

Mid Week • 2 Timothy 1

INTRODUCTION

Picture a dark, damp prison cell with cold stone walls.

The room measures 8 by 6 feet.

There is no window, just a heavy wooden door bound with iron bands, and overhead a single hole through which comes the only light and fresh air.

There is no plumbing, no toilet; just a bedpan.

There is no bed either – just a dirty, lumpy mattress stuffed with hay lying on the floor.

Now, hear the sound of chains clinking as the occupant of this cell moves about.

He's trying to position himself in such a way that the parchment he's holding falls under the narrow beam of light that's coming through the hole in the roof.

Now see him as he dips his quill in the inkwell and sets the tip to the parchment.

You are watching the Apostle Paul as he pens the words we're about to study.

You see, though 1 and 2 Timothy might appear to be united by their proximity in our bibles, they are in fact separated from each other by about 6 years and a vastly different set of circumstances for both the author, Paul, and the one they were written to, Timothy.

1 Timothy was written in about 60 AD during Paul's *first* imprisonment in Rome.

You'll remember from the book of Acts how Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, imprisoned in Caesarea for a few years and then taken to Rome on appeal.

His case was supposed to be tried before Caesar, but when his Jewish accusers failed to show up from Jerusalem, he was released.

Paul then went on to Spain and returned to the major cities he had visited in his first three missionary journeys.

Everything changed in 66AD.

He was re-arrested and taken to Rome once more- this time the charges against him were more serious because they were brought by the Empire of Rome itself.

The first time the charges were an issue of Jewish religious and social life over which Rome cared little.

That's why during his first imprisonment he lived in his own house in Rome and had a lot of freedom to come and go.

But now, he faced capital crimes, and so he was chained inside the dreaded Mammartine prison.

Here's why Paul had been re-arrested:

In 64 AD, Caesar Nero, a megalomaniac who fancied himself a great builder, hatched a plan to remodel and renovate the city of Rome.

Truth be told, Rome needed renovation!

Throughout it's history it had had little planning and was a hodge-podge of buildings.

The number of poor who lived in hovels and shanties was in the hundreds of thousands and the streets and sanitation was atrocious.

The Roman fascination with order and symmetry was denied by their own capital and it grated on Nero that he, god-man that he was, was hindered in his desire to remodel the city by the insignificant shacks of some insignificant poor people.

So he ordered a covert burning of the slums.

Problem is, the fire didn't stay confined to the poor section of town.

It burned for 6 days and gutted the mansions of many of the cities rich, as well as public buildings and even temples and shrines.

Everyone knew Nero was responsible, but in a clever bit of blame-shifting, he said his investigations revealed it was the *Christians* who were responsible.

Since the people couldn't really do anything about their rage against the Emperor, who they knew was the guilty party, they turned their anger on the Christians.

Nero led the way in arresting and torturing them.

He sewed them inside the animal skins and then set wild

animals loose on them as a form of public entertainment. He also clothed them in rags soaked in pitch, nailed them to crosses, and then at night, set them alight as he drove his chariot around his gardens, using them to light his way. Nero said that the reason the Christians had set fire to Rome was because they believed the end of the world would be attended by fire, and that by lighting the fire of Rome, they had hoped to bring an end to the world.

This charge may seem silly, but it was just one more misconception about Christianity that already filled the heads of most of the people of Rome.

History tells us that there were in fact, many thousands and possible even tens of thousands of Christians in Rome by this time – but thought they weren't really very secretive *yet*, their beliefs had been twisted and mangled by their critics.

Most people considered Christianity to be merely a radical offshoot of Judaism, which they disliked, but could do little about because there were so many Jews in positions of importance and power in the Empire, and Judaism had received the official approval of the Empire.

But Christianity was seen as an unofficial and so unapproved sect. Christians were called *atheists* because they did not believe in the gods.

They were accused of being *cannibals* because they “ate the body and drank the blood of Christ.”

They were accused of being immoral and incestuous because they attended something called an *agape*, a *love-feast*, and they called each other *brother* and *sister* and were known to be extravagant in their love for one another.

The Roman historian Tacitus, who himself disliked Christianity, says that Nero executed thousands of Christians as the scapegoat for the burning of Rome.

It was during this time of persecution that Christian leaders in particular were hounded and arrested.

You can be sure an all-points bulletin went out for Paul and he was soon arrested.

Carried to Rome, he was charged with two counts:

1) Being a leader of the Christians who had hatched the plot to burn Rome.

2) Being a leader of a banned religious sect.

As we come to 2 Timothy, Paul has already appeared before the proconsul of Rome on the first charge and been acquitted.

There was simply no evidence that Paul had incited the burning of the city, and by this time, two years later, the anger and rage over the burning has cooled and people are less willing to heap blame on the Christians when they know in fact Nero was responsible.

So Paul has been acquitted of the first set of charges.

Now he is being tried for the second set – and he knows these he cannot duck.

It is only a matter of time till he is found guilty and taken to the executioners block to be beheaded – which was the form of execution given to Roman citizens, which Paul was.

So this letter was penned some 6 years after 1 Timothy and things have not gotten better, not only for Paul but for Timothy as well. Persecution in Ephesus has grown and the problems of heresy have gotten worse.

Timothy is even more hard-pressed, so Paul writes to tell him that he is passing from the scene and it is now Tim's turn to step up and take charge!

We know that at this time dying Jewish leaders would write letters to their closest followers called “testaments.”

In these testaments, they would convey their final words of wisdom and would seek to leave their followers a final charge that would fire them up to carry on their life and work.

That is what Paul is doing here – he is handing his mantle to Timothy and asking him to carry on.

CHAPTER 1

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

Paul begins with his *typical* greeting, and because of that, some skeptics say the real Paul didn't write this.

They say if it really was a letter of Paul to Timothy, then it would have not been so formal here at the beginning.

Paul wouldn't have called himself an apostle because between the two of them, his apostleship was never in question.

But this objection to Paul's authorship neglects the later content of the letter.

Paul's calling by God is the *very thing* Timothy needs to be *assured* of.

As well, Paul knew this letter would find a much wider audience than just Timothy.

He knew, inspired as it was, that it would find its way in to the hands of multitudes of Christians.

So he begins by identifying himself as an *Apostle* – one of those who had been uniquely called by God to be an ambassador of the Lord and to have a foundational role in establishing the doctrinal moorings of the Christian Faith and Church.

Note what Paul says in v. 1 . . .

**Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,
according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,**

His apostleship was *motivated* by the *promise* of eternal life and was dedicated to the *message* of eternal life.

No matter what happened to Paul, he was willing to brave it because God had given him a vision of heaven so real it surpassed any trouble this world could throw at him.

You see, earlier in his ministry, Paul had been stoned to death by an angry crowd.

The Lord had then allowed him to see a small glimpse of the glory of heaven before sending him back.

Later in attempting to describe what he saw, Paul said to express it in human words would be so unworthy that it would be criminal.

From that day on, he lived out his days with great courage and bravery because he knew where he was going and couldn't wait to return.

Let me use an example:

Before I went to Hawaii for the first time, I didn't care at all to go. Oh, I had heard it was nice, but I thought of it as a crowded tourist

trap.

I figured Newport Beach was just as good and it didn't cost several hundred dollars to go there.

Then, I went to Hawaii – to satisfy my wife's desire to go.

I'll tell you – when it came time to board the plane to return, I didn't want to leave!

And I couldn't wait to go back!

Now, if I could go anywhere on earth for a relaxing vacation, I'd go to Hawaii.

Newport Beach is to Hawaii what Blythe is to Palm Springs. Paul had had a glimpse of heaven and knew that when all was said and done, that's where he would finish his race.

Sitting in that dank, dark Roman prison cell awaiting his execution was like sitting in the porch, waiting to enter the house.

While he waited, he would do one thing, try to persuade as many people as possible to go with him.

2 To Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

The endearment Paul gives Timothy here is touching.

The words “beloved son” convey the tenderest emotion and affection.

Timothy was probably personally closer to Paul than anyone.

And now that Paul is contemplating the end of his life on earth, he's thinking affectionately of that man who had been at his side through so much of his life and trials.

When he writes “Grace, mercy, and peace from God,” I'm sure it was with a special kind of intensity.

Like when we say goodbye to someone who's moving away.

The Becerras recently moved to Montana.

Prior to their moving, every time we'd part we'd say,

“Goodbye” meaning till we meet again – knowing that would probably be in the next week or so.

But on their last Sunday with us – we said “Goodbye” to George and Roxanne and their children and the goodbye meant something more.

It was said with greater sincerity and conviction for what it meant.

And for some of us, it was attended by a tear or two.
Paul knows he is writing to Timothy for the last time.

Even though he asked for Timothy to come to him quickly – he knew there was a chance he would be executed before he could get there.

So you can be sure he penned these words as genuine prayers:
May God give to Timothy, unmerited favor, may He show Him mercy, and may he know God's peace!

3 I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day,

4 greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy,

5 when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.

As Paul faced a court of *human* inquiry that would decide his earthly fate, he had first gone before the court of God's justice and had made sure that he was right with the Lord.

If there was something he was guilty of, he wanted to make that right before he passed from this life.

Sitting in that cell, Paul had had a chance to go over his books and make sure all his accounts were in order.

They were – so he had a clean conscience.

There was nothing “undone” in his life.

One of the things that he had had a chance to meditate on was the motivation for his life and ministry.

Was he doing what he did, did he preach the message he did, for some improper motive?

Was he in it for the money?

Was he trying to gain a power base?

Was he angry and seeking to rip down something that had hurt him in the past?

Was he deceived by pride or some other fleshly motivation?

He had considered all these things and knew that he had lived and served the Lord with only one motivation – to glorify God.

When Paul says that he had served God with a pure conscience *as his forefathers had*, he means the legacy of faithfulness to the Lord that had been passed on to him by previous generations of Jews who had been faithful to the Lord.

Paul didn't see himself as starting some new religion, as he was being accused of in Rome.

He was actually remaining faithful to the same religion his forefathers had believed.

He worshipped the very same God.

It's just that what his forefathers had looked forward to had finally come and Paul was called to declare that message far and wide.

Timothy too had been given a legacy of faith from his mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois.

Years before when Paul had traveled through the city of Lystra, the disciples there told him about a young man who had clear evidence of the calling of God on him.

Paul took him under his wing and asked his mother if he could assist him in his travels.

From that point on, Timothy became the apostle's protégé.

Now, as Paul looks to his last days, he knows the time of his mentoring Timothy is over and he must stand on his own.

So he tells him of the many and fervent prayers he has been praying for him.

He knows Timothy is gravely concerned about his condition there in Rome and this concern comforts Paul.

A bit later we'll see why Timothy's concern for Paul was such a blessing to him – it seems everyone but Luke had *deserted* Paul.

When it came time for Paul to rally character witnesses to his side, there was no one there – they had all split, leaving Paul in the lurch and standing empty handed before the proconsul of Rome.

Paul mentions the faith of Timothy's mother and grandmother.

He says that their faith is evident in Timothy's faith.

Mom and Dad – never underestimate the power of your faith and devotion to the Lord in the lives of your children.

While your children will have to chose for themselves whether or not they will follow the Lord, your life and faith have a

critically important role to play in the development of their concept of God.

You model for them what it means to believe in Christ.

6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

The news of Paul's imprisonment and trial troubled Timothy so badly that there was a danger he might despair and forsake his post as pastor of the Church at Ephesus, so Paul tells him to fan into flame the gift of God which is in him.

All those years before, when Paul first passed through Timothy's home town of Lystra, Timothy was one of those who had been brought to faith under his ministry.

Paul had laid hands on him as he received the Lord and at that time he had been filled with the Holy Spirit.

Paul now tells him to fan the flame on that gift.

Time and circumstances had conspired to cool the passion and fervor of Timothy's devotion.

In fact, because of the persecutions from without, the heresies from within, and now the crushing news of Paul's arrest and eventual execution, Timothy was tempted to panic and run away from it all.

Paul tells him – the Spirit you've received is not a Spirit of cowardice, but the Holy Spirit brings power, love, and a mind not ripped apart by competing and confusing thoughts.

We covered vs. 6 & 7 Sunday. If you weren't here – get the tape.

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,

9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

10 but has now been revealed by the appearing of our

Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

11 to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

Here Paul makes clear what he suspects Timothy might be struggling with – *being ashamed of the gospel*.

He knew Timothy to be a man prone toward fear and timidity.

And this was a season of great trial for him.

Things were not going well in Ephesus – he faced all kinds of opposition.

Persecution was mounting.

False teachers were getting bolder and creating more and more trouble.

And now his mentor, his spiritual father, the man he looked to for counsel and guidance was about to be taken from him.

We covered this Sunday, but it needs to be mentioned again tonight as we seek to understand what Paul is saying in these verses . . .

Today, the Christian faith is a world religion and a respected faith.

There is tremendous weight and evidence., from history, science, archaeology, and even philosophy to support the Christian worldview and message.

Even people who may not believe the gospel, at least see it as a noble message.

In fact, many people resist Christianity, not because they don't *believe* it, but because they don't want to follow its *morality*.

For people like that, religion isn't an issue of whether or not it's true, but what works.

This was not at all the case in the world of Paul and Timothy's day.

The Gospel was not some noble message.

It was a scandal – in fact, Paul calls it that very thing in 1 Cor. 1:23.

He says . . .

We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

That word stumbling block is *scandalon*, from which we get our word “scandal.”

And the word for foolishness means silliness, that which is utterly absurd.

What was so scandalous about the Gospel was that the Christians said their God had become a man, and that that man had died in the shameful manner imaginable!

Timothy's job, his life's calling, was to be a preacher of this message! And he was called to do it in the hostile city of Ephesus where there was a whole group of men who seemed content to twist and distort the gospel into ways that were more appealing to the world and their own pocketbook.

What capped it for Timothy was that his hero and the man everyone knew was his teacher, was now branded as a traitor, a religious fanatic and innovator of new gods, and a criminal to boot.

Paul could surmise what kind of questions had to be going through his friend's head; questions about the love and power of God.

Questions about whether or not it was all worth it or if he should call it quits.

So he tells him not to be ashamed, not to hang back or quit, but to redouble his efforts and press on even more boldly in the face of such trials and difficulties.

He encourages Tim to remember the tough stand *Jesus* took!

He DID become man, and when all else forsook Him he remained faithful, went to the cross, and by doing so, conquered death and opened wide the door to eternal life to all who will believe in Him.

This is one of the things that makes heroes – heroic!

There comes a point at which they stand *alone*.

Every one else has fled through cowardice or sheer apathy.

But the hero IS heroic simply because he or she is willing to live by *principle* rather than what's convenient and easy.

It's the stand Jesus took, Paul took, and Paul tells Timothy he needs to take.

Friends – what Paul said to Timothy, the Holy Spirit says to us tonight.

Living here in 21st Century America, we do not face the kind of abuse and scorn Paul and Timothy did, or even many of our brothers and sisters in Christ face in different parts of the world tonight!

Christianity is accepted as a settled part of the social landscape. As I said, people may not believe the gospel, but they generally respect our right to believe and practice it.

There seems to be mounting evidence that that tolerance and acceptance is changing and that there may come a day when we too will face persecution as the followers of Jesus Christ, but for the present – praise God we live in peace.

And there's the rub – because in our desire for peace and in order to avoid the pain of rejection and shame, many, if not most Christians, hide their faith from public view.

They go to church most Sunday's, but then they go to work M-F, and never a whisper about their faith to the people they work with.

And it isn't for lack of opportunity.

There are lots of times the conversation at work turns to some issue that just aches for the Spirit's wisdom, and the Christian knows he or she should say something, but if they did, it would blow the lid off and reveal them as one of those "born-again."

So they say nothing, and another prime opportunity to be salt and light passes by.

I want to tell you a true story I just read.

Rob Robinson pastors a Calvary Chapel in Arizona and told this story . . .

One of the men in his church is an engineer for the railroad.

A couple months ago he was in a head on collision with another train, but survived.

In the cab with him was another man with whom he'd been sharing the Lord for several months – but the guy wouldn't budge from his unbelief.

The night of the crash, this man started asking the Christian some urgent questions, as though he was troubled about something.

Because the Christian had shown a genuine love and care for him in the past months, he knew he'd get straight answers.

Once the man's questions were answered, the engineer asked him, are you now ready to receive Christ?

The man said he was, knelt down and prayed to receive Christ. A few minutes later – they collided with the other train.

That new babe in Christ went home to Lord while the Christian miraculously survived.
What if that engineer, for fear of rejection, had remained silent for all those months?

Paul stood boldly because he was absolutely sure of his call as a Christian to eternal life and as an Apostle to preach the gospel. He encouraged Timothy to stand boldly by reminding him of his calling.

And the Holy Spirit urges US to stand boldly as well.

We have to *stop fearing rejection and shame* for the sake of Christ and realize that as Paul says in v. 8, suffering for the sake of the gospel is part of the program; it's an expected part of enduring the hostility of an unbelieving world.

But all along the way, God will use our lives and witness to bring some to faith.

Right now, there are people you know who God wants to use YOU to reach.

Friends, relatives, work-mates, fellow students, and neighbors.

Don't be ashamed of Christ! Stand strong - be bold!

Look at v. 9 -

who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

When were you saved? Before time began!

How were you saved – by God's grace!

Here's another reason you and I can be fear-free and bold in Christ tonight – our salvation is not the result of our own strength, goodness, or ingenuity.

Our salvation is the result of God's eternal plan and comes to us as a free gift!

God did not wait to see what kind of lives we would live and decide to save us based on our performance.

You are not in or out of heaven based on whether or not you've been a good boy or girl.

Our salvation is all God's doing – applied completely to those who believe.

12 For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

This is Paul's valedictory – His consummate expression of his *victory*.

He knows he's at the end of his days and can look back over it all and say with confidence that he's ready to go home, knowing he's finished his course well.

He doesn't mind suffering because he's done a lot of it and through it ALL he's found God more than faithful.

Friends, we tend to fear suffering and avoid it at all costs, but then when we have to go through it, we usually end up looking back and realizing the great lessons we learned through suffering.

Spurgeon, who was prone to terrible fits of depression, said that he felt most stretched and cast upon the mercy and strength of God during his times of darkness.

Paul was not *ashamed* of Christ, because his whole vision was *filled WITH* Christ.

And that's the way you and I can be free of the fear of rejection as well.

We will only be tempted to be ashamed of bearing the name of Christ if we're longing for the world's esteem; if our values and priorities are set by the world.

But if our vision is fixed on Christ, on our lovely Savior, then how the world feels about us will mean nothing.

Paul's vision was so fixed on Jesus that it bothered him not at all if the rest of the world considered him a kook!

Paul says . . .

I know whom I have believed

It's important as Christians to know *what* we believe – but even more important, we need to know WHO we believe.

That's the difference between religion and Christianity.

Religion is belief in doctrines – Christianity is relationship with God.

I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that

Day.

Paul had lived his entire life as a kind of investment in Heaven.

Every day saw him rising to make more deposits.

And now, as he looked toward his execution, he saw it as a way to cash out his investment and enjoy it forever.

This is my life-verse and should I graduate before the Lord comes back, this is what I want preached at my graduation party.

13 Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

Paul is telling Timothy to stay the course and finish HIS race, just as Paul is arriving at the end of his after having stayed his course through many trials.

Timothy's major challenge was to not give in to the continual bombardment false teachers were making against the gospel there in Ephesus.

Paul tells him – hold on to the truth I committed to you!

Continue to teach it and live it!

This is a message pastors need to heed today!

Just as in ancient Ephesus, the gospel is under attack – and most often, not from outsiders and skeptics, but from those *inside* the church who want to monkey with it and change it to make it more appealing to the masses.

The message of the Cross, scandalous as it was in Paul's day, has become offensive to the sensibilities of modern man.

And for that reason many preachers won't talk about the cross or sin or blood or anything else that might make people "uncomfortable."

Sugar coat the gospel with interesting stories, tell jokes, present Christianity as a way to scratch the religious itch.

Show how believing in God can make your marriage better, your kids sweeter, work more enjoyable, and your teeth whiter.

And once they buy in to that, pull the old bait & switch!

Try as I might, I cannot see the Apostle Paul using this tactic, this means of evangelism in his ministry.

It certainly doesn't square with what Paul tells Timothy here!

If we are to use the NT as a pattern for understanding how Paul

preached and what he taught, then we have to conclude he wasn't afraid to declare that all men and women, apart from Christ are sinners destined for hell.

But that God sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins and that He rose again from the dead to give us eternal life.

This message may shock and stun, but it also saves!

There will be some who go away offended, and others who are offended right *in to* the Kingdom of God.

Ours is not to improvise with the message.

Ours is not to finagle or polish or alter the content of the gospel to make it more appealing to man.

Our duty, all of us, but especially pastors and teachers, is to hold fast the PATTERN of sound words that we see presented for us in the NT.

Note that, not just the *content* itself, but the very manner in which it is presented!

We must not make it our aim to appeal to men, but to please God who has entrusted this message to us.

14 That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

Paul is referring to Timothy's calling to the ministry.

He must live it out, not by his own strength, but through the power of the Holy Spirit.

15 This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

Ephesus, where Timothy lived, was in the region called Asia.

All those leaders whom Paul had won to faith earlier in his life who might have been able to stand by his side at his trial and offer up a word in his defense have bailed and left him all alone.

Timothy knew these men because he had been with Paul when they were converted.

Some of these guys were influential in their areas and could have been of great assistance to Paul in his hour of need.

But they had stayed away for fear of incurring the Imperial anger.

Nero was still ruling and still hated Christians.

Better to keep their heads down than to speak out in Paul's defense and risk the notice of the Emperor.

Paul mentions two men in particular who could have been of help to him but who failed him, Phygellus and Hermogenes.

This is the only place we find them and what it says is shameful – they deserted Paul.

From the way Paul words v. 15, the implication is that these two guys had become known to Timothy because deserting Paul wasn't the end of their error.

In order to justify their desertion of the apostle, they went on to make outrageous claims about him, therefore justifying their shameful behavior and cowardice.

They had stirred up rumors about Paul in order to clear their names.

Paul's words here set the record straight – he hadn't done anything wrong, these two guys were just cowards!

What a terrible thing to have your name recorded in God's word as an example of unfaithfulness!

If we had to be described in one sentence, what would it be?

Would it be the verdict of a traitor, or an unfaithful person, or of a faithful man or woman?

Would we be a Paul or a Phygellus?

The unfaithful example of Phygellus and Hermogenes moved Paul to remember the example of a faithful brother -

- 16 The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain;**
- 17 but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found *me*.**
- 18 The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered to *me* at Ephesus.**

Onesiphorus lived in Ephesus and had been one of Paul's chief supporters when he was there.

When word reached Onesiphorus that Paul was in prison in Rome,

he undertook the arduous task of traveling there to minister to his needs.

Prisoners in the ancient world depended on the charity of others for their food and clothing.

So Onesiphorus had gone to Rome to take care of Paul.

Once he arrived, he found it was difficult to locate the Apostle.

Paul was an obscure nobody to most people and it took some diligent seeking before he could be found.

Paul prays that he and his household will be blessed for the kindness and mercy shown to him when everyone else had turned away.

CONCLUSION

The name Onesiphorus means “help-bringer.” Here was a man who lived up to his name.

When all others had forsaken Paul, he loved Paul and ministered to him.

May Onesiphorus be an example to us all.

Whom would God have you be an Onesiphorus to?

Whom would God have you diligently seek out, not be ashamed of, and refresh?

Is there some “fringe” person you know that others have forgotten about, who has no status or reward to give you back, that you can reach out and love in the name of Jesus?

Is there not one person on the outside whom you can draw into your circle of friends, and refresh them in the name of the Lord? [David Guzik]