the idea of getting to know people. We should invite other people out to lunch because we don't know everyone here. We should just try to make friends.

A weird concept I know, and hard sometimes as an adult. But important, right? See, church should never just be a service you attend, but it should be a family that you are a part of.

There are plenty of spaces where God is working in this church alone. Join him in that work. All right, as we move to a close, I want to talk about one more person in this passage.

Unfortunately, I don't have enough time to talk about Morphing Mark, who's kind of got the opposite story of Demas, but instead, we're going to talk about the writer of this letter. We'll call him Persevering Paul.

[23 : 02] And see, last week, if you were here, we got to understand Paul's mindset in this moment as he's writing this letter. See, Paul knows that his life is about to be over.

He knows he has just days or weeks left until his race is finished. Just before this, if you look in verse 6, it says, For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near.

See, Paul experienced a lot while he was on earth. On top of his redemption arc of going from an enemy of the church to one of the church's biggest champions, he also suffered greatly for the gospel.

Earlier in his letter to Timothy, he writes, You know all about my endurance, persecutions, sufferings. Paul gives us a snapshot of those sufferings in another letter where he says, I have been whipped five times.

That's 39 times. Times five. Not going to do that quick maths. He's been beating with rods three times.

[24 : 12] He's been stoned, shipwrecked three times, not getting on a boat with Paul, and on and on and on it goes. If there's anybody in the world that could have mailed it in in the last few weeks, it should have been Paul, right?

He is in a dark, damp cell. He is cold. He is alone. Gotta say, Paul, my guy, call it a day.

Just relax a bit. You said so yourself. You have fought the fight. You have finished the race. That's past tense. Just phone it in. What does it matter?

But what does Paul do? In the last few weeks of his life, Paul is embodying what he said earlier to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2.

Entrust this good news. entrust this gospel to reliable people so they can go and teach others. In his last few weeks, Paul is sending missionaries, arranging visits, and pastoring Timothy, all in this letter here.

[25 : 22] If you remember back when we even started this series in 2 Timothy, we said one of the major things that is going to carry throughout this entire book is perseverance. perseverance. Paul is modeling that for us right here.

If life was a marathon, Paul is not limping towards the finish line saying, oh, please get me out of this. Instead, he is pushing to the last mile, giving everything he has until he breaks the tape trying to get his best time.

See, if you were here last week, we talked about keep the faith, which is the verses prior to what we just read. And by keep the faith, we were talking about that Paul means to pass it on to the next generation.

Steve, the pastor of this church, he encouraged older members of the church to pass the torch, to empower the next generation, and I completely agree.

I think that's exactly what Paul shows us in those verses. But if you are an older saint in this room, can I encourage you with this? See, just because you have passed the faith on, that doesn't mean that you are no longer a part of the team.

[26 : 38] That doesn't mean that you get to sit in the stands and watch as a fan and then collect your pension and say, woo, good job. God calls the church a body, and if we are going to operate to the best of our ability, we need every member to operate so that we can operate at our best.

So yes, we've got to let young leaders lead. That is absolutely true. But are we doing that from the sidelines while we are critiquing every single move that they make, criticizing every mistake that they do, or are we trying to get involved with them?

Are we actively seeking to disciple these young leaders and carry out their vision like you wish somebody would have carried out yours when you were in their place?

And younger people in the room, you don't get off the hook. Don't you dare for one second think that these older Christians have nothing to offer for you.

When they speak, listen. Get to know them. Ask insightful questions. It's important. what Paul is kind of pointing us towards here.

[27 : 59] Let's wrap it up with this. When people ask me the question, how has it gone when you have been merging churches, I tell them the truth. I know, slightly dangerous, right?

But I genuinely say the truth. I say it has been hard. There have been more challenges, honestly, than I thought. But more than anything, it is a blessing.

Because now, more than ever in this community, we look like the family of God. See, if someone was to sit across Carlton Vale at the bus stop out there at 11, 1107 a.m.

and see the people that are coming in, they would see young and old, rich and poor, black and white, and everywhere in between, gathering as one family of God.

You have to ask the question why. To which we get to answer because we worship a Savior that died for all people, was resurrected for all people, and loves all people.

[29 : 15] people. So this is the question before us today, church. We look the part of a family. Are we going to act the part?

See, we look like a family now, but are we going to do the hard work required to keep us a family? Are we going to look to see where God is working and join him in that work, spreading the gospel to our neighbors outside, and getting to know the people inside this building, are we going to put our desires above the Lord's?

See, Paul, he knew the church would be flawed. Read any of his letters, you can get that pretty quick. He knew the church would be full of sinners that make mistakes.

Anyone want to raise their hand on that one? But he also knew that the church was God's plan A for reaching the lost and discipling saints.

And so, when it came to the end of his life, he knew that the best thing for him to do and to give his life to was the church, and he did it until he was completely poured out.

[30 : 38] God. So what are we pouring ourselves out for? A better flat on the property ladder? Maybe it's the approval of our family.

Maybe we're pouring ourselves out for a better retirement plan. Or are we pouring ourselves out to further the kingdom that will last forever?

Titus, Tychicus, Luke, Carpus, Timothy, Paul. They had their answer.

What's yours? Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank you. Thank you for your word, Lord, that doesn't return void.

Thank you for your son. who gave the ultimate sacrifice so that even in this moment we know that if we just ask, Lord, we can come to faith in him.

[31 : 44] Lord, I pray for us as a church that this would not be the greatest moment that our church has had. That we would not look back at this past year, six months, and say, hey, these are going to be the highlights that people will remember and talk about as the quote unquote good old days.

But instead, I pray that we will continue to work together as one family, move together as one body, spreading your word, Lord, until we are a light among the darkness here in Kilburn and Queens Park.

Lord, help us to get to know each other. Help us to step out of our comfort zones. And help us, more than anything, to praise you. Pray this in your name.

Amen. Amen. Yes. Thank you.