

Sermon Notes

August 29, 2021

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Deserted But Not Destitute 2 Timothy 1:15-18

“The Loneliest Number”

- ❖ The problem of loneliness
 - a serious and growing problem
 - many struggle with a sense of abandonment on a continual, ongoing basis
 - a health crisis
- ❖ Loneliness is not a new problem
 - as he writes Timothy, Paul is vulnerable, open and transparent about the pain of loneliness he faces
 - thank heaven for the difference one single, faithful friend can make!

“People Who Need People”

- ❖ Paul’s capacity for friendship is immense... he has a vast circle of friends

- Paul stays in touch with and keeps track of his friends
- Paul prays regularly for his friends
- ❖ At the end of his life, Paul feels deserted and alone
 - is this a bit of an exaggerated, over-the-top assessment of the way things are?
 - has an entire continent full of people rejected and abandoned Paul?
 - whatever the case, Paul wounds are substantial, real and deeply painful
 - can Paul keep counting on Timothy?
- ❖ You have to be in a real relationship with someone in order for them to really hurt you
 - C. S. Lewis: “To love at all is to be vulnerable. If you don’t want to be hurt, give yourself to no one, not even a cat...”
 - attempts on the part of those he formerly trusted to undermine and subvert Paul’s ministry
 - it doesn’t take much to stir people up, convince them of lies and undermine the reputation of a leader
 - don’t fall prey to this
 - think of OT Joseph, Daniel, Job, Jeremiah

“With a Little Help From My Friends”

- ❖ *Onesiphorus* gives us a picture of true friendship in action
 - are you a true and trustworthy friend who ministers life and refreshment to someone in need?
 - a “life-giver” or “someone who sucks the life out of others”?
 - are you a friend who sticks closer than a brother?
- ❖ What did Onesiphorus do? How did Onesiphorus serve and refresh Paul?
 - a faithful servant of the gospel
 - exerts himself and expends energy to find Paul in Rome
 - not ashamed to make his connection with Paul known
 - keeps coming back (often!)
 - likely brings Paul food, supplies, and, even more importantly, refreshment for Paul’s soul
 - “a breath of fresh air”
- ❖ The ministry of mercy (Matthew 25:34-40)
 - when we refresh others, we refresh Christ
 - Paul urges Timothy to adopt this pattern of service and follow the good example of Onesiphorus
- ❖ Paul’s heartfelt wish for his wonderful friend is that the mercy of the Lord rest on him: ***Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy***

❖ True friends of Christ and the gospel stand with Him as they speak up about Christ and His work

- those who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit have no excuse for halfhearted commitment to God
- consistent friends stand and identify with those are ridiculed or marginalized for their proclamation of Biblical truth

Personal Application

1. What encouragement do you find in these words from Paul about how we are to look out for the needs of others and encourage them through the gift of faithful friendship?
2. Are you aware of anyone who may be facing a similar kind of isolation to what Paul expresses through these words as he nears the end of his life? What might you be able to do to be “an Onesiphorus” who will offer “a breath of fresh air” and bring refreshment to this person?
3. Read Jesus’ words in Matthew 25:34-40. As you do so, bear in mind that when we refresh others, we refresh Christ. What ministry of mercy do you sense God calling you to engage in at this time?