

STUDIES IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

"THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH"

STEP #12: 2 Timothy 4:16-22

"FINISHER: You Fought and You Finished"

Key verse 2:15 — *"Make every effort to present yourself to God, approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path."*

TEXT:

Key verse: 4:18

v. 16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them.

v. 17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully proclaimed and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the Lion's mouth.

v. 18 ***The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever, Amen.***

v. 19 Great Prisca and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.

v. 20 Erastus remained in Corinth, but Trophimus, being ill, I left behind in Miletus.

v. 21 Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus and Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren are sending greetings to you.

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

INTRODUCTION:**TWO OLD GEEZERS**

There were two old geezers living in the backwoods of West Virginia: Rufus and Clarence. They lived on opposite sides of the river and they hated each other.

Every morning, just before sun-up, Rufus and Clarence would go down to their respective sides of the river and yell at each other.

“Rufus!” Clarence would shout, “You better thank your lucky stars that I can’t swim, or I’d swim this river and whup you!”

“Clarence!” Rufus would holler back, “You better thank YOUR lucky stars that I can’t swim, or I’d swim this river and whup YOU!”

This continued every morning. Every day. For 20 years. One day the Army Corps of Engineers came along and built a bridge. But the insults went on every morning. Every day. Another 5 years.

Finally, Mr. Rufus’ wife had had enough. “Rufus!” she hollered one day, “I can’t take no more! Every day for 25 years you’ve been threatenin’ to whup Clarence. Well, thar’s the bridge! Have at it!” Rufus thought for a moment. Chewed his bottom lip for another moment.

“Woman!” he declared, snapping his suspenders into place. “I’m gonna whip Clarence!” He walked out the door, down to the river, along the riverbank, came to the bridge, then turned tail and ran screaming back to the house, slammed the door, bolted the windows, grabbed the shotgun and dove under the bed.

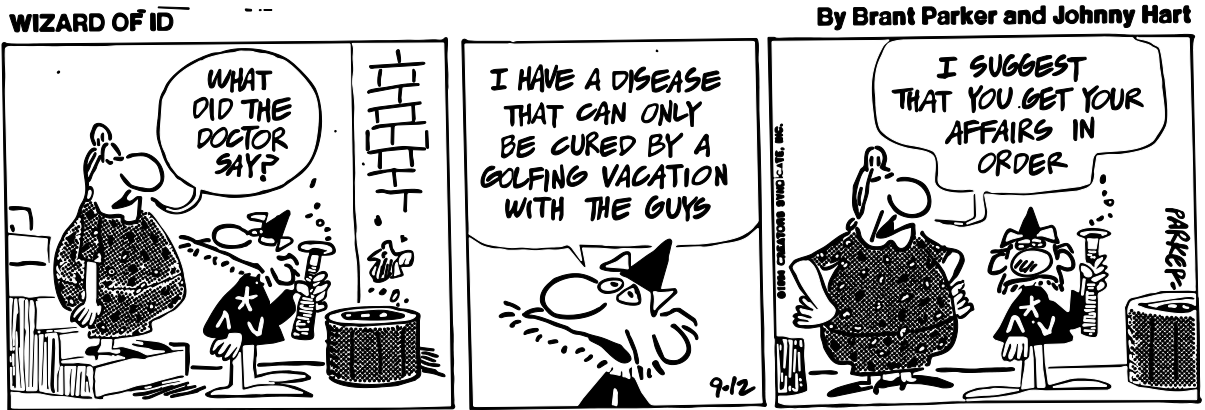
“Rufus!” cried the missus. “I thought you was gonna whup Clarence!”

“I was, woman, I was!” he whispered.

“What in tarnation is the matter?”

“Well,” whispered the terror-stricken Rufus, “I walked halfway over the bridge and saw a sign that said ‘Clearance, 13 feet, 6 inches.’ He ain’t never looked that big from the other side of the river!”

(Received via e-mail from Mark Skorheim, July 10, 2001)



Sign in a small town restaurant:

I DON'T REPEAT GOSSIP SO LISTEN CAREFULLY.

(source unknown)

(Thoroughly Modern Grandma: Quaint She Ain't by Louise Wollman) White Plains, NY: Peter Pauper Press, Inc. Copyright - Peter Pauper Press, Inc., 1990.

When granny feels strongly about something these days, she doesn't sit on the sidelines—she does something about it. In fact, another reason grandma doesn't HAVE a lap to sit on these days may be that she's out DOING laps: she's crusading for the causes that matter to her. Her reasons were best expressed by grandmother **Lady Bird Johnson** when she said, *I want to pay my rent on the world.*

p. 33

(The Book of Wisdom by Multnomah Books) Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc. Copyright -Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 1997.

It's later than you think—everything is farther away now than it used to be. It's twice as far to the corner—and they added a hill. I notice I've given up running for the bus—it leaves faster than it used to. It seems to me they are making steps steeper than in the old days, and have you noticed the smaller print they use in the newspapers? There is no sense asking anyone to read aloud . . . everyone speaks in such a low voice I can scarcely hear them. Material in dresses is so skimpy, especially around the hips. It's all but impossible to reach my shoe laces. Even people are changing—they are much younger than they used to be when I was their age. On the other hand, people my age are much older than I. I ran into an old classmate the other day, and she had aged so much she didn't remember me. I got to thinking about the poor thing while I was combing my hair this morning, and I glanced in the mirror at my reflection, and, confound it, they don't make mirrors like they used to either.

ANONYMOUS

p. 490

(The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart: And 1,501 Other Stories by Charles R. Swindoll) Nashville, TN: Word Publishing. Copyright - Word Publishing, Inc., 1998.

YOU KNOW you're getting older when . . .
 your dreams are reruns;
 the stewardess offers coffee, tea, or Milk of Magnesia;
 you sit in a rocking chair and can't get it started;
 everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt doesn't work;
 a pretty girl prompts your pacemaker to lift the garage door;
 you sink your teeth into a juicy steak, and they stay there.

p. 25

(Something to Smile About by Zig Ziglar) Nashville TN; Thomas Nelson Publishers; Zig Ziglar Corporation – 1997.

Baseball manager Casey Stengel to catcher Joe Garagiola: 'Joe, when they list all the great catchers, you'll be there listening.'

p. 158

(In the Hands of God: Inspiration From Daily Life by William Barclay)
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press. Copyright -
William Barclay, 1966.

That our look in life should always be the forward look. It seems to me that we might well define the beginning of old age as the day on which we begin to look back instead of forward. It is the day on which we think rather of what we have done, than of what we still may do.
p. 146

(The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart: And 1,501 Other Stories by Charles R. Swindoll) Nashville, TN: Word Publishing. Copyright - Word Publishing, Inc., 1998.

THE STORY IS Told of the man who, while walking on the beach, found washed up on the sand a used magic lamp. When the genie answered his rub, he told him that the lamp contained but one remaining wish. The man pondered for a moment, and then requested a copy of the stock page from the local newspaper, dated exactly one year later. In a puff of smoke, the genie was gone, and in his place was the financial news. Gleefully, the man sat down to peruse his trophy; he could invest with certainty, knowing the winners one year in advance. As the paper fell to his lap, it turned over to the obituary column found on the reverse of the page, and the name on the top of the listing caught his attention—it was his!

—Robert R. Shank, *Winning over Uncertainty*

p. 227

(The 776 Stupidest Things Ever Said by Ross & Kathryn Petras) New York, NY: Doubleday. Copyright – Ross & Kathryn Petras, 1993.

You got to be careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there.

Yogi Berra

p. 75

Some of Yogi's Best:

- *I want to thank all those who made this night necessary. (addressing the crowd at a 1947 event in his honor)*
- *You give a hundred percent in the first half of the game, and if it isn't enough, in the second half you give what's left.*
- *Mantle's a switch hitter because he's amphibious.*
- *How can you say this and that when this and that hasn't happened yet?*
- *If you can't imitate him, don't copy him.*
- *A nickel ain't worth a dime any more.*
- *I don't know, I'm not in shape yet.*
(when asked his cap size)
- *He is a big clog in their machine.*
(reportedly talking about Ted Williams)
- *Slump, I ain't in no slump. I just ain't hitting.*
- *I got a touch of pantomime poisoning.*
(explaining to his manager, Casey Stengel, why he couldn't play a game)
- *If I didn't wake up, I'd still be sleeping.*
- *How can you think and hit at the same time?*
- *I wish I had an answer to that because I'm getting tired of answering that question.*
(in response to a question about the '84 Yankees' dismal record)

pp. 75-76

(Illustrations Unlimited by James S. Hewett, editor) Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright – James S. Hewett, 1988.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A newspaper ad read: "Lost—one dog. Brown hair with several bald spots. Right leg broken due to auto accident. Left hip hurt. Right eye missing. Left ear bitten off in a dog fight. Answers to the name 'Lucky.'"

p. 100

(Christ and the Cowboy by Kenneth Wyatt) Tulia, TX: Y-8 Publishing Co.
Copyright – Y-8 Publishing Co., 1998.

Talkin' To The Boss

by Kenneth Wyatt

Many's the time on a Christmas Eve night,
With snow piled high and the stars turned bright,
Papa would saddle ol' Half Pint late,
Gather the reins and ride thru the gate.

He'd ride north to his favorite place,
Tug off his hat and bow down his face,
Then, with only God and the stars up there,
He'd always pray his favorite prayer.

Papa prayed with a heart full of love,
Praisin' the Christ Child and the Father above.
He prayed out loud and prayed silent, too,
Jes' prayed and prayed—until he was thru.

Sometimes he'd stay for a full hour long,
Then come ridin' back a bubblin' with song.
'Course we never knew what all he'd say,
But we all knowed he knew how to pray.

And later on as we sat round the tree,
Mama beside me and me on his knee,
We found our not goin' wasn't no loss
'Cause then and there we shared his

TALK TO THE BOSS.

(Humorous Cowboy Poetry: A Knee-Slappin' Gathering edited by Gibbs Smith staff members) Salt Lake City, Utah: Gibbs Smith. Copyright - Gibbs Smith, 1995.

IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SO

Perry L. Williams

A man from Czechoslovakia,
He came to Dallas town
And asked a broke young cowboy
To show him all around.

The cowboy says, "I would, ole pard,
But I ain't got a buck.
No groceries in the kitchen,
No gas in my old truck."

"Oh, I see," the tourist feller says,
"So I'll tell you what I'll do.
Just show me this here Dallas town,
And I'll do good things for you—

"Like pay you money for your time,
Even rent a fancy car,
Pay the bills when we do go into
A café or a bar."

So the man from Czechoslovakia
And the cowboy make a deal
To go and see the sights in town,
With the cowboy at the wheel.

Since the cowboy he's new in town,
He didn't know what to do.
But he finally figured where to go—
He'd just take 'im to the zoo.

They drove up to the zoo park.
The Czech bought the tickets there,
Then said to this young cowboy,
"Let's go see the grizzly bear."

Well, shore ‘nuff, they finally found ‘em
 And walked up to the cage,
 Where they found not one, but two big bears,
 And both were in a rage.

So this gent from Czechoslovakia
 Gets close to see the dark one’s hide
 When what happens, but one grabs him up
 And pulls him right inside.

Then right before the cowboy’s eyes,
 The bear eats him in one bite.
 Why, the man from Czechoslovakia
 Disappears plumb out of sight!

Well, the zoo men they come runnin’,
 Found the cowboy lookin’ frail.
 They ask which bear had got ‘im
 The cowboy said, “It was the male.”

So the vet he drugged old pappa bear,
 And just like a good Boy Scout,
 Says, “I’ll do an operation, men,
 To get that hombre out.”

He cut through skin and muscle,
 Reached and pulled back all that hair,
 Took a quick look and discovered
 He had skinned the wrong darned bear.

Now the moral of this story, friend,
 And seldom will it fail:
 Don’t always believe it when a cowboy says,
 “. . . the Czech is in the male!”

pp. 174-5

(Quotes & Idea Starters for Preaching & Teaching from Leadership Journal
 edited by Edward K. Rowell) Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
 Copyright – Christianity Today, Inc., 1996.

Don't let yesterday use up too much of today.

—Will Rogers

p. 165

That sounds a lot like the **Apostle Paul** in:

Philippians 3:13, 14

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

(Quotes & Idea Starters for Preaching & Teaching from Leadership Journal
 edited by Edward K. Rowell) Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
 Copyright – Christianity Today, Inc., 1996.

Fanaticism consists of redoubling your efforts when you have forgotten your aim.

—George Santayana

p. 187

(Chicken Fried Steak for the Soul for Man Does Not Live by Biscuits Alone by Roy English) Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs-Smith. Copyright – Roy English, 1999.

p. 68 In old age, few regrets the risks they took.

p. 69 The bull at the front of the herd has the best view.

p. 80 The self-righteous messenger spoils the message.

p. 111 Experience is a great teacher if it doesn't kill you first.

Chicken Fried Steak for the Soul
for man does not live by biscuits alone
(Title & Sub-title)

TOE PROTECTION

The lady from the East wanted to know why Westerners were supposed to die with their boots on.

“Well, Ma’am,” drawled the cowbody, if we die with our boots on, it won't hurt our toes when we kick the bucket.”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

IMPATIENT PATIENT

The impatient old man got tired of sitting in the waiting room to see the doctor. Finally, he told the nurse, “I guess I'll just go home and die a natural death.”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

ANY PORT IN A STORM

A dear old lady knew her time of final departure was approaching.

“Soon, I’ll be rocking in the bosom of Moses,” she told her pastor.

“No, dear,” said the pastor, “the Bible says the bosom of Abraham.”

“At my age, you don’t care too much whose bosom it is!”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

I hate death; in fact I could live forever without it.

—Pogo

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

We have reached:

Step #12—Finisher: You Fought and You Finished.

We are going to be witnessing in our passage today the **FANTASTIC FINISH** of one of the great finishers, the **APOSTLE PAUL**.

Our **KEY VERSE** is verse 18.

We will **FOCUS** on this step when we get to verse 18.

(God's Little Devotional Book for Leaders by Honor Books, Inc.) Tulsa, OK:
Honor Books. Copyright - Honor Books, Inc., 1997.

**The test of a
first-rate work is that
you finish it.**

n n n

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. . . .
2 Timothy 4:7

The Brooklyn Bridge, which links Brooklyn to Manhattan Island, is one of the most famous bridges in the world. At the time it was first conceived in 1883, however, bridge-building experts throughout the world told the designer, a creative engineer by the name of John Roebling, that his idea wouldn't work.

Roebling convinced his son Washington, who was also an engineer, that his idea had merit. The two of them developed the concept, resolved the problems others had forecast, and enthusiastically hired a crew to build their bridge.

After only a few months of building, a tragic on-site accident took John's life and severely injured Washington, who became unable to talk or walk. Everyone thought the project would have to be abandoned, since the Roeblings were the only ones who knew the dynamics of building the bridge.

Washington, however, could still *think*, and he had a burning desire to see the bridge finished. As he lay in his hospital bed, he had an idea. He would communicate with the engineers by using one finger to tap out in code on his wife's arm what he wanted her to tell them.

Washington tapped out his instructions for 13 years until the bridge was built!

Leaders are not only self-starters, they are finishers.
pp. 16-17

(God's Little Daily Devotional: 365 Days of Inspiration To Lift Your Spirit & Bring Peace to Your Soul by Honor Books) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books. Copyright – Honor Books, Inc., 1997.

A LAST PLACE WINNER

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.
Ecclesiastes 9:10 NKJV

During the 1984 Summer Olympics, a young American distance runner, **Derrick Redmond**, was running in front of the pack, well on his way to winning his race. Suddenly, with only a lap to go, Derrick's hamstring muscle snapped. He fell to the ground in agony and fellow runners dodged past him. His parents and friends let out a collective groan, as did millions of Americans who were watching by satellite.

Then, obviously in great pain, Derrick rose from the track and began hopping on one leg toward the finish line. Late stragglers passed him. People on the sidelines who feared for his health yelled for him to lie down. Yet Derrick hopped on. Long after the race was over, Derrick Redmond kept hopping.

Derrick had about 100 yards to go when a figure in the stands began jumping over people, chairs, and then the retaining wall. It was his father, Jim. Rushing to his son's side, he placed his arm around Derrick's waist. Derrick slung his arm over his dad's shoulder and together they half-bounced, half-ran the rest of the way. Derrick didn't wear a gold medal that day, but all who saw him and his father knew . . . Derrick and Jim Redmond had hearts of gold.

Honor awaits those who finish the race.

*If a task is once begun, never leave it till it's done.
 Be the labor great or small, do it well or not at all.*

p. 80

(Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals & Groups edited by Richard J. Foster & James Bryan Smith) San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright - RENOVARÉ, Inc., 1990, 1991, 1993.

Now it is right that every one of us should fulfill in our life the purpose of our Creator and spend that life for the glory of God and the good of others. Each of us should follow our calling and carry on our work according to our God-given gifts and capacities.

—**Sadhu Sundar Singh** (1889-1933?)

p. 311

(Churchill on Leadership: Executive Success in the Face of Adversity by Steven F. Hayward) Rocklin, CA: Forum / Prima Publishing. Copyright - Steven F. Hayward, 1997.

Churchill used to attribute his several near misses and narrow escapes from death in the trenches of World War I to the hand of destiny; though his political fortunes were at low ebb at that time, he wrote to his wife, “My conviction that the greatest of my work is still to be done is strong within me and I ride reposefully along the gale.”

p. 153

(Churchill on Courage: Wisdom for Perseverance by Frederick Talbott) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright - Frederick Talbott, 1996.

It is always in the last lap that races are either gained or lost. The effort must be forthcoming. This is not moment to slacken.

Winston Churchill

London, November 9, 1944

(quote 125)

I could be well content that others should bear the burden, but while I have life and strength I feel it my duty not to desert the fighting line, and I come before you now to ask you to stand by me giving me the best backing you can.

Winston Churchill

Election Address, Loughton, February 18, 1950

(quote 143)

(Is It Time to Make a Change?: Positive Thoughts for When Life Presents You with a New Direction by Deanna Beisser) ?: Blue Mountain Press.
Copyright - Deanna Beisser, 1997.

Be a Dreamer

Be someone who inspires
the people around you
by the way you live your life
and the way you treat others.
Stay focused on your future
and be willing to give all that you are
to make your dreams come true.
Encourage others,
and support them
with your strong beliefs.
Be a motivated person
who takes chances when
they present themselves.
Don't wait or worry about tomorrow;
just keep focused on
what's happening today.
Be someone
who looks forward
to challenges
and fully accepts
both the joys and struggles
that come to someone who dreams.

I have a good friend by the name of **Don Barker** who writes me numerous times a month with letters and notes of encouragement. He sent this letter the other day:

I often hear folks say that they would like to be young again. Not me! I like being an old man, and I look forward to becoming an older man. I wouldn't want to trade my present life for life at any previous stage. An author who has greatly influenced my efforts to grow old graciously is Don Anderson. In his book "Keep the Fire!" Coach Don wrote this statement: "Daily we have the opportunity of allowing the love of Christ to flow through us. It should excite those of us who are approaching our 60s, 70s, 80s, or beyond to realize that although we are playing in the fourth quarter, there is still time to grab the ball and make a positive contribution for the Lord. Games are often won or lost after the 2-minute warning. There may not be as much time, but there is always enough time for God's purposes to be accomplished through us." That's the kind of old man I would like to be. How about you?

This is a very emotional passage, to say the least. This is **PAUL'S FINAL STATEMENT** as he is facing certain death.

FINISHING WITH VICTORY AND DIGNITY is not something we spend much time talking about.

Death and Dying

Death is a delightful hiding-place for weary men.

Herodotus (484?-424? BC), Greek historian. *The Histories* (450? BC).

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Death and Dying

Excuse my dust.

Dorothy Parker (1893-1967), U.S. writer and wit. One of two suggestions Parker made for an epitaph. (1925).

Quoted in: *While Rome Burns* "Our Mrs Parker" (Alexander Woollcott; 1934).

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Age

Being over seventy is like being engaged in a war. All our friends are going or gone and we survive amongst the dead and the dying as on a battlefield.

Muriel Spark (1918 -), British novelist. *Memento Mori* (1959).

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Age

Like everyone else who makes the mistake of getting older, I begin each day with coffee and obituaries.

Bill Cosby (1937 -), U.S. actor, author, and comedian. *Time Flies* (1987).

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Old Age

The principal objection to old age is that there's no future in it.

Anonymous.

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Epitaphs

Here lies one who meant well, tried a little, failed much: surely that may be his epitaph, of which he need not be ashamed.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), Scottish writer. *Across the Plains* "A Christmas Sermon" (1892).

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Immortality

I don't want to achieve immortality through my work . . . I want to achieve it through not dying.

Woody Allen (1935-), U.S. film actor and director, 1976.
Woody Allen and His Comedy (Eric Lax; 1975).

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Last Words

My work is done. Why wait?

George Eastman (1854-1932), U.S. inventor, industrialist, and philanthropist. Suicide note (1932).

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Death

In Johnny Hart's comic strip "B.C.," a man climbs to the top of a mountain to seek a guru. "Oh, great Guru," he asks, "what is the secret of life?" The guru answers in two words, "Don't die!" The questioner remarks, "You don't acquire wisdom like that. You're born with it!"

—**Robert C. Shannon**, *1000 Windows*,
(Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).

(From *Parson's Technology*)

Extravagance

Oscar Wilde's last words were, "I am dying as I've lived, beyond my means."

—**Robert C. Shannon**, *1000 Windows*,
(Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).

(From *Parson's Technology*)

Time

Edna St. Vincent Millay wrote:

This I do, being mad;
Gather baubles about me,
Sit in a circle of toys, and all the time
Death beating the door in.

Doesn't that describe us well? We play idly with our toys, oblivious to the passing of time, ignoring the fact that death is beating in the door!

—Robert C. Shannon, *1000 Windows*,
(Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).

(From *Parson's Technology*)

Death

We see some startling things printed on T-shirts. One said, "Don't take life seriously. It's not permanent."

—Robert C. Shannon, *1000 Windows*,
(Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).

(From *Parson's Technology*)

Long Life in America

It's easy to live a long life, at least in America. Look at the statistics: Out of every 100,000 persons, 88,361 reach 50 years of age, more than 70,000 make it to 70, and almost 17,000 get to 85 or more. Staying around a long time, however, should not be our primary goal. Rather, we should be concerned with giving significance and value to all our years and not letting them end in shame and disgrace.

How we finish the race depends to a great extent on the pace we set along the way. Joseph Wittig remarked that when we write people's biographies we should start with their death, not their birth. After all, we have nothing to do with the way our life began, but we have a lot to do with the way it ends.

Our Daily Bread, February 24, 1995

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

Step #12—Finisher: You Fought and You Finished.

As we consider these final verses in our epistle, may our prayer be **TWO-FOLD:**

1. Lord, I long to finish well and
2. Lord, keep me from being an embarrassment to You in the finishing of my race.

FAILURE TO PREPARE IS PREPARATION FOR FAILURE.

1 Samuel 12:20

“Do not be afraid,” Samuel replied. “You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart.

John 9:4

We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work.

John 17:4

I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.

John 19:30

When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.

Peterson's [The Message](#) does a beautiful job paraphrasing [Hebrews 12:1-3](#). I think it would be good for us to meditate on these verses as we begin this study:

Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on *Jesus*, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: cross, shame, whatever. And now he's *there*, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. *That* will shoot adrenaline into your souls!
p. 557

Towner introduces us to the passage by saying:

In fact, Paul concludes this section with a strong reminder of the Lord's sufficiency in his servants' times of need.
p. 211

Barclay titles this final section:

LAST WORDS AND GREETINGS

p. 253

Hughes titles this final section:

Final Confidence

p. 265

Lea & Griffin say:

Paul gave Timothy fresh information about his lack of support from Christian friends (v. 16) and the magnificent strength the Lord had supplied (v. 17). The memory of the divine protection led Paul to an outburst of praise (v. 18).

p. 255

Knight says:

Here Paul relates that at his first defense no one supported him (v. 16), but the Lord gave him strength (v. 17a). As a result two things were achieved: The message was fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles heard it, and Paul was delivered (v. 17b-c). Paul remains confident that the Lord will continue to deliver him from every evil and bring him safely to the heavenly kingdom (v. 18).

p. 468

Hendriksen says:

There had been another trial. In that *first* defence no one had taken Paul's side. It is readily understood why Paul speaks of the trial as a *defence* (literally "apology" in the sense of speech in vindication from accusation), for that had been *his* part in it. In that former trial, then, Paul had stood alone. *Entirely* alone? No, for the Lord had caused *his* presence to be felt in a remarkable manner. From the way in which the Lord had then strengthened him Paul derives comfort for the present and for the future. Let Timothy also take courage.

pp. 325-6

Hawthorne & Martin say:

Paul was probably on his way back to Ephesus (1 Tim 3:14) when he was arrested, perhaps at Troas . . . At some point he also visited Corinth and Miletus . . . When he wrote 2 Timothy he was in Rome, where he expected to die . . .

p. 448

They say further:

There is a tradition (accepted by Eusebius and Jerome) that after being acquitted when his appeal was heard, Paul was arrested again and subjected to the more rigorous imprisonment and trial in Rome to which reference is made in 2 Timothy . . . There was no acquittal this time; he was convicted and beheaded with the sword at the third milestone on the Ostian Way, at a place called Aquae Salviae, and buried on the site covered by the basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls—a probably authentic location. These last proceedings against him may well have been an incident in Nero's proceedings against Christians about A.D. 65.

p. 687

In my book, [Ecclesiastes: Mid-Life Crisis](#), I say the following:

So many folks contemplate death and vow to do something significant for God with their money and talents before it's too late. I have had conversations with numerous individuals who have learned they have fatal illnesses. More often than not, these people have expressed a desire to accomplish something for the Lord. Maybe it's talking about Christ to an unsaved family member; perhaps it's donating a parcel of land to a church for a youth camp; possibly it's setting up a scholarship fund at a Bible college or seminary; sometimes it's as simple as speaking to a Sunday school class about how the Lord has proven faithful over a lifetime.

Whatever the intentions, most of the time the people never get around to acting. They're dead before the deed gets done. I am thinking about purchasing a stockpile of nickel-sized wooden disks with the words "A Round Tuit" stamped on each, so that I might hand them out as reminders that we must make provision to take action! We must get around to it—whatever *it* happens to be. I fully intend to buy those wooden nickels . . . if I ever get around to it, that is!

It is in human nature to procrastinate. We are adept at watching the wind and gazing at the clouds; we're not as good at planting and reaping. We put off following through on the resolutions we make. We know we need to exercise, register for night school, paint the house, recover the sofa, take the family camping, but we shove anything not included in our daily routine onto the back burner whenever possible.

p. 228

In my book, [Drawing Closer Growing Stronger](#), I say:

JOY THROUGH LIFE'S DIFFERENT PHASES

A surprise brought me joy one morning at our Colorado camp. All week I'd thought about ceremonially retiring my running shoes at 5 A.M. with nobody around. I visualized myself sneaking out for a last run, putting my marathon shoes to bed forever. I knew in my heart that hip replacement surgery, scheduled for the following Tuesday would change my life forever.

When I slipped down the hill to the main highway, I thought I was alone until I saw Doug, Joe, and Tom waiting for me yelling, "Hey, Don! We're going to help you finish!"

They jogged beside me and when we reached the five-mile mark, there stood Sara, smiling and holding a big poster of Philippians 3:14: "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Just as I crossed the finish line, she clicked on a prerecorded crowd cheering wildly in stereophonic sound. Wow! My friends made me feel great! My final run was completed, with the help of a lot of friends. I've discovered joy in putting things behind me and also joy in finishing what I set out to do. Now I'll go on to something new.

In a similar way, I believe joy will fill our hearts when we cooperate with God's eternal plan to help us become more Christlike. Thankfully, we have friends who come alongside to encourage us along the way and to whom we can be accountable.

One of the greatest inspirations on earth is an elderly person overflowing with joy. The Spirit-filled man or woman who laughs at their frailties and maintains a sense of humor, in spite of aches and pains, encourages us all. Boy, I want to be like that, too!
pp. 230-31

Let us dig into these final seven verses of Paul's second letter to Timothy.

v. 16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Paul's **first defense** evidently refers, not to his first Roman imprisonment, about which Timothy would have already known, but to a preliminary hearing leading up to his present trial. At such trials it was common to hear advocates for the accused, but in Paul's case **no one came to his support, but everyone deserted** him. The widespread desertion of the apostle may be explained by the fact that, unlike the period of his first imprisonment, it had now become dangerous to be a Christian in Rome. As early as A.D. 59-60 Roman Jews had informed Paul "that people everywhere are talking against this sect" (Acts 28:22). But the situation had gotten far worse after the fire of Rome in July of A.D. 64. Nero made the Christians scapegoats and many were tortured and died. The intensity of the anti-Christian pressure must have eased somewhat by A.D. 67, but the thought of identifying themselves with the fearless and outspoken apostle must have been more than the Roman Christians and even Paul's companions could face. In fact Paul was understanding toward their unfaithfulness, and he expressed the hope that **it not be held against them . . .**
p. 759

The word **"STOOD"** is **KEY** here in verse 16 as well as in verse 17.

Here in verse 16:

"AT MY FIRST DEFENSE NO ONE STOOD WITH ME."

In verse 17 it is:

"BUT THE LORD STOOD WITH ME."

One of the Greek writers paraphrased this phrase:

“No one stood by me as my advocate.” It is a legal term.
(source unknown)

“AT MY FIRST DEFENSE NO ONE STOOD WITH ME, BUT ALL DESERTED ME.”

This word “DESERTED” takes us BACK to:

2 Timothy 4:10 (DAV)

For Demas has deserted me, for love of the present world . . .

All of these things that the Apostle is experiencing here in verse 16, so also the Lord Jesus experienced.

You will remember that He came into Jerusalem that last time with great accolades, riding on the back of a donkey. Thunderous praise was coming from the multitude as they were crying out saying:

“Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!” **(Matthew 21:9).**

Then it is just a short trip from Sunday to Thursday when, having been apprehended in the Garden of Gethsemane. On Friday we awaken to the cries of:

“Crucify him! Crucify him!”

Matthew 26:56

“But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left Him and fled.

Paul's prayer-wish is expressed in the final phrase of verse 16:

"MAY IT NOT BE COUNTED AGAINST THEM."

You see the exact same response on the part of Jesus in:

Luke 23:34

But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.

This is also of true of **STEPHEN** as he was being stoned to death. His final words were recorded in:

Acts 7:60

And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And having said this, he fell asleep.

Luke 23:49

And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee, were standing at a distance, seeing these things.

Hendriksen says:

However that may be, to a certain extent Paul had suffered a disappointment. But he knows how to forgive. Hence, he continues: **May it not be charged against them.** This prayerful wish is entirely in harmony with the spirit of Christ (Luke 23:34), of Stephen (Acts 7:60) and . . . of Paul himself (I Cor. 13:5).
p. 326

Lea & Griffin say about this “DEFENSE”:

More recent interpreters view the occasion as a preliminary investigation during a later imprisonment, called in Latin legal language the *prima actio*. This would have a purpose similar to a grand jury hearing. After this first investigation the judge had been unable to resolve his doubts for or against Paul and called for a further investigation, known as a *secunda actio*. This would involve considerable delay, and Timothy might not have known about these developments.
pp. 255-6

Barclay says something similar:

A Roman trial began with a preliminary examination to formulate the precise charge with which the prisoner was to be charged. When Paul was brought to that preliminary examination, not one of his friends stood by him. It was too dangerous to proclaim oneself the friend of a man on trial for his life.

One of the curious things about this passage is the number of reminiscences of Psalm 22. “What hast Thou forsaken me?” “All men forsook me.” “There is none to help.” “No one was there to stand by me.” “Save me from the lion’s mouth.” “I was rescued from the mouth of the lion.” “All the ends of the earth shall turn unto the Lord.” “That the Gentiles might hear it.” “The kingdom is the Lord’s.” “He will save me for his heavenly kingdom.” It seems certain that the words of this psalm were running in Paul’s mind. And the lovely thing is that this was the psalm which was in the mind of Jesus when He hung upon His Cross, for this is the psalm which begins: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” and which ends in triumph . . . As Paul faced death, he comforted and encouraged his heart with the same Psalm as His Lord did in the same circumstances.
pp. 253-4

Gaebelein says:

At the time of the Apostle’s first defence no one took his part, by standing by him; all forsook him. They left him alone and had not the courage to defend him. Beautiful is his prayer, “that it may not be laid to their charge.”
p. 201

Lock explains:

. . . as advocate or friend to bear testimony for him. . . . all who at Rome might have come forward to support his case.
p. 119

MacArthur titles this verse:**THE UNFAITHFUL ANONYMOUS**

p. 212

He then says, with regard to the word “DEFENSE”:

Defense translates *apologia*, from which we derive the English “apology” and “apologetics.” It refers to a verbal defense and frequently was used as a legal term. In the Roman court system, an accused person had two hearings, the *prima actio*, to clearly establish the charge, and the *secunda actio*, to determine guilt or innocence. Paul’s **first defense** would therefore have been a *prima actio*.

Whatever kind of trial it was, not one of Paul’s friends and fellow believers had **supported** him. As with the noun **defense**, the Greek verb behind **supported** may have been a legal term, referring to official testimony in court. **No one** stood by Paul or testified on his behalf; instead they **all deserted him**.

p. 212

Demarest says:

But his anger with his silent Christian friends is resolved quite differently: “*May it not be charged against them.*” Here is Paul quoting Psalm 22, even as Jesus had used it in Gethsemane. Within the family, the desire is for healing and forgiveness, not for judgment and vengeance.
pp. 294-5

Milne says:

This is a reference to Paul's preliminary appearance before the emperor, in which his case was investigated and the accused and witnesses were heard. Sadly for reasons that Paul does not even hint at, no-one from the Roman church community came forward in his support, so that the apostle was left alone to make his own defence.

In a gesture of Christlike generosity (Luke 23:34), he wishes his disloyal friends no ill-will by saying, **May it not be held against them.** While it is true that all believers in Christ have been justified now from all their offences, it is also true that their attitudes, choices, words and actions as believers are being judged now, and will be judged by Christ the Lord in the day he comes . . . This is a solemn prospect that should inspire them to live by a good conscience by aiming to please their Lord in everything.
p. 186

Stott says:

So most commentators understand his *first defence* to have been the first hearing or *prima actio* of his case, 'the preliminary investigation preceding the formal trial'.

Now Roman law would have permitted him to employ an advocate and call witnesses. But, as Alfred Plummer puts it, 'among all the Christians in Rome there was not one who would stand at his side in court either to speak on his behalf, or to advise him in the conduct of his case, or to support him by a demonstration of sympathy'.
p. 122

He says further:

Either because Christian friends could not or would not, he was unsupported and alone.

This moment, one night cautiously say, was Paul's Gethsemane. Of course his agony was different from Christ's. Yet like his Master before him he had to face his ordeal alone, for at the time of his greatest need he could say 'all deserted me', as it was written of Christ, 'they all forsook him and fled' (Mk. 14:50).
p. 123

Wiersbe says:

Another reason why Paul wanted Timothy in Rome was because his next hearing was coming up and only Luke was with him. The believers in Rome and Ephesus who could have stood with Paul had failed him . . . but Paul knew that Timothy would not fail him. Of course, the Lord had not failed Paul either! . . . The Lord had promised to stay with Paul, and He had kept His promise.

p. 160

Wilson says:

Paul sadly records that at the preliminary investigation (*prima actio*), which preceded the trial proper in Roman law (*secunda actio*), no one had the courage to speak up for him in court. All the Christians in Rome deserted him in his hour of need, but he forgives their failure and prays that it may not be held against them . . . ‘He would have it to be reckoned as a proof of weakness, not of false-heartedness’ (Fairbairn).

p. 167

King says:

The astonishing fact was that (a) *No one would undertake his defence.*

(i) Professional pleaders refused the case—“no man stood with me”, the verb is used in a technical, legal sense, as of what we should call Defending Counsel. I suppose they were afraid of getting mixed up in such a charge, and being tarred with the same brush; for I have no doubt that, as the Jewish leaders did in all these cases against the Christians, they preferred here an accusation of sedition and treason. Why, they even did that in the case of our Lord: recall the words in Luke [23] xxiii. 2, “We found this Fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that He Himself is . . . a king.” It was, of course, a trumped-up charge; but the Roman authorities would never have listened to the real trouble, the religious question. The same thing happened with Paul at Thessalonica, in Acts [17] xvii. 7, “these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one JESUS”. I should think that once again the apostle was the victim of this fraudulent behaviour, and that is why no lawyer could be found to help him.

pp. 135-6

King says further:

“I pray GOD that it may not be laid to their charge”. No shadow of vengeance is here, but sweet prayerfulness. But, where have I heard like words before? Where has Paul heard like words before? Ah yes—it was more than thirty years ago that, as a young leader, he had presided at a Christian’s execution, and, as the cruel stones crushed the life out of the sufferer, the grand martyr, Stephen, had prayed, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge”, Acts [7] vii. 60. That scene was one of the smarting stabs that . . . pricked his conscience; and those words had remained in his memory ever since, and only now, after thirty long years, and faced with his own martyrdom, did he get his own back against Stephen for good, by praying the same prayer for those who despitefully used him and persecuted him. They both caught that lovely spirit from the Saviour, even as we get all of good from Him, when he asked, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”, Luke [23] xxiii. 34.
p. 136

Guthrie says:

Evidently the reference is to the preliminary investigation preceding the formal trial, which was sometimes delayed for a considerable period. There are three factors to be taken into account in attempting to reconstruct the historical situation. At this defence *all men forsook* Paul; the defence provided an opportunity for the preaching of the gospel; and it resulted in some form of deliverance.
p. 175

Lenski says:

When Paul says that no one was at his side but that all abandoned him he does not refer to witnesses but to assistants such as the Roman courts allowed. These appeared in the capacity of *patroni et amici* of the accused . . . to stand by him at the trial, to lend their prestige before the court.
p. 874

Lenski continues:

If we understand the function of such patrons in a Roman court we see that men like Luke, Tychicus, or any of Paul's own assistants, and men like those named in v. 21 were not competent to act in this capacity. It is not necessary, therefore, to offer excuses for them as some do. None to these men had sufficient, yea, any standing with the imperial court. We have no means of knowing to whom Paul refers when he writes: "all abandoned me." All we know is that several men, whether they were Christians or non-Christians, could have acted as patrons for Paul but failed to do so. Their reason was, we may be sure, the nature of the indictment against Paul and the great danger of acting as a patron before the court in behalf of a man who was under such an indictment.

p. 875

He says finally:

So Paul had no one at his side, and this vicious Alexander was able to damage Paul greatly. Whether it was also charged that Paul was one of those who had had a hand in the burning of Rome, and whether several points were charged against him, we are unable to say. Some conclude that "in my first defense" refers to one charge, and that other court sessions that followed heard the other charges; also that, despite the damage done by Alexander, this first charge (implication in the burning of Rome) was dismissed because witnesses proved that Paul was in distant Spain at that time. In my opinion "my first defense" refers to the preliminary hearing on the one capital indictment on which Paul was bound to be condemned to death at the completion of his trial.

p. 876

Larson says:

Reminded that God's sovereignty overcomes all human efforts, Paul exalted in God as his strength and defender. He turned to another personal example: his preliminary trial.

Paul probably had a pretrial hearing to determine the grounds of the accusations against him. At that time, no one offered a word in his defense: **no one came to my support**. Not only was the hearing void of testimony on his behalf, but his friends **deserted** him. Perhaps Demas was in mind here along with others. Luke probably had not arrived in Rome by the time of Paul's initial trial. The event, however, brought back painful memories for Paul. Still, he viewed it through the goodness of God, choosing gratitude and forgiveness rather than bitterness: **May it not be held against them**.

p. 325

Kelly says:

In view of this it is preferable, with most present-day supporters of authenticity, to locate Paul's **first defence** in his present, i.e., second, Roman captivity, and to understand by it, not the trial proper (which of course was to issue in his condemnation), but what in Roman legal parlance was called the *prima actio*, i.e. the preliminary investigation. This had apparently gone favourably for the accused, at least to the extent of the judge not being able to resolve his doubts and thus pronouncing the verdict When this happened, Roman legal practice required that a further investigation, or *secunda actio*, should take place, and this might involve a considerable delay. Timothy may well have been ignorant of the turn events had taken and may have needed bringing up to date. It remains a mystery why no member of the Roman church, with which his relations had been so close, **gave him his support** (. . . the verb is technical for a witness or advocate standing forward in court on a prisoner's behalf). Perhaps nothing more than fear or weakness of character was the cause of their defection; but some have detected a hint here of deep-rooted personal tensions, even divisions, in the community.

p. 218

Matthew Henry says:

He had lately been called to appear before the emperor . . . The Christians at Rome were forward to go and meet him . . . but when it came to the pinch, and they would be in danger of suffering with him, then they all forsook him. Paul had his trials in his friends' forsaking him in a time of danger as well as in the opposition made by enemies: all forsook him.
p. 1898

Hughes agrees with this analysis:

The Roman judicial process initially involved what was called a “first action” (*prima actio*), a preliminary defense hearing before the emperor or a magistrate roughly equivalent in purpose to a grand jury hearing. Unaccountably, this defense was a solo event for Paul. There was no witness or advocate standing forward in Paul's behalf, as the phrase “no one came to my support” clearly indicates. No one was there at all! We surmise that Luke and Tychicus (who were now with Paul) were on missions or perhaps had not arrived, because otherwise they would certainly have been there. But it is a complete mystery why no members of the church in Rome, with whom he was so close, were there. Not one! Perhaps it was because of fear of the Roman authorities.

Whatever the reasons, the situation was pathetic—scandalous! Here was the great missionary general, who had weathered the storms of several continents for the gospel, standing at the end alone before the Roman court. It seems impossible, but it was a fact.

Perhaps equally remarkable was Paul's attitude—“May it not be held against them” . . . No bitterness here—only a prayer for forgiveness. How like Jesus he was.

p. 267

Fee says of verse 16:

Paul now turns from the request for Timothy to come to a brief explanation about his own situation, which has inherent in it the urgency noted in the request. It begins with the prepositional phrase **at my first defense**, which has been the subject of some debate. However, it simply makes little or no sense for this to refer to an earlier imprisonment . . . as most of the early Fathers and earlier exegetes supposed (why inform Timothy of that which he would have known?). Most likely **my first defense** refers to the present captivity and the Roman juridical practice of a *prima actio*, a preliminary hearing before the emperor or a magistrate, roughly comparable in purpose to a grand jury hearing. This would then be followed by the actual trial. Given the two-year delay after the preliminary hearing during his first imprisonment . . . Paul had good reason to expect the same again; hence this letter and the summons for Timothy to join him.

p. 296

Barnes says:

Paul had many friends in Rome . . . but it seems that they did not wish to appear as such when he was put on trial for his life. They were doubtless afraid that they would be identified with him, and would endanger their own lives.

p. 252

Lange says:

But here, likewise, human weakness, and fear of becoming involved in the probably unfavorable issue of his suit, had prevailed in full force. It is hence likewise clear that his condition now was entirely different from that during his former imprisonment.

p. 117

A. T. Robertson says:

No one took my part . . . “No one came by my side” . . . But all forsook me . . . Same verb and tense used of Demas above (verse 10), “But all were forsaking me” (one by one) or, if aorist . . . “all at once left me.” May it not be laid to their account . . .
p. 633

Quinn & Wacker translate these first three verses in the following way:

4¹⁶At my first appearance in court no one was on my side; instead, all left me helpless. (May it not be held against them!) 17Still the Lord stood by me and put his strength in me, so that through me the proclamation would be carried out fully, or, in other words, so that all the pagans would listen to it, and I was delivered “from the lion’s mouth.” 18The Lord will deliver me from every one of these vicious attacks and he will save me for his kingdom, in heaven. To him, the glory for all eternity. Amen.
p. 814

Patrick & Lowth say:

He therefore calls this his “first apology,” or defence, because, after he had made it, he was still kept in bonds . . . and so reserved for another hearing.
p. 867

J. Vernon McGee says:

“At my first answer” was either the preliminary hearing which opened Paul’s final trial, or it was his first trial in Rome three years earlier. Paul was alone at that time.
p. 479

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

. . . “defense” in court, at my first public examination. Timothy knew nothing of this, it is plain, till Paul now informs him. But during his *former* imprisonment at Rome, Timothy was with him . . . This must have been, therefore, a *second* imprisonment. He must have been set free before the persecution in A.D. 64, when the Christians were accused of causing the conflagration in Rome; for, had he been a prisoner then, he certainly would not have been spared.

p. 1383

They say further:

The position of “their,” in the *Greek*, is emphatic. “May it not be laid to THEIR charge,” for they were intimidated; *their* drawing back from me was not from bad disposition so much as from fear; it is sure to be laid to the charge of those who intimidated them. Still Paul, like Stephen, would doubtless have offered the same prayer for his persecutors themselves (Acts 7:60).

p. 1383

Isaiah 63:3

“I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing.

I CAN'T MAKE IT LORD!

A Christian must always be ready for service when the Lord calls him. Some believers have once felt definitely led into a work for the Lord but did not follow through because of an obstacle the devil threw in their way. A poem by Everek R. Storms brings out this thought very effectively: “Ten future missionaries heard God’s call divine;/One was married wrongly, that left only nine./Nine future missionaries—they could hardly wait;/Mother needed one, though, that left only eight./Eight future missionaries bound for God and Heaven;/One got to making money, that left only seven./Seven future missionaries—if only each one sticks;/One lost out completely, that left only six./Six future missionaries for the Lord alive;/One preferred the homeland, that left only five./Five future missionaries wait an open door;/One grew tired of waiting, that left only four./Four future missionaries bound for eternity;/One no longer willing, that left only three./Three future missionaries—for the need, how few!;/One the board rejected, that left only two./Two future missionaries a daughter and a son;/One developed ulcers, that left only one./One future missionary—thank the Lord for him;/He refused to ever let the vision dim./Body, soul, and spirit, he to God did yield;/Now for years he’s labored on the foreign field./God in Heaven rejoices, ‘Blessed child of Mine,/You have done My will—but what about the nine?’”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

THE LORD AND YOU

In her book *Lincoln's Daughters of Mercy*, Marjorie Greenbie tells about Mother Bickerdyke, who worked with General Sherman during the Civil War. She brought relief to thousands of wounded and dying Union soldiers.

Once, when Mother Bickerdyke was giving special attention to a man considered worthless by his comrades, she was asked, "Why do you waste your time on trash like that?" "Because," she replied "when there's any creature around here so miserable that there's nobody to care for him, he still has two friends in this army. One is God, and the other is me."

Paul certainly wasn't considered worthless by his co-workers, but there were times when he felt alone. Demas had forsaken him; Crescens, Titus, and Tychicus were all away traveling (2 Tim. 4:10,12). Yet God and one person, Luke, sustained Paul when he stood at his final defense in Rome. As the trial that would lead to his execution got underway, only Luke was with Paul (v. 11). He and the Lord gave Paul the support he needed to maintain a clear witness.

The Lord works through people. With Paul, He used Luke. Some struggling person in your life today may need the Lord—and you! —DJD

*To those in darkest night
Go be a kindly friend;
Pour love and sunshine on their cares
And broken lives you'll mend. —Zimmerman*

**ALL AROUND ARE NEEDS TO MEET:
BE GOD'S HEART AND HANDS AND FEET.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Saturday, July 16, 1994)

Late Faith

. . . Late faith is unavailing. There's little use accepting arks once the rain begins to fall. Death is such an instant storm that by the time you reach for an umbrella, you already need your water wings.

Calvin Miller, *The Valiant Papers*. p. 20

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

“How God Helps Us” (source information unknown)

Dale Carnegie, in *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, said, “When we hate our enemies, we give them power over us—power over our sleep, our appetites, and our happiness. They would dance with joy if they knew how much they were worrying us. Our hate is not hurting them at all, but it is turning our days and nights into hellish turmoil.” (Pocket Books, Inc., New York, 1953, p. 114.)

Bitterness is the fruit of an unforgiving heart. We must, therefore, never allow our disappointments in others to canker into resentment by harboring them in our hearts. We must rise above resentment at all costs. We must remember the best and forget the rest. If we spend our time trying to get even we will never get ahead.

p. 152

Let the judges judge. Let the prosecutors prosecute. Let the juries condemn. You forgive, and pray for those who hurt you. Never let the failures of others make you bitter or a quitter. God's grace will enable you to do that. That's one of the ways he helps us.

p. 153

(God's Little Treasury of Virtues by Honor Books) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books.
Copyright – Honor Books, Inc., 1996.

From his cradle to his grave a man never
does a single thing which has any first and
foremost object save one—to secure peace
of mind, spiritual comfort, for himself.

—*Mark Twain*

The Book of Unusual Quotations

Selected and Edited by Rudolph Flesch

New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1957

p. 50

Be Humble

There is no true and constant gentleness without humility. While we are so fond of ourselves, we are easily offended with others. Let us be persuaded that nothing is due to us, and then nothing will disturb us. Let us often think of our own infirmities, as we shall become indulgent toward those of others.

—*Fenelon*

Daily Strength for Daily Needs

Mary Tileston

p. 139

(The Art of Forgiving: When You Need to Forgive and Don't Know How by Lewis B. Smedes) Nashville, TN: Moorings / Ballantine. Copyright – Lewis B. Smedes, 1996.

The most creative power given to the human spirit is the power to heal the wounds of a past it cannot change.

We do our forgiving alone inside our hearts and minds; what happens to the people we forgive depends on them.

The first person to benefit from forgiving is the one who does it.

Forgiving happens in three stages: We rediscover the humanity of the person who wronged us, we surrender our right to get even, and we wish that person well.

We forgive people only for wounding and wronging us; we do not forgive people for things we do not blame them for.

We cannot forgive a wrong unless we first blame the person who wronged us.

Forgiving is a journey; the deeper the wound, the longer the journey.

Forgiving does not require us to reunite with the person who broke our trust.

We do not forgive because we are supposed to; we forgive when we are ready to be healed.

Waiting for someone to repent before we forgive is to surrender our future to the person who wronged us.

Forgiving is not a way to avoid pain but to heal pain.

Forgiving is done best when it is done intolerantly.

Forgiving someone who breaks a trust does not mean that we give him his job back.

Forgiving is the only way to be fair to ourselves.

Forgivers are not doormats; to forgive a person is not a signal that we are willing to put up with what he does.

We do not excuse the person we forgive; we blame the person we forgive.

Forgiving is essential; talking about it is optional.

When we forgive, we set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner we set free is us.

When we forgive we walk in stride with the forgiving God.
pp. 177-8

(The Most Brilliant Thoughts of All Time: In Two Lines or Less edited by John M. Shanahan) New York, NY: HarperCollins. Copyright – John M. Shanahan, 1999.

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.
Mohandas Karamchand [Mahatma] Gandhi, 1869-1948
p. 121

(Seize the Day with Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Charles Ringma) Colorado Springs, CO: Piñon Press. Copyright – Charles Ringma, 2000.

“You have granted me many blessings; now let me also accept what is hard from your hand. You will make all things work together for good for your children.”

—PRAYER FROM PRISON

The ordinary circumstances of life are not outside of God’s involvement and planning. God wishes to use many of life’s normal situations to mold and shape our lives. Both difficulties and blessings can be used to make us more gentle, godly, sensitive, and caring. While blessings can make us complacent and difficulties can make us hard, it is our response to the God of the blessings and the hardships that will cause us to grow through both to become more human and Christlike.

Thought

It is what we do with blessings or difficulties that will determine the kind of person we are becoming.

(February 21)

v. 17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully proclaimed and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the Lion's mouth.

Back in verse 16 we read:

“All deserted me.”

Here, in verse 17, we read:

“BUT THE LORD STOOD WITH ME AND STRENGTHENED ME.”

Paul is bearing witness to the fact that in the midst of this “first defense” he sensed the Lord's:

PRESENCE and

POWER.

The Lord was faithful to stand with him and to **“STRENGTHEN”** him.

Psalm 109:30, 31

With my mouth I will greatly extol the Lord;
in the great throng I will praise him.
For he stands at the right hand of the needy one,
to save his life from those who condemn him.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Colossians 1:11

strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience, joyously

Colossians 1:29

And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

Ephesians 3:7

of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

Ephesians 3:16

that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man;

Ephesians 3:20

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

Isaiah 41:10

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:13

For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.

Hebrews 13:5

Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

Paul then states in verse 17 the **PURPOSE** in the Lord's **PRESENCE** and **POWER**:

“IN ORDER THAT THROUGH ME THE PROCLAMATION MIGHT BE FULLY PROCLAIMED AND THAT ALL THE GENTILES MIGHT HEAR; AND I WAS DELIVERED OUT OF THE LION’S MOUTH.”

The **PURPOSE** is **THREE-FOLD**:

1. **“THROUGH ME THE PROCLAMATION MIGHT BE FULLY PROCLAIMED,”**
2. **“THAT ALL THE GENTILES MIGHT HEAR,”** and
3. **“I WAS DELIVERED OUT OF THE LION’S MOUTH.”**

The ultimate purpose is that the word might be spread through this experience.

Acts 9:15, 16

But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

The **QUESTION** is raised:

What does Paul mean when he says **“I WAS DELIVERED OUT OF THE LION’S MOUTH”**?

There are those who would say it is the **ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE**. Others say this is a reference to **NERO**. Still others think this is a reference to **SATAN** because he is characterized as a “roaring lion” in 1 Peter 5: 8.

It is probably none of these but is just a reference to:

PHYSICAL DEATH or **SERIOUS DANGER**.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Paul's courage in proclaiming the gospel was not dampened by the weakness of those around him. The secret to his ministry was his dependence on the strength of God . . . Though nobody remained with him Paul said, **The Lord stood at my side and gave me strength.** The apostle to the Gentiles had long before discounted his own life for the sake of preaching the gospel . . . This was simply the latest episode of many wherein Paul put his own life on the line **so that through him the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.** And once again, at least for the time being, he had been **delivered from the lion's mouth.** Some have seen in this last phrase a metaphorical reference to Nero or a literal reference to the wild animals in the Roman Coliseum. More likely Paul is drawing on a biblical image (cf. Ps. 22:21; Dan. 6:22).
p. 760

Psalm 22:21

Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

Daniel 6:22

My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king."

1 Timothy 1:12

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service;

Acts 20:24

"But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

J. Vernon McGee says:

“I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion”—he was spared execution at that time.
p. 479

A. T. Robertson in his Word Pictures says:

Clearly Jesus appeared to Paul now at this crisis and climax as he had done so many times before. *Strengthened me . . .* “Poured power into me.”
p. 633

Quinn & Wacker translate the phrase:

put his strength in me. Lit. “he empowered me . . . *Endynamoō* occurred above in 1 Tim 1:12; 2 Tim 2:1 . . .
p. 817

They say further:

Endynamoō, as previously at 1 Tim 1:12 and 2 Tim 2:1, understands the risen Jesus as having—at a given time (aorist) in this instance—“empowered” his disciple and given him help when human witnesses left him helpless.
p. 824

They say this about the final phrase:

When it does occur, however, it is usually in a context dealing with one in authority with even royal power, and evidently the Daniel episode fixed itself in the imagination of later Judaism, including apocalyptic.
p. 826

Barnes says:

Though all *men* forsook me, yet *God* did not. This expresses a universal truth in regard to the faithfulness of God . . .
p. 253

Fee says:

. . . He **gave me strength so that through me** (in the emphatic position) he might fulfill his own plans.
p. 297

Fee, speaking further on being “delivered from the Lion’s mouth,” says:

If this is the proper clue, then he would be using the language of the psalm to refer to his being **delivered from** death.
p. 298

Hughes says:

That visit to Paul in Antonia by Jesus was a reprise of what had happened some 600 years before to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in their captivity. Remember their response to Nebuchadnezzar’s threat to throw them into the fiery furnace? “The God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up” (Daniel 3:17, 18). And do you remember what Nebuchadnezzar saw? “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods” (3:25). I am sure Paul connected with this. The same God was with him in *his* distress!

Moreover, Christ was in him, and he was in Christ. For Paul, being aware of Christ’s presence was as natural as breathing. The wondrous reality was that the Lord was at Paul’s side as he stood before imperial Rome at his first hearing and that, in Paul’s words, he “gave me strength”—or as A. T. Robertson renders it, “poured power into me” (cf. Philippians 4:13).
p. 268

Kelly says:

Their desertion, however, served only to highlight the divine succour, for **the Lord stood by him and gave him strength**. He thus received an access of courage and boldness, and the providential purpose of this, as he views the matter, was **so that through him the preaching of the gospel might be brought to completion and the whole pagan world might hear it**.
p. 218

He then says further:

The words **through me** are emphatic, and the verb used . . . does not mean 'make fully known' (AV), but 'carry out fully', 'complete'. His idea seems to be that the proclamation of the gospel reached a specially glorious climax when it was made in the capital, and he exults that he has been singled out to be the instrument of this.
p. 219

He then says further:

There is therefore no need to see in them a reference to the amphitheatre, with which there was no question of Paul's being threatened, or to Nero, with whom the Greek fathers liked to identify the lion, or to Satan. Paul's meaning simply that, through God's marvellous intervention and as a result of the strength given him to proclaim the gospel, the judge or judges failed to reach a decision at his initial examination, and he was therefore saved from imminent death.
p. 219

Larson says:

A little Jewish man, chained, defenseless and alone, friendless and humiliated, now stood before the imperial Roman court with all its pomp and regalia—and preached the full gospel of Jesus Christ. He fulfilled by his own example the words he had passed on to the Corinthian church: “But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong . . . ‘Let him who boasts boast in the Lord’” (1 Cor. 1:27, 31).
pp. 325-6

Lenski says:

The sense of the figure is simply this, that at his first hearing the Lord kept him from being sent to execution at that time.
pp. 879-80

Guthrie says:

When he adds *I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion* Paul is using a common metaphor to express deliverance from some extreme danger (cf. Dn. [6] vi. 20 and Ps. [22] xxii. 21). This is more reasonable than to suppose that the lion is metaphorical for the Emperor Nero, or is an allusion to the amphitheatre, or symbolic of Satan, the roaring lion (I Pet. [5] v. 8).
p. 177

King says:

That old lion who, according to I Peter [5] v. 8, “goeth about seeking whom he may devour”, was for the moment robbed of his prey. Dr. Plummer says that “the deliverance not mean release from prison following upon acquittal, but temporary rescue from imminent danger”.
p. 137

King then says further:

His unfailing Presence, and His upholding Power, were at Paul's disposal, though all else fail. He, and we, can always rely on that, however lonely and deserted we may feel. One is reminded of what the Master said in John [16] xvi. 32 about Himself, "ye . . . shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me". Alone; and yet not alone! And, thank GOD, what was His comfort is our comfort too, and was Paul's.

p. 137

Wilson says:

In contrast to the failure of his friends, Paul triumphantly affirms the faithfulness of the Lord, who stood by him and imparted the strength which enabled him to bring his ministry to its completion in the capital of the pagan world.

p. 167

He says further:

Paul's inspired 'apologia' made such a deep impression upon the court that he was rescued from the lion's mouth. Presumably the expression is an oblique reference to his temporary reprieve from Nero's malice. 'After his first examination Paul could still write to Asia bidding Timothy and Mark come to him, which shows that he looked forward to a considerable interval before the next stage of his trial' . . .

p. 168

Wiersbe says:

When Paul had been discouraged in Corinth, the Lord came to him and encouraged him (Acts 18:9-11). After he had been arrested in Jerusalem, Paul again was visited by the Lord and encouraged (Acts 23:11). During that terrible storm, when Paul was on board ship, the Lord had again given him strength and courage (Acts 27:22ff). Now, in that horrible Roman prison, Paul again experienced the strengthening presence of the Lord, who had promised, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

pp. 160-61

Wiersbe says still further:

What a man! His friends forsake him, and he prays that God will forgive them. His enemies try him, and he looks for opportunities to tell them how to be saved! What a difference it makes when the Holy Spirit controls your life.

p. 161

He says finally:

To be “saved from the lion’s mouth” was a proverbial saying which meant “to be delivered from great danger” (Ps. 22:21).

p. 161

Stott says:

At all events Paul emerges from this incident as a New Testament Daniel for whose protection the Lord shut the lion’s mouth.

p. 124

He says further:

Alfred Plummer gives a graphic description of the scene as he envisages it:

‘It is quite possible that this event, which the Apostle of the Gentiles regards as the completing act of his own mission and ministry, took place in the forum itself . . . But at any rate it would be held in a court to which the public had access; and the Roman public at this time was the most representative in the world . . . In that representative city and before that representative audience he preached Christ, and through those who were present and heard him the fact would be made known throughout the civilized world that in the imperial city and before the imperial bench the Apostle of Christ had proclaimed the coming of his kingdom.’

This, then, is to be Timothy’s model.

p. 125

Milne says:

Indeed he had turned his first appearance before the emperor and a cross-section of imperial society into an opportunity to complete his missionary mandate to evangelise the nations of the world.

p. 187

He then says:

The faithful servant of Christ may rest assured that Christ will strengthen him in proportion to his own weakness . . . Christ's spiritual presence and support had meant everything to Paul, and had carried him through his most recent trial. The same pattern of fellowship and empowering from above can be expected by those who follow Paul in his courageous faithfulness in the service of Christ and the gospel. Those who honour him, he honours and keeps . . .

p. 187

Lock says of this final phrase "DELIVERED OUT OF THE LION'S MOUTH" is:

. . . a proverb for extreme danger, probably consciously borrowed from Ps 22 . . .

p. 119

Gaebelein says:

But while all men had forsaken him, one had not forsaken His faithful servant. True to His promise, "I will not leave nor forsake thee," He had stood with Paul and strengthened him. And when he stood before the Roman authorities the Lord had given him another opportunity to proclaim the Gospel he loved so well, "that through me the preaching might be fully known, and all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."

p. 201

Lea & Griffin say:

The phrase appears in Ps 22:21 in reference to an experience of great danger. This was Paul's meaning here, and it is best not to be too specific beyond this. God intervened by giving Paul the strength to proclaim the gospel, confounding the judge in reaching a conclusion, and saving Paul from a cruel death. The lion had been robbed for the moment.
p. 256

Hendriksen says:

And I was rescued out of (the) mouth of (the) lion. Probably this is simply an idiomatic way of saying, "I was delivered out of the jaws of death" . . . and not a specific reference of Satan, Nero, or a literal lion of the amphitheatre. In all probability this, as is clear from Ps. 22:21, 22 (the passage upon which Paul's figurative expression is based) means *complete* deliverance. Paul had been enabled to declare the name of the Lord far and wide. His first Roman imprisonment had ended in full acquittal and in more missionary journeys.
pp. 326-7

Griffiths says:

But the Lord (verse 17) is another striking contrast. In this life-threatening situation, when all human support seems to have been withdrawn, the faithful God is with Paul. The Lord did two things: First, he strengthened (or emboldened) Paul . . . *so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it*, which seems to mean that Paul was able to proclaim the gospel at his trial. Second, *I was delivered* ('by the Lord' is implied). Is the 'lion' death, the devil, the emperor or what? Nero did some horrible things to Christians, but there is no evidence of the use of lions this early.

It seems fitting that Paul would use the Psalms in times of stress, and we have noted his use of Psalms 28 and 69 already. Probably the language and thought of Psalm 22 lies behind this whole passage, so that 'lion's mouth' comes from Psalm 22:21. Jesus quoted Psalm 22:1 on the Cross, and Paul may have had it in mind (verses 10, 16). The words *I am poured out like water* (Psalm 22:14) may be echoed by *poured out like a drink offering* (verse 6; see p. 211). Other links may be *stood at my side* with Psalm Psalm 22:19a and *all Gentiles* with Psalm 22:27b.
p. 219

Calvin says:

Though the Roman church failed in its duty, Paul says that the Gospel was not harmed through it, since he himself alone, depending on God's heavenly power, was able to bear the whole burden, and far from being discouraged from the fear which gripped everyone else, he only saw more clearly that God's grace does not need any support from any other source. Paul is not boasting about his own strength but is giving thanks to the Lord that when he was brought to the extremity, he did not give way or lose heart during such a dangerous trial. He acknowledges that God's hand has supported him, and it is enough for him that the inward grace of the Spirit was a shield against attacks.

p. 168

He then says about the final phrase:

Many people think that **the lion** was Nero. But I think that Paul uses this expression to indicate danger in general, as if he were saying "out of the blazing fire," or "from the jaws of death." Paul says that he escaped only through God's marvelous help, since the danger was so great that otherwise it would at once have swallowed him up.

p. 168

In the article How God Helps Us, he recommends:

How did God help Paul, and how does God help us? In three ways:

- He gives us grace for the disappointments of life.
- He gives us strength for the trials of life.
- He gives us hope for the end of life.

pp. 149-50

He says further:

The word “stood” in this instance means to stand beside another in order to assist them. So the Lord stood beside Paul and enabled him successfully to fulfill his mission of proclaiming the gospel to the Gentile world.

Note that the Lord did not save Paul *from* his trial. He strengthened him *in* his trial. He did not get him *out*, he got him *through*. That is most often the way of God with his people. He does not *isolate* us *from* life, he *insulates* us *in* life.

The Lord didn’t save Daniel from the lion’s den; he saved Daniel in the lion’s den. He shut the mouths of the lions to keep them from devouring Daniel.

God did not save the three Hebrew children from the fiery furnace; he saved them in the fiery furnace. He entered into the furnace with them and became their shield to keep the fire from consuming them.

God did not route David on some outer loop around the valley of the shadow of death; rather he became David’s shepherd and walked with him through it.

God did not save Jesus from the cross; God saved him and us through the cross.

pp. 153-4

“JESUS AND I”

Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me.

2 Timothy 4:17

Every Christian comes to the end of his resources at one time or another. It's then that he learns how to draw on Christ's strength to help and uphold him.

Several years ago the *Christian Herald* published an article about missionary Dan Crawford that underscores this truth. He had the difficult task of following in the steps of David Livingstone, the missionary who gave his life in ministering the Word of God in Africa. Crawford didn't have the imposing personality of his famous predecessor, so at first he had trouble winning the loyalty of the tribal people. Even the people in his church back home weren't sure he could carry on the work. With God's help, however, he did a magnificent job. When he died, a well-worn copy of the New Testament was found in his pocket. A poem, evidently his own, handwritten on the inside cover, revealed the secret of his success: "I cannot do it alone!/ The waves dash fast and high;/ The fog comes chilling around,/ And the light goes out in the sky./ But I know that we two shall win in the end—/ Jesus and I./ Coward, and wayward, and weak,/ I change with the changing sky,/ Today so strong and brave,/ Tomorrow too weak to fly;/ But—HE never gives in! So we two shall win—/ Jesus and I!"

As you face a new task or are burdened down by your trials, you'll find that depending completely on the Lord will make all the difference. Because He is there to strengthen and comfort, you can say, "I know that we two shall win in the end—Jesus and I!"

—H.G.B.

*When in the midst of life with its problems,
Bent with our toil and burdens we bear,
Wonderful thought and deep consolation:
Jesus is always there!*

—Lillenas

**It is not just the sense of His presence
but the fact of His presence that is our strength.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Saturday, September 15, year unknown)

Answered Prayers

We know not what we should pray for as we ought—Romans 8:26.

I prayed for strength, and then I lost awhile
 All sense of nearness, human and divine;
 The love I leaned on failed and pierced my heart;
 The hands I clung to loosed themselves from mine;
 But while I swayed, weak, trembling, and alone,
 The everlasting arms upheld my own.

I prayed for light; the sun went down in clouds,
 The moon was darkened by a misty doubt,
 The stars of heaven were dimmed by earthly fears,
 But all my little candle flames burned out;
 But while I sat in shadow, wrapped in night,
 The face of Christ made all the darkness bright.

I prayed for peace, and dreamed of restful ease,
 A slumber drugged from pain, a hushed repose;
 Above my head the skies were black with storm,
 And fiercer grew the onslaught of my foes;
 But while the battle raged, and wild winds blew,
 I heard His voice, and perfect peace I knew.

I thank Thee, Lord, Thou wert too wise to heed
 My feeble prayers, and answer as I sought,
 Since these rich gifts Thy bounty has bestowed
 Have brought me more than I had asked or thought.
 Giver of good, so answer each request
 With Thine own giving, better than my best.

—Annie Johnson Flint

V. Raymond Edman, *But God!*,
 (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids; 1962), p. 103

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

Trotman's Drowning

Dawson Trotman's drowning swept like cold wind across Schroon Lake to the shoreline. Eyewitnesses tell of the profound anxiety, the tears, the helpless disbelief in the faces of those who now looked out across the deep blue water. Everyone's face except one—Lila Trotman, Dawson's widow. As she suddenly walked upon the scene a close friend shouted, "Oh, Lila . . . He's gone. Dawson's gone!" To that she replied in calm assurance the words of Psalm 115:3:

But our God is in the heavens;
He does whatever He pleases.

All of the anguish, the sudden loneliness that normally consumes and cripples those who survive did not invade that woman's heart. Instead, she leaned hard upon her sovereign Lord, who had once again done what He pleased.

Starting Over by Charles R. Swindoll,
Multnomah Press, 1977, p. 67

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

His Way Was Right

He writes in characters too grand
For our short sight to understand;
We catch but broken strokes, and try
To fathom all the mystery

Of withered hopes, of death, of life,
The endless war, the useless strife—
But there, with larger, clearer sight,
We shall see this—His way was right.

John Oxenham
Source unknown

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

(Final Roar by Bob Briner) Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman. Copyright – Martha Ann Briner, 2000.

At the risk of sounding like the ultimate Neanderthal man, however, I feel that American Christians must get tougher and eschew an attitude of self-indulgent helplessness which sees so many of us running after every new recovery technique and guru. We should find much more of our sufficiency in Christ and the answers to our problems in obedience to Holy Scripture.
p. 15

There is an arm that never tires,
When human strength gives way.

—GEORGE MATHESON (1842-1906)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Richard Foster quotes a favorite author of mine, Thomas Kelly:

“We feel honestly the pull of many obligations and try to fulfill them all. And we are unhappy, uneasy, strained, oppressed, and fearful we shall be shallow . . . We have hints that there is a way of life vastly richer and deeper than all this hurried existence, a life of unhurried serenity and peace and power. If only we could slip over into that Center! . . . We have seen and known some people who have found this deep Center of living, where the fretful calls of life are integrated, where No as well as Yes can be said with confidence.”

Kelly says it well; if only we could slip over into that Center!

(From *Parson's Technology*)

The Light That Never Fails

“We all, with unveiled face, beholding . . . the glory of the Lord . . .”
(2 Corinthians 3:18).

A servant of God must stand so very much alone that he never realizes he is alone. In the early stages of the Christian life, disappointments will come—people who used to be lights will flicker out, and those who used to stand with us will turn away. We have to get so used to it that we will not even realize we are standing alone. Paul said, “. . . no one stood with me, but all forsook me . . . But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me . . .” (2 Timothy 4:16-17). We must build our faith not on fading lights but on the Light that never fails. When “important” individuals go away we are sad, until we see that they are meant to go, so that only one thing is left for us to do—to look into the face of God for ourselves.

Allow nothing to keep you from looking with strong determination into the face of God regarding yourself and your doctrine. And every time you preach make sure you look God in the face about the message first, then the glory will remain through all of it. A Christian servant is one who perpetually looks into the face of God and then goes forth to talk to others. The ministry of Christ is characterized by an abiding glory of which the servant is totally unaware—. . . Moses did not know that the skin of his face shown while he talked with Him” (Exodus 34:29).

We are never called on to display our doubts openly or to express the hidden joys and delights of our life with God. The secret of the servant’s life is that he stays in tune with God all the time.

(From Our Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers, April 22)

(Shattered Dreams: God's Unexpected Pathway to Joy by Larry Crabb)
Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press. Copyright – Lawrence J.
Crabb, Jr., 2001.

Counseling as a technical specialty where professional experts treat diagnosable disorders is yielding to an encounter between two people where soul care is more the focus than psychological treatment. The same problems are addressed—eating disorders, sexual abuse, family dysfunction, anxiety, and depression—but with the view that spiritual emptiness is the root problem and spiritual reality is the cure.

More than ever before in my lifetime, people are self-consciously hungry for God, for spiritual renewal, for deep satisfaction of the soul. And we are more in danger than ever before of managing our search and discovering a spirituality without Christ.

The search to discover God requires that we *abandon* ourselves, that we give up control of what matters most, and that we place our *confidence* in Someone we cannot manage. These requirements are as vital as they are difficult.

p. 107

(God's Little Daily Devotional: 365 Days of Inspiration To Lift Your Spirit & Bring Peace to Your Soul by Honor Books) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books. Copyright – Honor Books, Inc., 1997.

LEAVE THE OUTCOME TO GOD

Know ye the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Psalm 100:3

A story is told about actor Charlton Heston that illustrates our need to do all we can and then trust God to do what we cannot.

It seems that during the making of the great epic, *Ben Hur*, Heston worked long hours with the stunt trainers to learn to drive a chariot for the movie's crucial chariot race scene. He improved greatly in his mastery over the horses and rig, but finally became convinced the task was more of a challenge than he had initially anticipated. He approached the legendary director of the movie, Cecil B. De Mille, about the scene.

“Mr. De Mille,” he said, “I’ve worked very hard at mastering this rig, and I think I can drive it convincingly in the scene. But I don’t think I can win the race.”

The director replied, “You just drive. I’ll do the rest.”

God has a way of orchestrating the various races we run during the course of our lives. He trusts us to do our part in “manning the rigs.” We must trust Him to determine the result of the race. As one engineer has said, “God provides the initial input. We provide the output. And God provides the outcome.”

The greatest act of faith is when man decides he is not God.

p. 82

(Grace for the Moment: Inspirational Thoughts for Each Day of the Year by Max Lucado) Nashville, TN: J. Countryman / Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Max Lucado, 2000.

The Cure for Disappointment

The ways of God are without fault.
PSALM 18:30

When God doesn't do what we want, it's not easy. Never has been. Never will be. But faith is the conviction that God knows more than we do about this life and He will get us through it.

Remember, disappointment is cured by revamped expectations.

I like the story about the fellow who went to the pet store in search of a singing parakeet. Seems he was a bachelor and his house was too quiet. The store owner had just the bird for him, so the man bought it.

The next day the bachelor came home from work to a house full of music. He went to the cage to feed the bird and noticed for the first time that the parakeet had only one leg.

He felt cheated that he'd been sold a one-legged bird, so he called and complained.

"What do you want," the store owner responded, "a bird who can sing or a bird who can dance?"

Good question for times of disappointment.

He Still Moves Stones

p. 368

(Renewed Day by Day: Daily Devotional Readings: Volume I by A. W. Tozer, compiled by Gerald B. Smith) Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications. Copyright – Christian Publications, 1980.

The average Christian these days is a harmless enough thing, God knows. He is a child wearing with considerable self-consciousness the harness of the warrior; he is a sick eaglet that can never mount up with wings; he is a spent pilgrim who has given up the journey and sits with a waxy smile trying to get what pleasure he can from sniffing the wilted flowers he has plucked by the way.

(October 15)

(The Prayer Factor by Sammy Tippit) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright – Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1988.

Early in my Christian life I read of the experiences of men such as D. L. Moody and Charles Finney. I longed to have an experience like them. I believed I would become a man of God if I could have an encounter with God like Finney and Moody had. Moody was so overwhelmed by the power of God that he had to ask God to stay His hand. And Finney said that waves and waves of liquid love flowed over him.

After I read about those experiences I told God that I was ready for His waves of love to come over me as they did Charles Finney. But they never came. I asked Him to let His power come upon me as it did upon D. L. Moody. But it never came. Finally while in prayer I discovered an insight. It was not the will of God for me to know the experience of Moody and Finney, but it was the will of God for me to know the God of Moody and Finney.

p. 40

(Called & Committed: World-Changing Discipleship by David Watson) Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw. Copyright – David Watson, 1982.

The world of today is being increasingly influenced by disciples of another kind who understood obedience more clearly than the average Christian. A BBC radio program about women terrorists showed that they were intensely loyal, totally ruthless, and willing to go to any lengths for their cause. Bernadette Devlin declared, “Before, there came a time when one said, ‘This I can’t do!’ Now there comes a time when one says, ‘This I must do!’”²⁴

24. “More Deadly Than the Male,” BBC broadcast on December 4, 1978.
pp. 9-10

**(The Church: What We Are Meant To Be by Ken Hutcherson) Sisters, OR:
Multnomah. Copyright - Ken Hutcherson, 1998.**

Peter and John look up at them and say, “Well, your honors, you’re the ones who are supposed to teach all the people how to glorify God. That’s *your* job, O great Sanhedrin. So may we poor, unlearned fish jockeys ask you a question? If we walked into this room and told you, ‘We want you to do thus and so,’ but God says, ‘No, I want you to do something else,’ which should you do?”

Gotcha! The Sanhedrin must have sat there puffing and spluttering in their beards.

“Come on, Sanhedrin, who wants to answer first? If God tells us to do one thing, but we want to do another thing, which way should we go?”

The Sanhedrin, of course, would have to answer, “Obey God.” And Peter and John said, “Well, that’s just what we intend to do. We’re going to do what God asks us to do. We would rather displease you than displease Him. We’d rather face punishment from you than discipline from Him.”
p. 97

v. 18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever, Amen.

Haddon W. Robinson, in the *Our Daily Bread* for August 17, concludes his reading with these words:

**WHEN WE KNOW GOD STANDS WITH US,
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO STANDS AGAINST US.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Friday, August 17, 2001)

Matthew 10:28

“And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Colossians 1:12, 13

giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

Romans 8:31

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

Romans 8:37-39

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Paul knew that his fate in the Roman courts was sealed . . . and he was ready to die. Yet he saw his death not as a victory for Rome but as a **rescue** of the Lord. Despite **every evil attack**, he had complete confidence that God would **bring** him **safely to His heavenly kingdom** . . . For this Paul, even in the face of his own death, could do nothing but praise God: **To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen** . . .
p. 760

Calvin says:

Paul states that he is hoping for the same help in the future, not so that he may avoid death, but to avoid being overthrown by Satan and to avoid veering from the right course. We should not make our safety our chief aim, but that we should rise above every trial and be prepared to die a hundred times over rather than being infected by engaging in evil work.
p. 168

Griffiths says:

Paul will not necessarily escape death, which seems inevitable. Paul expects to arrive safely in *his heavenly kingdom*. Christians are committed to believe in heaven. What then is more appropriate and typical of Paul than a shout of praise at this point. *To him be glory!*
p. 219

Hendriksen says:

In the past Paul had been rescued *from* death. Now he will be rescued *by means of* death. In neither case does his soul perish. He is never separated from the love of God in Christ.
p. 327

Hendriksen continues:

The expression “the Lord . . . will save me to (or *for*) his heavenly kingdom” implies that Paul expected to go to heaven immediately upon death. This is Scripture’s doctrine throughout. Thus, the psalmist expects to be welcomed into the realm of glory when he dies (Ps. 73:24, 25). “Lazarus” is immediately carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16 . . .). The penitent thief enters Paradise at once, together with his Lord (Luke 23:43). Paul is convinced that when the earthly tent is destroyed, the building from God, “eternal in the heavens” will be ready to receive the believer (II Cor. 5:1); that death is “gain” (Phil. 1:21) . . .

pp. 327-8

He then says finally:

Not filled with dismay is Paul when he thinks of imminent departure from this earth. On the contrary, since this departure is better by far than remaining on earth, his soul is filled with rapture. Hence, not surprising is the doxology: **To him the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

p. 328

Milne says:

Buoyed by this recent deliverance, Paul breaks out into an expression of heartfelt confidence in the Lord’s trustworthiness for the future. Although Paul knew that he faced almost certain death and that he would not get out of prison alive, he understood that he was in Christ’s hands and that God would preserve him *from* the destroying power of death and *for* his heavenly kingdom . . . All Christ’s true servants are similarly indestructible until their work is done, being kept by God’s power for their heavenly inheritance (1 Pet. 1:3-5). The thought of Christ’s faithfulness draws a spontaneous doxology from the apostle, which he seals with a concluding amen (let it be so).

pp. 187-8

Wiersbe says:

But, for a Christian, there are even more dangerous things than suffering and death. Sin, for example. This is what Paul had in mind (2 Tim. 4:18). He was confident that the Lord would deliver him from “every evil work” and take him to the heavenly kingdom. Paul’s greatest fear was not of death; it was that he might deny his Lord or do something else that would disgrace God’s name. Paul was certain that the time had come for his permanent departure (4:6). He wanted to end his life-race well and be free from any disobedience.

pp. 161-2

Wilson says:

. . . he ascribes all the glory to Christ in a fervent doxology which he seals with an emphatic ‘Amen’. The very hope produces a doxology: how much more the realization!’ (Bengel).

p. 168

Guthrie says:

It is strongly reminiscent of the Lord’s teaching about the kingdom of heaven. It is no wonder the contemplation of it raises in the apostle’s mind a doxology in which he ascribes eternal glory to Christ. His mind is clearly centred more on eternal realities than any hopes of further release.

p. 178

Lenski says:

“Did rescue—shall rescue,” a significant repetition. The rescue of a day or two ago when Paul expected to be sent to his execution, this wonderful rescue which was due wholly to the Lord, is to Paul an assurance of the next far greater rescue when the Lord will take him to his heavenly kingdom. This is not a thought of the prolongation of life for more gospel work, not a thought even of receiving another opportunity at a coming hearing to utter the great herald proclamation of the gospel in the court basilica before assembled crowds. That next appearance in court, when it is finally ordered, will most likely end with the sentence of the judge, that and nothing more. Paul hopes that Timothy may yet reach him before that day and hour. We hope that he did.

p. 880

He says further:

Paul’s heart is deeply moved as he pens these words. Instead of uttering a sad complaint at the thought of a cruel death, his soul is filled with the glow of golden hope and expresses its joy in the form of a doxology.

p. 881

He then says finally:

Thus Paul faced the end, and it is thus that he finally bowed his head before the executioner’s sword or his ax and went to his eternal reward.

p. 882

Larson says:

He knew God would not rescue him from the death that awaited him in the immediate future. But Paul remained firm in his conviction that God protects those who are his, guarding their souls until the time when he brings them into his kingdom. No evil plot of man or Satan can snatch God’s children from his loving care. Thus, Paul declared, **to him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

p. 326

Kelly says:

Paul is thinking of spiritual rather than physical protection, and is affirming his confidence that no assault of his enemies will undermine his faith or his courage, or cause him to lapse into disastrous sin. This interpretation is confirmed by the facts (a) that the sentence sounds like an echo of ‘deliver us from evil’ of the Lord’s Prayer, and (b) that the climax of his deliverance is to be admission to God’s **heavenly kingdom**. Christ himself had promised that ‘anyone who loses his life for my sake will save it’ . . . In a sense God’s kingdom is a present reality, having been inaugurated in the person of Christ, but for Paul it is also the goal to which Christians look forward at the consummation of the age . . .

p. 220

Hughes says:

Paul did not expect acquittal—he was certain of death (cf. v. 6). But he looked death straight in the face and roared with confidence: “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” (v. 18).

p. 269

Fee says:

Both the location and the language of this doxology are reminiscent of Philippians 4:20. What a fitting note on which to conclude, given the continuing urgencies of his and Timothy’s present situation!

p. 298

Barnes says:

But he was assured that God would keep him from shrinking from death when the hour approached; from apostasy, and from the manifestation of an improper spirit when he came to die.

p. 254

A. T. Robertson says:

Paul is not afraid of death. He will find his triumph in death . . .
p. 633

He says further:

[This is] Paul's final doxology, his Swan Song, to Christ as in Rom. 9:5; 16:27.
p. 634

Romans 16:27

to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory
forever. Amen.

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

The very *hope* produces a doxology: how much greater will be the doxology
which the actual *enjoyment* shall produce! [BENGEL].
p. 1383

Barclay says:

He was quite certain of the ultimate rescue. In time Paul might seem
to be the victim of circumstances and a criminal condemned at the bar of
Roman justice; but Paul saw beyond time and he knew that his eternal safety
was assured. It is always better to be in danger for a moment and safe for
eternity, than to be in safety for a moment and to jeopardize eternity.
p. 254

Lange says:

The Apostle foresees that the issue of the decisive final hearing, now imminent, might not be comparatively as favorable as that of the first hearing, from which he had gone forth unharmed; but he does not lose courage upon that account. He who has delivered him thus far out of all dangers, will do it yet again.

p. 118

MacArthur says:

For Paul, as for every believer, “to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). And although the apostle would not give up the battle until the Lord took him home, his loneliness, pain, deprivation, and desertion made the prospect of heaven all the more appealing.

For that and for everything the Lord had done, was doing, and was yet to do, Paul exulted, **To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

p. 214

Towner says:

And while Paul’s portion of the work is still to be finished, this protection will be assured. But ultimately the Lord’s faithfulness extends to his rescue to eternal life (*his heavenly kingdom*). No evil worked against God’s people can keep them from this goal . . . Paul’s own experience of Jesus’ travail was his opportunity to learn of the Lord’s strength for endurance and promise of protection.

p. 212

Liefeld says:

Paul cannot refrain from a brief doxology at this point. The phrase “for ever and ever” is appropriate to his thoughts about the “heavenly kingdom.”

p. 300

Spurgeon says:

Ye sons of sorrow, ye daughters of weakness, ye children of sickness, let this cheer you:—

“The road may be rough,
But it cannot be long,
And I’ll smooth it with hope,
And cheer it with song.”

Oftentimes when I have been travelling on the Continent I have been obliged to put up at [a] hotel that was full, where the room was so inconvenient, that it scarcely furnished any accommodations at all. But we have said, “Oh, never mind: we are off in the morning! What matters it for one night?” So, as we are soon to be gone, and the time of our departure is at hand, let us not be ruffling our tempers about trifles, nor raise evil spirits around us by cavilling and finding fault. Take things as you find them, for we shall soon be up and away.

p. 890

Matthew Henry says:

If the Lord stand by us, he will strengthen us, and his presence will more than supply everyone’s absence. Former deliverances should encourage future hopes. We ought to give God the glory of all past, present, and future deliverances: *To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

p. 1899

Hawthorne & Martin say:

It is astonishing how frequently the NT writers in general mention the glory and majesty of God. Moreover, men and women are prompted to glorify God. To ascribe glory to God in face of the mysterious working of his power is often spontaneous, yet in Pauline theology the theme is more implicit than fully spelled out.

p. 360

Hawthorne & Martin say further:

Paul looks forward to the day when the Lord “will save me into his heavenly kingdom*” (2 Tim 4:18). That also is the implication of the remark that the justified* “will be saved through him from the wrath” (Rom 5:9). There is a future dimension in salvation, which is important, for Paul is clear that ultimately sinners will face the wrath of God. But there is ultimate deliverance for those who have put their trust in God. Paul quotes the prophet Joel for the assurance that “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom 10:13). “Calls”* does not mean calls in a superficial manner, as of one who simply wishes to avoid the personal consequences of sin. “Calls” here means a genuine calling on the Lord which proceeds from the conviction that God can and will save and that the caller is in desperate need.

p. 862

Patrick & Lowth say:

Mark therefore his words, he saith not, He will again deliver me out of the mouth of the lion; but only, that “he will preserve me from every evil work, and to his heavenly kingdom.”

p. 868

OUR CONSTANT COMPANION

As they knocked on the door of Ed Claesson’s room in a home for the elderly, Clair and Frances Hess heard Ed talking to someone. Frances whispered, “Clair, he has a visitor.”

After Ed said, “Come in,” they went into his room, but they didn’t see anyone with him. When they said they had heard him talking to somebody, the stately 98-year-old Swede smiled and said, “Oh, I was just talking to Jesus. I asked Him why it is taking him so long to call me Home.”

Jesus Christ WAS in the room with Ed. Although bodily in heaven, Jesus is present in spirit with all of His people just as He promised.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

WALKING WITH GOD

A little girl, hearing of Enoch in her Sunday school class, went home to repeat the story. Her version went something like this, “Mommy, today the teacher told us about a man who every day went out to walk with God. One day they walked and walked and walked till it was almost dark. And when this man started to go back, the Lord said to him, ‘Enoch, you’ve walked with Me so long, why don’t you just go Home with Me?’ And Mommie, that man went right on Home with God.”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

THE END OF TEARS

An elderly Christian lady lay dying. Her beloved husband sat by her bedside tenderly holding her hand. They both knew that the end was near and that they soon would be parted. As their eyes met, a tear flowed down the old woman’s wrinkled cheek. Gently, her husband wiped it away. Then, with a quaver in his voice, he said, “Thank God, Mary that’s the last!”

When ties of love are broken, tears flow freely, and this is as it should be. But for the one who is going to heaven, as well as for us who remain, the parting is not final. Our hearts rest in the assurance that one day separation and tears will give way to unending joy.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF DEATH

Just before she died, hymnwriter **Frances Havergal** asked a friend to read Isaiah 42. Halfway through verse 6, which reads, “I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You,” Miss Havergal stopped her. “Called, held, kept,” she whispered. “That’s enough. I’ll just go home to Glory on those words!” A few minutes later she entered the presence of the Lord. Although Isaiah 42:6 refers to Christ, Miss Havergal, in applying it to herself, was expressing her confidence in God to keep her safe until the very end.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

THE UMPIRE

In his book *Men at Work*, columnist George Will mentions the firm justice meted out by baseball umpires. He writes, “Toughness is not enough, but it is necessary. Once when Babe Pinelli called Babe Ruth out on strikes, Ruth made a populist argument. Ruth reasoned fallaciously (as populists do) from raw numbers to moral weight: ‘There’s 40,000 people here who know that last one was a ball, tomato head.’ Pinelli replied with the measured stateliness of John Marshall: ‘Maybe so, but mine is the only opinion that counts.’”

The apostle Paul knew that at the end of our days only one opinion will matter—that of the ultimate Umpire, the “righteous Judge” before whom we play the game of life (2 Tim. 4:8).

As he wrote his second letter to Timothy, Paul was sitting in a cold, damp dungeon. Like an athlete who had spent his strength to win the prize, Paul had persevered. During his 30 years of ministry, a thousand voices had urged him to cheat in the race, throw in the towel, compromise the faith. But Paul had decided that he would not listen to the voices of the crowd. He had only one Judge to please. He was ready to meet the Umpire of the universe.

Are you ready to meet Him too?

—HWR

*Just live your life before your Lord,
It matters not what others do—
Your actions will be weighed by Him
Who metes out judgment just and true. —Rae*

GOD’S VERDICT IS THE ONE THAT COUNTS.

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Friday, October 13, 1995)

FINISH THE RACE

At 7 p.m. on October 20, 1968, a few thousand spectators remained in the Mexico City Olympic Stadium. It was almost dark. The last of the marathon runners were stumbling across the finish line.

Finally, the spectators heard the wail of sirens on police cars. As eyes turned to the gate, a lone runner wearing the colors of Tanzania staggered into the stadium. His name was John Stephen Akhwari. He was the last contestant to finish the 26-mile 385-yard contest. His leg had been injured in a fall and was bloodied and crudely bandaged. He hobbled the final lap around the track.

The spectators rose and applauded him as though he were the winner. After he had crossed the finish line, someone asked him why he had not quit. He replied simply, "My country did not send me 7,000 miles to start the race. They sent me 7,000 miles to finish it."

Not all heroes receive medals. Yet those who faithfully live for Christ, as the apostle Paul did, know that someday they will receive a crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8). The Lord, the righteous Judge, will reward all those who long for Christ's return, are faithful in spite of difficulties, and finish the race. —HWR

*Help me to watch and pray
And on Thyself rely;
And let me ne'er my trust betray,
But press to realms on high. —Wesley*

**WORK FOR GOD DONE WELL
WILL RECEIVE GOD'S "WELL DONE!"**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Monday, November 29, year unknown)

START RIGHT, END WELL

It is important to start right, but it is imperative to end well.

William Clubertson,
former president, Moody Bible Institute

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

AFRAID?

Afraid?
 Of What?
 To feel the spirit's glad release,
 To pass from pain to perfect peace,
 The strife and strain of life to cease.
 Afraid of that?

Afraid?
 Of What?
 Afraid to see the Savior's face,
 To hear his welcome and to trace
 The glory gleaned from wounds of grace
 Afraid of that?

Afraid?
 Of what?
 A flash, a crash
 A pierced heart
 Darkness!
 Light!
 Oh, heaven's art!
 A wound of His,
 A counterpart
 Afraid of that?

Afraid?
 Of what?
 To do by death what life could not
 Baptize with blood a stony plot
 Till souls shall blossom from this spot
 Afraid of that?

E.H. Hamilton

From John & Betty's Stamm's
 belongings after their death in China

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

DEATH/LAST WORDS

Ah, Jesus!

—CHARLES V, KING OF FRANCE (1338-1380)

As I lie here on the brink of the eternal world, I want to tell you that you need have no fear for the integrity of those who have the direction of this great movement. God is with them. I would gladly have stayed here a little longer to have pushed forward the war, and to have taken part in the special effort for a hundred thousand souls, just inaugurated by the General, but I shall hear of their ingathering as surely, and rejoice in it as fully, in the country whither I am going. Good-bye. I will meet you in the morning.

—CATHERINE BOOTH (1829-1890)

Doctor, I die hard but I am not afraid to go.

—GEORGE WASHINGTON (1732-1799)

Earth recedes, heaven opens. I've been through the gates! Don't call me back . . . if this is death, it's sweet. Dwight! Irene! I see the children's faces.

[Dwight and Irene were his dead grandchildren.]

—DWIGHT LYMAN MOODY (1837-1899)

Eighty-six years I have served him, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?

—To his executioners

—SAINT POLYCARP (D.C. 167)

Glory, hallelujah! Glory, hallelujah! I am with the Lord! Glory, ready, go!

—From the scaffold

—CHARLES J. GUYTON (1841-1882)

I am not dying. I am entering into life.

—THERESE OF LISIEUX (1873-1897)

I have been dying for twenty years, now I am going to live.

—JAMES DRUMMOND BURNS

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

I have been everything and everything is nothing. A little urn will contain all that remains of one for whom the whole world was too little.

—LUCIUS SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS (146-211)

I have lost a world of time! Had I one year more, it should be spent in perusing David's Psalms and Paul's Epistles. Mind the world less and God more.

—CLAUDIUS SALMASIUS (1588-1653)

I shall hear in heaven.

—LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

I surely must be going now, my strength sinks so fast. What glory! The angels are waiting for me!

—THOMAS BATEMAN

I will stick to Christ as a burr to a topcoat.

—KATIE LUTHER

I would give worlds, if I had them, that Age of Reason had not been published. O Lord, help me! Christ, help me! O God what have I done to suffer so much? But there is no God! But if there should be, what will become of me hereafter? Stay with me, for God's sake! Send even a child to stay with me, for it is hell to be alone. If ever the devil had an agent, I have been that one.

—THOMAS PAINE (1737-1809)

Joy!

—HANNAH MORE (1745-1833)

Like as thy arms, Lord Jesus Christ, were stretched out upon the cross, even so receive me with the outstretched arms of thy mercy.

—MARY STUART (1542-1587)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Lord, I am coming as fast as I can.

—From the scaffold

—WILLIAM LAUD (1573-1645)

See how pure the sky is, there is not a single cloud. Don't you see that God is waiting for me?

—JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU (1712-1778)

Standing as I do in view of God and eternity, I realize that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness toward anyone.

—EDITH CAVELL (1865-1915)

This is the last of earth! I am content.

—JOHN QUINCY ADAMS (1767-1848)

Turn up the lights; I don't want to go home in the dark.

—O. HENRY (1862-1910)

Weep not for me, but for yourselves.

—JOHN BUNYAN (1628-1688)

What a beautiful day!

—EMPEROR OF RUSSIA ALEXANDER I (1777-1825)

What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset.

—CROWFOOT OF THE BLACKFEET (1821-1890)

Why fear death? It is the most beautiful adventure in life.

—CHARLES FROHMAN (1860-1915)

Wonderful, wonderful, this death.

—WILLIAM ETTY (1787-1849)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

(God's Little Devotional Book on Success by Honor Books) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books. Copyright - Honor Books, Inc., 1997.

**Half the failures
in life arise
from pulling in
one's horse as
he is leaping.**

■ ■ ■

Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

Luke 9:62

On a foggy morning in July of 1952, **Florence Chadwick** waded into the waters off of Catalina Island, intending to swim the channel to the California coast. An experienced long-distance swimmer, she had been the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions.

The water was numbingly cold that day, and the fog was so thick she could hardly see the boats that accompanied her, in part, to keep sharks at bay. Several times she heard rifles being fired at the sharks she sensed in the inky waters with her. She swam for more than fifteen hours before asking to be lifted from the water. Her trainer encouraged her to swim on, telling her they were close to land. When Florence looked ahead, however, all she could see was fog. She quit — only a half mile from her goal.

Later she said, "I'm not excusing myself, but if I would have seen the land, I might have made it." It wasn't the cold, fear, or exhaustion that caused her to fail in her attempt to swim the Catalina Channel. It was the fog.¹⁶

Even if your goal isn't clearly in sight, press on. God hasn't brought you this far for you to fail. He is there in your future, and so is your reward.

¹⁶*Illustrations of Preaching & Teaching*, Craig Brian Larson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), p. 96.
pp. 44-45

(Charles Wesley: Man With the Dancing Heart by T. Crichton Mitchell)
Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City. Copyright -
Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994.

On his tombstone were the following lines, written by himself on the death of one of his friends: they could not be more aptly applied to any person, than to Mr. **Charles Wesley**:

*With poverty of spirit bless'd,
 Rest, happy Saint, in Jesus rest;
 A Sinner sav'd, through grace forgiv'n,
 Redeem'd from earth to reign in heav'n!
 Thy labours of unwearied love,
 By thee forgot, are crown'd above;
 Crown'd, through the mercy of thy Lord,
 With a free, full, immense reward!⁵*

5. Whitehead, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A., and The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A.*, 227.
 p. 254

(Quotes for the Journey, Wisdom for the Way compiled by Gordon S. Jackson)
Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress. Copyright – Gordon S. Jackson, 2000.

I must not think it strange that God takes in youth those whom I would have kept on earth until they were older. God is peopling eternity, and I must not restrict him to old men and women.

—JIM ELLIOT

p. 40

**(The Mystery of God's Will by Charles R. Swindoll) Nashville, TN: Word.
Copyright – Charles R. Swindoll, Inc., 1999.**

God is full of surprises. Mere superficial pressures never determine life's outcome . . . If you are intimately linked with the living God of the universe, you don't need to worry about what the crowd is doing—or even what the king is doing. The same God who created the world is able to carry you through and to work out every situation of your life, no matter how impossible it may seem.

—RAY STEDMAN, *Adventuring Through the Bible*

p. 171

**(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.) Nashville, TN:
Thomas Nelson. Copyright - Albert M. Wells, Jr., 1988.**

The world is full of fantasy; there must be some reality somewhere, and the only reality that I've found is the reality of the Christian faith.

—Malcolm Muggeridge

p. 30

(The Darkness and the Dawn: Empowered by the Tragedy and Triumph of the Cross by Charles Swindoll) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Charles R. Swindoll, Inc., 2001.

A Norwegian fisherman and his two sons were out on their daily fishing run. By mid-afternoon a sharp, brisk wind was whipping salty spray into the faces of the rugged man and his teenage boys. As the wind increased, the waves grew into gray-blue giants. The little boat pitched back and forth as the three rowed desperately to get back to shore. The storm was so fierce that it washed out the light in the lighthouse on the shore, leaving the fishermen dependent upon dark, groping guesswork.

Meanwhile, on shore, in their rustic cottage where their wife and mother waited for them, a fire broke out. Unable to put it out, the woman watched as the flames destroyed their home and all their earthly possessions.

When the father and sons finally made it safely to shore, she was waiting for them with the tragic news. Yet even as she told her husband of the terrible fire that had destroyed their home and all their possessions, he seemed strangely unmoved by the loss. It was as though he never heard the news.

“Didn’t you hear me, Karl?” she asked. “Our house is gone.”

“Yes, I heard you,” he said. “But a few hours ago we were lost at sea, fighting fierce wind and high waves. Our only guide to the shoreline was the lighthouse on the cliff, and then it went out. I was certain we would die. Then I noticed a dim, yellow glow in the distance. We turned our boat and rowed toward the light. It grew brighter and brighter, and we followed it safely to the shore.”

“You see, Ingrid,” he said, “that little yellow glow was the first sight of our house on fire. At the peak of the blaze, we could see the shoreline bright as day. The same fire that destroyed our house created a light that saved our lives.”⁴

We’re on the sea of life and all the lights are out. Our ship is going down, and the only way to get to shore is the light of the resurrection.

Through the tragedy of a burning house a family was saved. Through the tragedy of a crucified Jesus we have a risen Savior. And because He lives, we also live.

4. As quoted by Charles A. Allen, *You Are Never Alone* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1978), pp. 126-127.
pp. 312-13

(Near to the Heart of God: Meditations To Draw You Closer by Bernard Bangley) Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press. Copyright – Bernard Bangley, 2000.

It is hard to believe that a loving God could allow us to suffer. Does it please him? Couldn't he make us good without making us miserable? Certainly he could. God can do anything. Our hearts are in his hands.

But he does not choose to spare us sorrow. In the same way that we are not born mature but have to grow into adulthood, so we must learn to humble and to trust God. We need our crosses. Suffering can help us loosen some knots that tie us to earth. To resist is merely to delay what God is trying to do for us.

It is not possible for a child to wake from a nap fully grown. God works in the heart the same way he works on the body—slowly, imperceptibly. Physical development is steady and deliberate. And that is how our souls grow: Our heavenly Father sends a series of events that wean us from earth by gradual steps. Learning to deny ourselves is a painful process. But the sick soul must take its medicine. Is the surgeon cruel when he makes an incision? No! It is an act of kindness.

The parental heart of God has no desire to hurt us. But he understands that we must get our priorities straight. We cry. We pout. We sigh and groan. We say unkind things about God. He does not intervene. He lets us continue through the process. And we are saved. A little grief has spared us a much greater sorrow. We can only conclude that God is good, that he is tender and compassionate even when we felt that we have a right to complain that he is unkind.

—FRANÇOIS DE FÉNELON: *Meditations and Devotions*

p. 163

(God's Most Precious Jewels are Crystallized Tears: True Stories of Women Who Turned Their Misery Into Ministry by Barbara Johnson) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Barbara Johnson, 2001.

The line I liked the most in his sermon was this: 'You can throw up, but you can't quit!'"

She also appreciates this wisdom attributed to Chinese evangelist **Watchman Nee**: "When the day comes for me as it came for Hannah that my Samuel, in whom my hopes are centered, passes out of my hands and into God's, then I shall know what it really means to worship Him. For worship follows in the wake of the cross, where God is all and in all. When our hands are emptied of all we hold dear and the focus shifts from ourselves to God, that is worship."

p. 117

(I Exalt You, O God: Encountering His Greatness in Your Private Worship by Jerry Bridges) Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press. Copyright — Jerry Bridges, 2001.

It has helped me to consider an unexplained setback in Paul's missionary strategy. Paul had gone to Jerusalem, after which he planned to sail to Rome and then to Spain. In Jerusalem he was illegally arrested at the instigation of the Jews and finally ended up in prison in Caesarea. There he stayed for *two whole years* because Felix, the Roman governor, wanted to grant a favor to the Jews (Acts 24:27). Here was God's leading cross-cultural missionary and church planter languishing in prison when he could have been on his way to Rome and Spain. He finally got to Rome, but as a prisoner. We don't know if he ever made it to Spain.

Why would God do this? Why would He allow His chosen apostle to the Gentiles to sit in prison for two years? God hasn't told us. His ways are higher than ours.

Humility should be a hallmark of those who fear and worship God. To accept that God's ways are often mysterious, that His wisdom is infinite and ours only finite, is an important expression of humility.

p. 124

(Great Souls at Prayer: Fourteen Centuries of Prayer, Praise and Aspiration by Mary W. Tileston) New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, Inc. Copyright – unknown, 1983.

. . . Guide, guard, and govern us even to the end, that none of us may fail to lay hold upon the immortal life—Amen.

George Dawson.

p. 341

This is our **KEY VERSE** in:

Step #12—Finisher: You Fought and You Finished.

“THE LORD WILL DELIVER ME FROM EVERY EVIL DEED, AND WILL BRING ME SAFELY TO HIS HEAVENLY KINGDOM; TO HIM BE THE GLORY FOREVER AND EVER, AMEN.”

WHAT A FANTASTIC FINISH!

WHAT A WAY TO GO OUT!

SINGING THE DOXOLOGY!

IT JUST DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THAT!

finisher

fin•ish•er (*plural fin•ish•ers*) *noun*

1. **somebody who completes something:** somebody who completes something, for example, a task or a race
2. **somebody who adds finishing touches:** somebody who completes the final stage of a process in manufacturing or restoration

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Afterlife

Though with great difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword, I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me, that I have . . . fought His battles, who will now be my rewarder. So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

John Bunyan (1628-1688), British preacher and writer. The death of Mr. Valiant-for-Truth. *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1684).

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Paradise

Swing low sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home,
I looked over Jordan an' what did I see?
A band of Angels coming after me,
Comin' for to carry me home.

Anonymous.

Spiritual. Also sung by English Rugby Union supporters. "Sweet Chariot".

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LIFE FLOWS BY LIKE A FLOOD

Francois Fenelon, a 17th century French mystic who wrote the classic *Christian Perfection*, spoke eloquently of the denial of death: “We consider ourselves immortal, or at least as though [we are] going to live for centuries. Folly of the human spirit! Every day those who die soon follow those who are already dead. One about to leave on a journey ought not to think himself far from one who went only two days before. Life flows by like a flood.”

Christianity Today, October 3, 1994, p. 24

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

Philippians 1:20-25

according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. And convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,

The scene is now dramatically changed.

The time for Paul’s departure has come.

His life is “being poured like as a drink offering” upon the sacrifice and service of the faith of those whom he has faithfully served.

HOW DO YOU FINISH VICTORIOUSLY?

You go out singing the **DOXOLOGY** and looking forward with **FANTASTIC ANTICIPATION** the moment you die when you instantaneously enter into the presence of the Lord, the One who said to the thief on the cross:

“Today you will be with me in paradise.”

(The Christian in Complete Armour by William Gurnall) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright - James S. Bell, Jr., 1994.

Julius Palmer, an English martyr, shared how he lifted his thoughts above suffering by heavenly meditation on God’s “great and precious promises”: “To them that have their mind fettered to the body as a thief’s foot is to the (sic) a pair of stocks, it is hard to die. But if any be able to separate his soul from his body, then by the help of God’s Spirit, it is no more mastery for such a one than to drink this cup.” A soul in heaven feels none of the struggles we have here on earth. Here, Christian, is the most glorious picture to be seen this side of heaven!

When a Christian can stand upon this Pisgah of meditation and look with the eye of faith across the panorama of the great and precious things which the faithful God has prepared for him, it is easy to turn from the world’s love and rejection alike. But it is hard for some of us to get up there because we get tired after only a few steps of climbing toward God’s mount. That is when we must call out, “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” Who will lift us up to this holy hill of meditation, higher than the surging waves that dash upon us from beneath? God’s Spirit will pick us up in His everlasting arms and take us there.

(December 31)

**(Help! I'm Being Intimidated by the Proverbs 31 Woman! by Nancy Kennedy)
Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright - Nancy Kennedy, 1995.**

Jesus Himself called Heaven a real place (Greek word, *topos*). “In My Father’s house are many dwelling *places*; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a *place* for you. And if I go and prepare a *place* for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2-3, emphasis added). Yes, Heaven is a real *place*. Jesus said so.

Heaven is populated by *real* people, entered by *real* gates, traveled by *real* streets, and developed with *real* buildings. It is a real place where God lives. It is the *real* place from which Christ came into this world. And it is the *real* place to which Christ returned at His ascension—*really!*

p. 16

v. 19 Great Prisca and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.

Paul in these remaining verses of the epistle is going to be mentioning **NINE DIFFERENT NAMES** of individuals.

Here in verse 19, he mentions some of his very favorite folks.

These are super-great homefolks who have stood behind the scenes and have done so much over the years in ministry with the Apostle Paul.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

. . . **Priscilla) and Aquila**, [they are] the well-known couple who taught Apollos in Ephesus . . .
p. 760

Acts 18:2

And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them,

Acts 18:18

And Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow.

Acts 18:26

and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Romans 16:3-5

Greet Prisca and Aquila my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

1 Corinthians 16:19

The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary continues by saying:

. . . **and the faithful household of Onesiphorus** . . . were singled out by the apostle for greeting.
p. 760

2 Timothy 1:16-18 (DAV)

May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my being a prisoner; but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me, and found me—may the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day—and what services he rendered at Ephesus you are knowing very well.

Hawthorne & Martin say:

The household provided members with a sense of security and identity that the larger political and social structures were unable to give . . .

Given the dominant place of the household concept within the culture of Paul's day, its impact upon his teaching is not surprising. Paul brings to life his descriptions of the church and various relationships within it by drawing on terms and concepts associated with the household.

p. 417

Hawthorne & Martin say further:

There are many indications the Pauline corpus that women labored alongside men in the cause of the gospel. First, there is the outstanding example of Priscilla. She and her husband, Aquila, were coworkers with Paul, and they risked their necks for his life. It was in their house that the church met, and for them all the churches of the Gentiles gave thanks . . .
p. 603

MacArthur says:

Earlier in this letter, Paul expressed appreciation **for the household of Onesiphorus**, who “often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains” (1:16). Because the **household** is mentioned in both places, it is obvious that everyone in it was a Christian, perhaps led to Christ by **Onesiphorus** himself. Such a **household** would have included not only family members but also servants and friends who lived with **Onesiphorus**.
p. 214

Griffiths says of these closing verses:

Nine more Christians are mentioned by name in snippets of news and greetings.
p. 220

F. F. Bruce says:

Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned six times in the New Testament—three times in the Pauline letters and three times in Acts. Each writer, Paul and Luke, puts Priscilla before her husband in two out of the three places where he names them. On the two occasions when Paul puts Priscilla first (except that he prefers to call her Prisca) he sends his greetings to them . . . on the other occasion, writing to the Corinthian Christians from Ephesus, he said, ‘Aquila and Prisca send their warm greetings in the Lord’ (1 Cor. 16:19). He may well have been in their home at the time, and as he wrote, or rather dictated, it is quiet credible that Priscilla insisted that her husband’s name be put first.
pp. 44-45

Bruce says further:

When he had completed eighteen months in Corinth (say, from the autumn of A.D. 50 to the spring of 52), he left that city and crossed the Aegean to Asia. Priscilla and Aquila went with him and settled in Ephesus. They have been envisaged as the kind of business people who had branches in several cities.

p. 47

He says still further:

By the time Paul wrote to the Romans, Priscilla and Aquila had returned to Rome. It is plain that by this time (early in A.D. 57) Claudius's edict of expulsion had been allowed to lapse; since 54 a new emperor had been on the throne. In Rome, as in Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila had a 'church in their house', to which also Paul's greetings are sent.

p. 49

Bruce then has this to say about “ONESIPHORUS”:

Finally, there is a man named Onesiphorus, whose help meant much to Paul when he needed it most. He is mentioned twice only—both times in one of the Pastoral Epistles . . . —but the little that is said of him is eloquent enough. His name is quite like that of Onesimus—it means ‘profit-bearing’ or ‘profit-yielding’—and Paul proved him to be true to his name. He rendered Paul great help in Ephesus (evidently his home city)—by contrast with ‘Alexander the coppersmith’, who did him ‘great harm’ . . . —and in times of trouble, says Paul, ‘he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me.’ The imprisonment to which Paul refers here perhaps involved greater restriction than the house-arrest under which he lived for two years . . . it may have been not only difficult to find the apostle but dangerous to be recognized as one of his friends. Was it because of the danger of being publicly associated with him that, as he wrote, ‘at my first defence no one took my part; all deserted me’ . . . ? All the more, then, would he have appreciated the courage and determination shown by Onesiphorus. One writer has drawn a vivid and moving picture of ‘one purposeful face in a drifting crowd’ as ‘this stranger from far coasts of the Aegean . . . threads the maze of unfamiliar streets, knocking at many doors, following up every clue, warned of the risks he is taking not to be turned from his quest; till in some obscure prison-house a known voice greets him, and he discovers Paul chained to a Roman soldier.

Plainly, too, Onesiphorus had the active support of his family as he went out of his way to be of service to Paul. No wonder that Paul bespeaks the mercy of God on Onesiphorus and his household both in their early life and at the great day.

pp. 89-90

Barker says:

In Romans 16:3, Paul writes a greeting to a few close friends. Two in particular are singled out. He labels them, “My fellow workers in Christ Jesus.” Who are these two who are so singularly honored? Great preachers like Peter? Greater writers like Mark? Great thinkers like John? Great missionaries like Barnabas? Great organizers like Titus? Great teachers like Timothy? Not at all. They are a housewife named Priscilla and her businessman-husband, Aquila. In Paul’s eyes—and God’s eyes—this housewife and her businessman-husband are as great as these others, and are identified as “fellow workers in Christ Jesus.”

p. 14

Barker says further:

Like many couples today, Priscilla and Aquila made a series of moves. Starting in Pontus, they lived successively in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, and then in Rome and Ephesus again. She went through all the moves uncomplainingly.

The names of Priscilla and Aquila occur six times in the New Testament. In four of those six times, Priscilla's name is mentioned first. This is so unusual that scholars have concluded that she was socially superior to Aquila and was born into the upper class, as we have mentioned. Scholars have also concluded that Priscilla's name usually precedes her husband's because she was the more capable, the more intelligent, the more vigorous. (If any husband has a grain of sense, he will admit that it is certainly the case in his own marriage as well!) Though superior in every way, she devotedly stayed by his side.

p. 16

He continues:

An old man was in prison, waiting to be executed. He thought back over his long, useful life, packed with memorable people and incidents. Inevitably, a few people stood out. Writing a last letter, Paul, this old man in prison, mentioned three people in particular who stood out in Ephesus. Two of those three were Priscilla and Aquila.

Strange, we think, that Paul should remember these two. For Priscilla and Aquila did nothing particularly world-shattering. But that is just where we are so wrong. In God's eyes, building a Christian marriage, guiding the young, and having the church in your home *is* world-shattering! The Priscillas and Aquilas are truly the fellow workers in Christ Jesus.

pp. 20-21

Barker then says finally:

At Winchester, Virginia, in the lovely Shenandoah Valley, there is a quiet old cemetery where a shaft of granite commemorates the unknown dead of the Confederate Army. On it are inscribed the words,

WHO THEY ARE NONE KNOWS
WHAT THEY WERE ALL KNOW

Those are the words we can apply to the Priscillas and Aquilas of the world—the quiet, gentle, kindly Christians who, in everyday living, are truly “fellow workers in Christ Jesus.”

p. 21

(Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul: 101 Stories of Life, Love and Learning
by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, and Kimberly Kirberger)
Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc.. Copyright - Jack
Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, and Kimberly Kirberger, 1997.

Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while and leave footprints on our hearts. And we are never, ever the same.

Source Unknown

p. 35

v. 20 Erastus remained in Corinth, but Trophimus, being ill, I left behind in Miletus.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Erastus was an old associate of Timothy (Acts 19:22) and his whereabouts would presumably be of interest; the same would be true of the information about **Trophimus** . . . an Ephesian.

p. 760

Acts 19:22

And having sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

MacArthur says:

The **Erastus [who] remained at Corinth** probably was “the city treasurer” of Corinth, who sent greetings through Paul to the church at Rome (Rom. 16:23). He also may have been the man whom the apostle sent with Timothy to minister in Macedonia (Acts 19:22).

p. 214

MacArthur says this of “TROPHIMUS”:

Trophimus was a native of the province of Asia, specifically the city of Ephesus, and had accompanied Paul from Greece to Troas (Acts 20:1-6). He probably helped carry the offering to the church in Jerusalem, where he was the unintentional cause of Paul’s arrest for presumably bringing a Gentile into the temple (Acts 21:29). On his trip to Rome, Paul sadly had to leave him **sick at Miletus**.

p. 215

Kelly says:

One of Paul's reasons for dwelling on the absence of these two old friends is to impress upon Timothy his need for his presence and comfort. He adds a further reasons for urgency with the plea, **Do your best to come before winter.**

p. 222

Hendriksen says:

It must have been hard for Trophimus to be left behind at Miletus, only thirty-six miles south of his home at Ephesus.

p. 332

Barker says this about "TROPHIMUS":

Trophimus was soon caught up in Christian church work. Later on Paul sent word to all the churches that there was a special relief offering being collected to help distressed Christians back in Palestine. The Church at Ephesus was asked if it would like to cooperate.

Trophimus and his fellow church members at Ephesus must have been aware of what a church is for, because they responded generously when they saw the need. Trophimus must have been looked to as a leader and as a trustworthy man because he was one of the two picked from Ephesus to travel with Paul to take the relief fund to Palestine.

p. 104

Barker says further:

Trophimus and Paul seemed to have a knack for being in the middle of riots for once again there was a serious public disturbance.

This time it was a rumor that lit the fuse. The rumor was that Trophimus, a Gentile and thus an outsider, had been seen in the inner court of the temple, an area that was out-of-bounds for Gentiles. The quickest way to create a mob scene in Jerusalem in those days was to spread the word that an outsider had defiled the sacred temple area.

It was the second time in the Bible record that Trophimus was mixed up in a riot. Probably Trophimus did not intentionally try to be a “terrible-tempered Mr. Bangs.” No Christian does that. But there is, nonetheless, a hint that Trophimus did something about his belief and his action made enough impact on others to cause a reaction.

p.p. 104-5

He continues:

The last reference to Trophimus in the New Testament comes in II Timothy 4:20. Paul is signing off in his letter and closes with a few words of personal chit-chat about mutual friends. He says, “Trophimus I left ill at Miletus.” That one short sentence tells a lot. Trophimus was taken ill in the course of his Christian work and was unable to go on with the others. Being a Christian cost Trophimus pain and discomfort and suffering and time and hardship.

p. 108

He continues:

We have peddled a cut-rate salvation. We have watered down the real thing, labeled it, “peace of soul,” or “happiness” and let it pass for Christianity. It is not simply either of these, nor is it simply saving your own soul. It is bearing a cross, suffering, sacrificing, giving. Jesus Christ did not live or die for anything so cheap and easy as mere peace of mind or happiness. He called us to take up our crosses and follow Him!

Trophimus might have stayed home and played it safe. He might have guarded his health. He might have made sure he had an easy time in life—but he would not have been a Christian. A Christian is one who is willing to sacrifice.

pp. 108-9

Barker says finally:

“What are you getting out of all this Christian-stuff?” the world sneers.

Getting? Nothing, we answer. Because life to us is not getting, but giving. And we answer, “We go through life with the Greatest ever to live.” Being with Him is all the reward we ever need.

p. 110

v. 21 Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus and Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren are sending greetings to you.

This verse TAKES US BACK to verse 9:

“come to me quickly.”

Now it is:

“MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO COME BEFORE WINTER.”

“The wind, the rain, and the cold are on their way and I would really love to have the cloak as well.”

We read a description of the **WINTER WEATHER** in:

Acts 27:20

And since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.

Acts 28:1-3

And when they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta. And the natives showed us extraordinary kindness; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all. But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The appeal in verse 9 is repeated with the addition of the words **before winter**. Paul may have desired his cloak before the weather turned cold (v. 13), but he was more likely concerned about the sailing conditions on the Adriatic Sea. Of the four individuals listed . . . nothing is known. Though “everyone” had deserted Paul at his first defense, still, in the spirit of forgiveness expressed in verse 16, Paul had not cut the Roman Christians off. The greeting is from **all the brothers**.
p. 760

Philippians 4:22

All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household.

What a tremendous testimony this is. Right in the very eye of the storm, there are those who are remaining faithful unto the Lord and would, at this time, send their greetings to Timothy.

Hendriksen says:

Except for these brief notices here in II Tim. 4:21, we have no definite and reliable knowledge about any of the four persons mentioned here. Neither do we know who are meant by “all the brothers.”
p. 333

Kelly says:

None of the four, it appears, belonged to the Apostle’s intimate circle . . . There is no real contradiction between this verse and Paul’s complaint in 16 that everyone had deserted him at his preliminary hearing. None of those mentioned here was probably of sufficient standing at the time to appear in court on his behalf; in any case it was one thing to send messages like these in a letter, and quite another to take the drastic step of standing up in court to give testimony for Paul.
p. 222

MacArthur says:

He would desperately need the cloak of warmth. As for the books and parchments, Paul realized that what little light he now had for reading and writing would decrease still more as the days became shorter.

p. 215

Griffiths says:

Do your best to get here before winter. Paul repeats his request of verse 9. Once the autumn gales started nobody came by sea: ships were beached and the masts taken down. There is pathos in the old man's longing for human companionship and fellowship in his remaining weeks.

p. 221

A. T. Robertson says:

Pathetic item if Paul was now in the Mamertine Dungeon in Rome with winter coming on and without his cloak for which he asked. How long he had been in prison this time we do not know. He may even have spent the previous winter or part of it here.

p. 634

Barnes says:

Probably because of the dangers of the navigation then, and because the circumstances of the apostle were such as to demand the presence of a friend.

p. 255

Hughes says:

“Do your best to get here before winter” was not a primary reference to Paul's discomfort from the cold but to the ancient shipping lanes, which were considered closed to traffic from November 10 to March 10. Paul had once been shipwrecked when his ship tried to beat the season. It was now or never!

p. 270

Larson says:

Paul returned to immediate needs. He pressed Timothy to hurry, to try and get to Rome **before winter**. Travel was difficult in those days, and the sea passage across the Adriatic Sea to Italy would prove impossible during the stormy winter months. Paul needed the warmth of Timothy's companionship.

pp. 326-7

Wiersbe has a little section called:***Respond to Opportunities***

Paul's plea, "Come before winter" (2 Tim. 4:21), is a reminder to us that opportunities do not wait forever. Once the winter season began, Timothy could not travel easily to Rome and see his beloved friend for the last time. "Before winter or never!" says Dr. Clarence Macartney in his famous sermon "Come Before Winter". He continued, "There are some things which will never be done unless they are done 'before winter.'" Are there opportunities you are neglecting today that may soon vanish forever? Are there people you should contact and decisions you should make? Today is yours; tomorrow may be too late. Come before winter!

p. 805

Knight says:

Paul repeats his request for Timothy to come to him using the same imperative and infinitive as in v. 9 . . . But now, instead of using the adverb [quickly], he uses the phrase [before winter]. . . . [Winter] was used of both the cold season, . . . and [the] wintery and stormy . . . Here the two meanings virtually coalesce since the season is probably intended precisely because then Paul will need his cloak . . . and the weather will make sea travel impossible . . . Paul knows that if Timothy does not come "before winter" (usually regarded as from about November to about March; . . .) he will have to wait until travel commences again in spring. Perhaps the most compelling reason for Timothy to "come before winter" is Paul's expectation that his trial and probable execution will not be put off that long.

p. 477

Parker says:

“Come before winter;” winter is bad almost anywhere, but oh! how wintry is winter in gaol—a great fortress like this.
p. 156

He then says further:

Paul’s very notes, Paul’s lines written by his own hand. He never did much with his own hand in the way of writing, for he was a man who suffered much with an affliction of the eyes; but he did write some little pieces of parchment, and nobody perhaps could read them but himself. He wanted them all with him. It was not much—young life, poor old skin to keep his shivering body warm, and the books and the parchments. What did he care for anything else? He said, I am done, so far as this world is concerned; 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. In the meantime I only want a young soul, and an old sheepskin, and a book or two.
p. 156

Stott says:

In these final verses of the letter the apostle also mentions some Christians in Rome, who send their greetings to Timothy. He gives the names of three men—Eubulus, Pudens and Linus (the latter just possibly the Linus whom Irenaeus and Eusebius mention as the first Bishop of Rome following the martyrdom of Peter and Paul)—and of one lady, Claudia, and then mentions ‘all the brethren’. It seems likely, since Paul knows some of their names and can send greetings from them to Timothy, that they have visited him in prison.
p. 118

Stott says further:

But above all Paul yearns for Timothy himself. ‘Do your best to come to me soon’, he writes (9). ‘Do your best to come before winter’ (21). If he is ever to see Timothy again and enjoy his friendship, then Timothy must come soon (while he is still alive) and in any case before winter (when navigation would be impossible). So twice he urges him to do his best to come. We must not play down the urgency of Paul’s affectionate desire to see Timothy. The same apostle who has set his love and hope upon the coming of Christ (8), nevertheless also longs for the coming of Timothy. ‘I long night and day to see you,’ he has written at the beginning of his letter, ‘that I may be filled with joy’ (1:4). The two longings are not incompatible. One sometimes meets super-spiritual people who claim that they never feel lonely and have no need of human friends, for the companionship of Christ satisfies all their needs. But human friendship is the loving provision of God for mankind. It was God himself who said in the beginning: ‘it is not good that a man should be alone’ (Gn. 2:18). Wonderful as are both the presence of the Lord Jesus every day and the prospect of his coming on the last day, they are not intended to be a substitute for human friendships.
pp. 119-20

King says:

We observe here also (b) *His human longings*—“Do thy diligence to come before winter.” Under the restrictions of the primitive navigation of those days, there was no sailing in the winter; and if Timothy did not get away before then, it would necessitate a long dreary postponement of his visit, and in all probability it would then come too late. And this very human father did so badly want to see his son. In verse 9, he had already dictated, “Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me”, come quick; but now, in his own handwriting, he pens it, “Do thy diligence to come before winter.”
pp. 141-2

Quinn & Wacker say:

In Mark 13:18 = Matt 24:20 the reference is to “flight in the winter,” i.e. during the storms of the rainy season (cf. Matt 16:3; John 10:22), which made the *mare clausum* from November 11 to March 10 for ancient navigators.
p. 829

What this basically means is that the **SEA WAS CLOSED** from **November 11 to March 10.**

Demarest says:

Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and “*all the brethren*” join in the final greeting. I’m haunted by the question of where they had been at the first defense hearing. If they had let him down, it no longer mattered to Paul.
p. 296

He says further:

Is there not a word for us all in this poignant appeal, “*Come before winter*”? There may not be another spring. Act now. Do the kind deed today; there may be no tomorrow.
p. 296

J. Vernon McGee says:

Notice that he again urges Timothy to come, and to come before winter. This concludes the tremendous swan song of the apostle Paul.
p. 479

Lenski says:

Paul repeats the request voiced in v. 9. Since this is a repetition it shows us how earnestly Paul pleads for Timothy's coming. After saying "quickly" he now says at least "before winter"; why before winter, is stated in connection with our comment on v. 9.

p. 883

Guthrie says:

The urgent request of verse 9 is repeated with the addition of the words *before winter*. For a period of some weeks the Adriatic would be closed to shipping and the apostle is therefore anxious that Timothy should hasten to reach Italy before transport delayed him. This is another intensely human touch which suggests the imminence of the apostle's trial.

p. 179

Milne says much the same thing:

Do your best to get here before winter (verse 21) is Paul's last request to Timothy, and the most personal reason for writing this letter. Paul was now virtually alone, and winter conditions around the Mediterranean closed off many of the shipping lanes that led to Rome. Paul derived a special pleasure and profit from Timothy's presence (Phil. 2:19-22), and longed to see him in one last act of fellowship. He could foresee that his end was relatively near.

p. 189

Lea & Griffin say:

Paul wanted Timothy to come before winter not only because he needed his coat but because transportation on the Mediterranean stopped from November through March. Mention of this season indicated that the letter was probably written in late spring or early summer. If Timothy wanted to make it to Rome during that year, he needed to leave at once.

p. 261

Lock says:

. . . as quickly as possible: before winter sets in which will make travelling dangerous for you, and when I shall specially need your presence—and (perhaps) the warm cloak.

p. 120

Paul has greetings from:

“EUBULUS AND PUDENS AND LINUS AND CLAUDIA.”

Then he makes the statement:

“AND ALL THE BRETHERN ARE SENDING GREETINGS TO YOU.”

This reminded me of a section of my book, [Drawing Closer Growing Stronger](#), when I wrote these words:

One day I had an opportunity to lead Bobby Brown to the Lord. Bobby was a third baseman for the New York Yankees during their golden years. He played with Bobby Richardson who, when he retired, traveled around the country sharing his Christian testimony. On a television show one night, he closed with this poem which I really like:

Your name may not appear down here
 In this world's Hall of Fame,
 In fact, you may be so unknown
 That no one knows your name;
 The Oscars and the praise of men
 May never come your way,
 But don't forget God has rewards
 That He'll hand out someday.

This Hall of Fame is only good
 As long as time shall be;
 But keep in mind, God's Hall of Fame
 Is for eternity;
 To have your name inscribed up there
 Is greater more by far
 Than all the fame and all the praise
 Of ev'ry man-made star.

This crowd on earth may soon forget
 When you're not at the top.
 They'll cheer like mad until you fall
 And then their praise will stop;
 Not God, He never does forget,
 And in His Hall of Fame,
 By just believing on His Son,
 Forever—there's your name.

I tell you, friend, I wouldn't trade
 My name, however small,
 That's written there beyond the stars
 In that celestial Hall;
 For all famous names on earth,
 Or glory that they share;
 I'd rather be an unknown here,
 And have my name up there.

WHERE TO FIND ME

An old noted preacher lay dying. He was ready to die and eagerly looked forward to being with the One he had loved and served so faithfully. His son, also in the ministry, spent as much time as possible at his father's bedside. But one Saturday he found it necessary to leave him because he had to fill a preaching assignment in another city. Well aware of his father's grave condition, he was hesitant about going. Sensing his son's reluctance, McFerrin encouraged him to be on his way. "Son, you'd better get started," he said. "Don't worry about me. I'm feeling some better today. But if I should slip away while you're gone, you'll know where to find me!"

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

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

The word “you” that concludes verse 21 and the words “YOUR” and “YOU” in verse 22 all REFER TO TIMOTHY.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Paul’s closing benediction is first directed to Timothy (**your spirit**, sing.) and then to his other readers (**you**, pl.), once again demonstrating that the epistle was designed to be read widely . . . If 2 Timothy were penned during Paul’s second Roman imprisonment, these are the last words of the apostle to have survived.

p. 760

Lea & Griffin say:

Most of Paul’s epistles lack a double benediction. The first benediction was directed toward Timothy; the second expressed a word for the entire church.

This letter represented a special message to Timothy, but Paul had an obvious concern for the full fellowship. Nothing could sustain the Ephesian Christians with more stamina and holiness than an abundant supply of God’s grace. All of God’s people always need all of his grace.

p. 261

Quinn & Wacker say:

What does it mean, in the biblical tradition, to declare or pray that the Lord is/may be with someone . . . ? It is an assurance or prayer that a divine dynamic has entered or will enter a person’s heart and visible life, a dynamic that has several aspects (protection, alliance, guidance to success, reassurance, encouragement, demanding obedience . . .

p. 839

Quinn & Wacker say further:

Thus in this final prayer of 2 Tim 4:22 the apostle intercedes with the risen Jesus to energize and support that gift of the Spirit which God has bestowed on Timothy. This reference to the Spirit ought not to be dismissed too quickly because it is in a formula. The formula was as yet by no means set, much less stereotyped, and the reference to the Spirit is really quite indistinguishable from that in the other Pauline blessings cited above.

The final prayer here occurred in identical form (and with the same textual problem) in 1 Tim 6:21 and in Titus 3:15 with the addition of [all] . . . Whereas “the Lord” is to be with Timothy in his ministry, here . . . “grace,” is to be with those (“you” pl.) who listen to this letter.
p. 840

Stott says:

First in verse 22: ‘The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.’ These are the very last recorded words of the apostle. If he has been dictating thus far (perhaps to Luke), possibly now he takes the pen himself and writes this as his autograph. May ‘the Lord be with you’ (singular), he prays, as he has been with me during my trial (17). And may ‘grace (the word in which all Paul’s theology is distilled) be with you.’ This time the pronoun ‘you’ is plural, which ‘recognizes that the letter was in fact destined for public use’. It was directed to the whole church. It is directed to us today.

Then in verse 18 we read, ‘To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.’ It would be difficult to find a better summary than these two sentences of the apostle’s life and ambition. First, he received grace from Christ. Then he returned glory to Christ. ‘From him grace; to him glory.’ In all our Christian life and service we should desire no other philosophy than this.
pp. 126-7

Larson says:

He prayed God's continual ministry in and through Timothy's life. He desired that this young man, to whom he was passing the torch of ministry, would remain faithful until the end, kept by God's Spirit.

And then, **Grace be with you.** The "you" is plural, and it includes all who would read the letter. Paul prayed for God's full goodness and concern, his unrelenting kindness and strength for all who seek to please him and who claim Christ as Lord.

Fittingly, these were probably Paul's final words. His ministry began in the blaze of God's grace on the road to Damascus, and he ended his life bestowing that same grace on all who remain faithful.

p. 327

Hughes says:

The benediction—"The Lord be with your spirit"—is in the singular, being for Timothy alone. "Timothy, may the Lord Christ Jesus be with your human spirit." Timothy would carry that blessing to the end.

The expression of grace—"Grace be with you"—is in the plural, being for the Christian community. Every one of Paul's benedictions contains the word *grace*. So Paul's terminal word and wish was that God's unmerited favor, forgiveness, and enabling power would be showered upon his children.

"Grace be with you."

p. 271

Griffiths says:

And so we come to the last words of the man used by the Holy Spirit to become the major contributor to the New Testament writings: *The Lord be with your spirit*, addressed to Timothy, and *Grace be with you* (plural), being a greeting to all in Ephesus. Did this letter reach Timothy before Paul was executed? Did he get to Paul before winter? We shall never know. The curtain comes down at this point.

p. 221

Kelly says:

If 2 Timothy is the latest in date of the three letters, as seems highly probable, these are the last words written by the Apostle which have survived.

p. 223

Hendriksen says:

“The Lord” means “the Lord Jesus Christ” . . . The predicate “(be) with your spirit” implies that the spirit of Timothy needs to be strengthened, so that he will fully discharge his ministerial task and in the fulfillment of his duties will even be able to endure suffering for the sake of Christ, and this without protest. The second part is addressed not only to Timothy but also to all those who will hear or read the letter: **Grace (be) with you.**

p. 333

Towner says:

Paul’s personal blessing to Timothy is a prayer that the Lord be continually with his spirit (Gal 6:18; Phil 4:23; Philem 25). *Spirit* here refers to the spiritual dimension of human life, that dimension in which the Lord communicates and has fellowship through the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:16). This is probably just as much a prayer that Timothy be able to perceive the Lord’s presence.

p. 214

Lange says:

A blessing differing somewhat in form from the conclusion usual to the Apostle. In the knowledge that it is his last Epistle, he has purposely so divided the blessing that the former part concerns Timothy alone . . . but the latter, all the believers with him who would read it . . .

p. 118

Fee says:

It is altogether fitting that the very last words from Paul should be a benediction, a desire for God's **grace** to **be with** all his people.
p. 302

Wilson says:

These are the last words of the great apostle. He first prays that the Lord may be with Timothy's spirit, and then embraces all believers in the final benediction. 'Grace be with you all!' (NEB). Paul thus ends his ministry on the same note with which it began [*Acts 13.43*], for what was his 'signature' in every Epistle is also his final prayer for the church [*2 Thess 3.17, 18*].
p. 170

Wiersbe says:

"Grace be with you" (4:22) was Paul's personal farewell, used at the end of his letters as a "trademark" that the letter was not a forgery.

The Bible does not record the final days of Paul. Tradition tells us that he was found guilty and sentenced to death. He was probably taken outside the city and beheaded.

But Timothy and the other devoted believers carried on the work! As John Wesley used to say, "God buries His workmen, but His work goes on." You and I must be faithful so that (if the Lord does not return soon) future generations may hear the Gospel and have the opportunity to be saved.

p. 164

Matthew Henry says:

We need no more to make us happy than to have the Lord Jesus Christ with our spirits. And it is the best prayer we can put up for our friends. *Grace be with you. Amen.* And if grace be with us here to convert and change us, to make us holy, to keep us humble, and to enable us to persevere to the end, glory will crown us hereafter.

p. 1899

Barker says:

Paul's letters were just the bracing tonic Timothy needed. Although depressed by the discouraging set-backs at Ephesus and weakened by a bout of "nervous stomach," Timothy was faithful. He stuck to his post and performed his duty. He stayed on in Ephesus.

p. 97

He says further:

Because of Jesus Christ, Timothy, the timid lad of Lystra, grew to be strong enough to stand any kind of setback. In fact, when Paul himself was in prison, Timothy was asked to visit him. Part of the reason for the request was the close tie between "father" Paul and "son" Timothy. Part of the reason also was that Timothy, by that time, could pass on strength and encouragement.

There is pathos in the sickly, aged Apostle asking for his "son": "Do your best to come before winter" . . . More important, there is a pronouncement in this verse: Timothy was a man who had known intimately the meaning of discouragement, loneliness and failure—yet he had been able to stand. Obviously Timothy had come to have a contagious power about him. The secret of this contagious power? Jesus Christ.

p. 99

He says finally:

No one knows for sure how the rest of Timothy's life was spent. The rumor that has persisted through the centuries is that Timothy went back to Ephesus and remained there as a faithful pastor. Tradition also has it—and it cannot be proved or disproved by any historical evidence—that Timothy died a martyr's death. The details are few, but tradition states that Timothy protested the wild excesses during one of Ephesus' "religious" holidays, and was so badly mauled by a mob that he died.

pp. 99-100

Faith

Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the spirit be thine!

Robert Browning (1812-1889), British poet. *Men and Women* “Saul” (1855).

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(Great Souls at Prayer: Fourteen Centuries of Prayer, Praise and Aspiration by Mary W. Tileston) New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, Inc. Copyright – unknown, 1983.

Blessed are all Thy saints, my God and King, who have travelled over the tempestuous sea of mortality, and have at last made the desired port of peace and felicity. Oh, cast a gracious eye upon us who are still in our dangerous voyage. Remember and succour us in our distress, and think on them that lie exposed to the rough storms of troubles and temptations. Strengthen our weakness, that we may do valiantly in this spiritual war; help us against our own negligence and cowardice, and defend us from the treachery of our unfaithful hearts. We are exceeding frail, and indisposed to every virtuous and gallant undertaking. Grant, O Lord, that we may bring our vessel safe to shore, unto our desired haven—Amen.

St. Augustine (354-430).

p. 278

(Bits and Pieces by M. B. "Billy" Dunn, 1977)

"To My Lord Jesus Christ"

I've always known about You it seems,
From childhood up and living in dreams.
And being and doing in thoughts in talk,
From time to time even in my walk.

But my Lord, I don't know You as I would,
And I haven't done all I should.
To seek as You said to find
And get from You a renewed mind.

Mostly I just called on You when in need,
Thank You for givin' me faith's seed
That You would always come through
Even though I have been untrue to You.

Praise You my Lord for being You,
And for doing all the things You do.
Thank You for Your great mercies to me,
And for opening my eyes so I could see.

But, my Lord, I tire of being what I am.
A Christian off and on, livin' a sham.
I want to see all You want me to see,
And I want to be all You want me to be.

It was Ellisen who said:

“So passed off the scene the world’s greatest missionary statesman. As with Jesus, John the Baptist, many prophets and apostles, his life was taken from him . . . but his voice was not silenced.”

(source unknown)

CONCLUSION:

What lessons did you learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The Lord delights in those who finish well.

LESSON #2: Failure to prepare is preparation for failure.

LESSON #3: Are you prepared in your heart to stand alone if it is necessary?

LESSON #4: Are you free with your forgiveness for those who fail you?

LESSON #5: We can always count on the Lord being with us in every situation of life.

LESSON #6: You can always count on the Lord's presence and power.

LESSON #7: He will always be there to deliver His own, whether in life or in death.

LESSON #8: Paul is praising the Lord in the prison, he is singing in the storm.

LESSON #9: When we know God stands with us, it does not matter who stands against us.

LESSON #10: It is good for us to be concerned that when it comes our time to die, we will be triumphant and victorious witnesses for our Lord and Savior.

LESSON #11: God is available to meet our needs through the people who are around us.

LESSON #12: It is good for us to make preparations to have a message as part of our legacy that lives on after we are gone.

Demarest says:

Thirty years of remarkable ministry is about to end with the thud of the executioner's axe. But the word and work of the Lord will go on as long as people like Timothy and us heed Paul's last letter.

p. 296

A. T. Robertson says:

Let us hope that Timothy and Mark reached Paul before winter, before the end came, with the cloak and with the books. Our hero, we may be sure, met the end nobly. He is already more than conqueror in Christ who is by his side and who will welcome him to heaven and give him his crown. Luke, Timothy, Mark will do all that mortal hands can do to cheer the heart of Paul with human comfort. He already had the comfort of Christ in full measure.

p. 634

Baxter says:

This second letter to Timothy is the last writing of Paul preserved to us. As such it has a peculiar and touching interest. In it we see Paul's final attitudes. These are a study all in themselves. Never does the apostle shine in nobler light. His passion for the great work to which his whole energy has been devoted is strong as ever upon him.

p. 234

NEW BODIES FOR OLD!

The Word of God clearly reveals that man is more than a creature of time. He is destined for eternity! Recognizing this truth, a famous American wrote his own epitaph as follows:

The body of Benjamin Franklin, printer,
Like the cover of an old book,
Its contents torn out,
Lies here food for the worms;
But the work shall not be lost,
For it will (as he believes) appear once more
In a new and more elegant edition,
Revised and corrected by its Author!

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

WHAT ARE YOU LIVING FOR?

Although the Apostle Paul's ministry had been rewarding, it had not been easy. Measured by the world's yardstick of success, Paul's life seems almost without significance.

He wrote his second letter to Timothy as he languished in a cold, damp dungeon awaiting execution. In a matter of weeks, Paul would stand before a half-insane Nero, and his life and ministry would end. But he knew that after his death he would receive the crown of life from the King of kings. And we now know how the influence of his life continued, changing the course of history itself.

Many people living in their twilight years suddenly realize how empty and pointless their lives have been. They've made some deals and had some fun, but in terms of satisfying friendships or lasting accomplishments, their lives have been zero. They have climbed the ladder of success, only to discover that all along it had been leaning against the wrong wall.

An ancient historian would have written volumes about the splendor of Nero and probably never mentioned Paul. Yet, today we name our dogs Nero and our sons Paul. I guess what we live for is pretty important after all.

By the way, what are you living for? —HWR

*One life to live for Christ my Lord,
One life to do my part,
One life in which to give my all
With fervency of heart. —Brandt*

**THERE ARE NO LOSERS WITH JESUS
AND NO WINNERS WITH THE DEVIL.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Thursday, January 14, year unknown)

(Diamonds in the Dust: 366 Sparkling Devotions by Joni Eareckson Tada)
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Joni Eareckson Tada, 1993.

She Is Not Gone

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

—Psalm 116:15

Edna Hamlin was a saintly old woman. She sat humped over in a wheelchair the many years she lived in a nursing home. Edna and I were pen pals those years. Her letters not only overflowed with smiles and joyful observations about nurses and friends, but her envelopes would spill over with gospel tracts, crocheted bookmarkers, and copies of poems and hymns. Edna was my inspiration.

I just received word that Edna passed away. All at once I feel sadness and joy. Perhaps this poem explains why.

I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads
 her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean.
 She is an object of beauty and strength, and I stand and watch her
 until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where
 the sea and the sky come down to mingle with each other.
 Then someone at my side says: “There! She’s gone.”

Gone where? Gone from mysight—that is all.
 She is just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was
 when she left my side, and just as able to bear her load
 of living freight to the place of destination. Her diminished
 size is in me, not in her; and just at that moment when
 someone at my side says, “There! She’s gone,” there are
 other eyes watching her coming, and other voices ready to
 take up the glad shout, “There she comes!”
 And that is Dying!

Author Unknown

The length of our days is in Your hands, O Lord. What counts, though, is not how long we live but how we spend those days. Give us wisdom to know how short, how fleeting life really is.

(April 29)

HIS BILLOWS (PSALM 42:7)

They are His billows, whether they go over us
 Hiding His face in smothering spray and foam,
 Or, smooth and sparkling, spread a path before us,
 And to our haven bear us safely home.

They are His billows, whether, for our succour,
 He walks across them, stilling all our fear,
 Or to our cry there comes nor aid nor answer,
 And in the lonely silence none is near.

They are His billows, whether we are toiling
 Through tempest-driven waves that never cease,
 While deep to deep with clamor loud is calling,
 Or at His word they hush themselves in peace.

They are His billows, whether He divides them,
 Making us walk dry shod where seas had flowed,
 Or lets tumultuous breakers surge about us
 Rushing unchecked across our only road.

They are His billows, and He brings us through them;
 So has He promised, so His love will do;
 Keeping and leading, guiding and upholding,
 To His sure harbor, He will bring us through.

—Annie Johnson Flint

V. Raymond Edman, *But God!*,
 (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids; 1962), p. 142

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

DYING WORDS

Ray had been in a coma for four days. Once powerful and muscular, his arms lay quietly at his flanks. Physically exhausted and consumed by his two-year struggle with colon cancer, he lay in his hospital bed motionless, a living chrysalis in an inverted cocoon. He would soon die, most likely within the day.

My hospital visit that morning brought me to Ray's room at 5:30. The nursing station and patient rooms were quiet and, in one of the paradoxes of hospital life, even peaceful—if such a thing as peace is possible in a place where life and death constantly vie for dominance. Sitting silently at his bedside, Ray's wife of 40 years, Jean, had placed her small hand softly on her husband's right shoulder. No examination would be necessary today. In deference to Jean's vigil, I pulled a chair abreast of hers and joined her silent watch, conjointly marveling at the physical stamina and endurance of the human body and pondering the mystery of the approach of physical death. Lost in our private thoughts and beset by personal memories of this marvelous man, we sat together, bonded by our grief and captivated by the drama slowly unfolding before us.

Suddenly, an awesome thing happened. Lazarus-like, Ray sat bolt upright in his bed. Fiercely clutching the sides of his bed, Ray contracted his arms as he gasped with apparent abject horror into the void at the foot of his bed. This totally unanticipated activity was immediately followed by an equally unexpected loosening of his vocal cords—silent for these four days—in a terrifying scream that cascaded down the quiet hospital corridor.

In four short clauses that reverberate even today in my mind as I reflect on his death ten years ago, Ray screamed into the early morning surrounding his bed: “No! I don't want to go . . . I don't want to die . . . I won't go!” Completely exhausted by this emotional and physical outburst, Ray collapsed into the bed, gasped the humid air of the hospital room two or three times, and died.

King Hezekiah would understand.

The Enemy, **Norwood R. Anderson**,
in *Christianity Today*, February 7, 1994, p. 36

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

WHEN MY WORK IS DONE ...

Thursday, December 21, 1899, after cutting short a Kansas City crusade and returning home in ill health, D.L. Moody told his family, “I’m not discouraged. I want to live as long as I am useful, but when my work is done I want to be up and off.” The next day Moody awakened after a restless night. In careful, measured words he said, “Earth recedes, Heaven opens before me!” His son, Will, concluded his father was dreaming. “No, this is no dream, Will. It is beautiful. It is like a trance. If this is death, it is sweet. There is no valley here. God is calling me, and I must go.”

Moody, December 1993, p. 70

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

(God's Little Daily Devotional: 365 Days of Inspiration To Lift Your Spirit & Bring Peace to Your Soul by Honor Books) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books. Copyright – Honor Books, Inc., 1997.

A POWERFUL WITNESS

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

A Christian worker among the underprivileged in London was a true inspiration to a man observing her. When he asked her what had inspired her Christian faith, she told him her story: As a young Jew, she had fled the German Gestapo in France during World War II. After she found refuge in the home of a French Huguenot, she knew she was close to being caught. A Christian widow soon arrived and told her that she must flee to a new place immediately. The girl replied, "It's no use, they will find me anyway. They are so close behind." The widow said, "Yes, they will find someone here, but go with these people to safety. I will take your identification papers."

The young girl understood the widow's plan: The Gestapo would think she was a fleeing Jew. She asked, "Why are you doing this?" The widow responded, "It's the least I can do. Christ has already done that and more for me." Sure enough, the widow was imprisoned in the Jewish girl's place, and within six months she died in a concentration camp.

The Jewish woman may have been able to outrun the Gestapo, but she could not outrun what this woman had done for her. Personal sacrifice is the most potent witness and greatest legacy a person can leave.

The strongest evidence of love is sacrifice.

p. (unknown)

(Sport Shorts Calendar by Jay Carty) Bloomington, MN: Garborg's Heart 'n Home, Inc. Copyright – Jay Carty, 1993.

Even though I may be winning Olympic medals, I believe my finest day is yet unknown—that won't be until I stand with Jesus and He's showing me all the things that I trust Him for now by faith.

Dave Johnson, Decathlete, Olympic Bronze Medalist

(December 31)

Now we have come to the **CONCLUSION** of our study of 2 Timothy: The Twelve Steps to a Fantastic Finish.

- Step #1: INTEGRITY: Getting It All Together (2 Tim. 1:1-7)
- Step #2: CONVICTION: Here I Stand, God Help Me (2 Tim. 1:8-12)
- Step #3: COURAGE: I Am Willing To Pay The Price (2 Tim. 1:13-18)
- Step #4: LEGACY: What Am I Passing On? (2 Tim. 2:1-7)
- Step #5: PERSEVERANCE: In Single-Minded Steadfastness, I Will Stay The Course (2 Tim. 2:8-13)
- Step #6: FOCUSED: This One Thing I Do (2 Tim. 2:14-19)
- Step #7: SATANIC SEDUCTION: I Am Keeping My Eyes on Jesus (2 Tim. 2:20-26)
- Step #8: COUNTER CULTURE: Lord, Where You Lead Me I Will Follow (2 Tim. 3:1-9)
- Step #9: FAITHFUL: May He Find Me Faithful (2 Tim. 3:10-17)

Step #10: PASSION: Pleasing You Is My Ruling Passion (2 Tim. 4:1-8)

Step #11: SERVANTHOOD: May I Hear “Well Done” (2 Tim. 4:9-15)

Step #12: FINISHER: You Fought And You Finished (2 Tim. 4:16-22)

**(Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life by
Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, pp. 224-9)**

THE RACE

by D. H. Groberg

I.

“Quit! Give up! You’re beaten!”
They shout at me and plead.
“There’s just too much against you now.
This time you can’t succeed!”

And as I start to hang my head
In front of failure’s face,
My downward fall is broken by
The memory of a race.

And hope refills my weakened will
As I recall that scene;
For just the thought of that short race
Rejuvenates my being.

II.

A children’s race—young boys, young men
How I remember well.
Excitement, sure! But also fear;
It wasn’t hard to tell.

They all lined up so full of hope;
Each thought to win that race.
Or tie for first, or if not that,
At least take second place.

And fathers watched from off the side,
Each cheering for his son.
And each boy hoped to show his dad
That he would be the one.

The whistle blew and off they went!
Young hearts and hopes afire.
To win and be the hero there
Was each young boy’s desire.

And one day in particular
 Whose dad was in the crowd,
 Was running near the lead and thought,
 “My dad will be so proud!”

But as they speeded down the field
 Across the shallow dip,
 The little boy who thought to win
 Lost his step and slipped.

Trying hard to catch himself
 His hands flew out to brace,
 And mid the laughter of the crowd
 He fell flat on his face.

So down he fell and with him hope
 He couldn't win it now—
 Embarrassed, sad, he only wished
 To disappear somehow.

But as he fell his dad stood up
 And showed his anxious face,
 Which to the boy so clearly said:
 “Get up and win the race.”

He quickly rose, no damage done.
 Behind a bit, that's all—
 And ran with all his mind and might
 To make up for his fall.

So anxious to restore himself
 To catch up and to win—
 His mind went faster than his legs;
 He slipped and fell again!

He wished that he had quit before
 With only one disgrace
 “I'm hopeless as a runner now;
 I shouldn't try to race.”

But in the laughing crowd he searched
 And found his father's face.
 That steady look which said again:
 “Get up and win the race!”

So up he jumped to try again
 Ten yards behind the last—
 “If I’m to gain those yards,” he thought,
 “I’ve got to move real fast.”

Exerting everything he had
 He gained eight or ten
 But trying too hard to catch the lead
 He slipped and fell again!

Defeat! He lay there silently
 A tear dropped from his eye—
 “There’s no sense running any more;
 Three strikes: I’m out! Why try?”

The will to rise has disappeared
 All hope had fled away;
 So far behind, so error prone;
 A loser all the way.

I’ve lost, so what’s the use,” he thought.
 “I’ll live with my disgrace.”
 But then he thought about his dad
 Who soon he’d have to face.

“Get up,” an echo sounded low.
 “Get up and take your place;
 You were not meant for failure here.
 Get up and win the race.”

“With borrowed will, get up,” it said,
 “You haven’t lost at all,
 For winning is no more than this:
 To rise each time you fall.”

So up he rose to run once more,
 And with a new commit
 He resolved that win or lose
 At least he wouldn’t quit.

So far behind the others now,
 The most he’d ever been—
 Still he gave it all he had
 And ran as though to win.

Three times he'd fallen, stumbling;
 Three times he rose again;
 Too far behind to hope to win
 He still ran to the end.

They cheered the winning runner
 As he crossed the line first place,
 Head high, and proud, and happy;
 No falling, no disgrace.

But when the fallen youngster
 Crossed the line last place,
 The crowd gave him the greater cheer
 For finishing the race.

And even though he came in last
 With head bowed low, unproud,
 You would have thought he'd won the
 Race to listen to the crowd.

And to his dad he sadly said,
 "I didn't do so well."
 "To me, you won," his father said.
 "You rose each time you fell."

III.

And now when things seem dark and hard
 And difficult to face,
 The memory of that little boy
 Helps me in my own race.

For all of life is like that race,
 With ups and downs and all.
 And all you have to do to win,
 Is rise each time you fall.

"Quit! Give up! You're beaten!"
 They still shout in my face.
 But another voice within me says:
 "GET UP AND WIN THE RACE!"

Someone said:

Never give up on your dream. There's still time on the clock.
(source unknown)

Don't be discouraged. Everyone who got where he is, started where he was.

I received a missionary letter from one of the **Campus Crusade for Christ** missionaries that we've known over the years. He says:

Campus Crusade Turns 50!

In July, we joined 5,000 Campus Crusade staff from the United States and Canada in Ft. Collins, CO. to say farewell to Dr. Bill Bright our Founder and President, as we celebrated 50 years of ministry. Under his leadership Crusade has grown from its humble beginnings at U.C.L.A. in 1951 as a college ministry to a staff of 21,000 working in nearly every country of the world. Dr. Bright is dying of pulmonary fibrosis and his confinement to a wheel chair and oxygen has brought this globe trotter into a stationary and upright position. Over the past months, working with a team of eight, he has churned out numerous books and novels; finishing the race in a rolling sprint.

Interesting Stats

The Jesus Film Project, working with 120 different mission agencies has shown the film "Jesus" (which Crusade produced in 1980) to over 4,427,000,000 people around the globe. There are 675 different translations with 268 in process producing 141,845,721 decisions for Christ in 236 countries.

WOW! What a finish!

I would like to conclude this series of studies with some words I wrote in my book, [Ecclesiastes: Mid-Life Crisis](#), at the end of one of the chapters.

FINISHING WELL

The older I get, the more I realize that heaven is the place for finishers. Remember that in 2 Timothy 4:6-7 Paul writes, “For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” Jesus cried out on the cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Fewer than eight hours before, He had prayed to the Father, “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do” (John 17:4).

As *we* prepare to finish, let’s determine, by God’s grace, to finish well. We ought to remember along the way that our efforts will not only be judged by how few times we have fallen along the course, but also by how many times we were willing to get up off the ground, dust off our britches, and begin to run again as He would have us to do. There is hope after a crisis at mid-life, and you may well discover that the fire of trial has burned away much of the chaff in your life. God has used and can use what you have been through.

As we close, let us meditate on the words of this hymn by Johnson Oatman, Jr. The Lord’s way is the higher way, leading to higher ground.

I’m pressing on the upward way,
 New heights I’m gaining every day;
 Still praying as I’m onward bound,
 “Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”
 My heart has no desire to stay
 Where doubts arise and fears dismay;
 Though some may dwell where these abound,
 My prayer, my aim, is higher ground.
 I want to live above the world,
 Though Satan’s darts at me are hurled;
 For faith has caught the joyful sound,
 The song of saints on higher ground.
 I want to scale that utmost height;
 And catch a gleam of glory bright;
 But still I’ll pray till heaven I’ve found,
 “Lord, lead me on to higher ground.”

pp. 260-61