

Final Words **2 Timothy 4:19-22**

Introduction

In this last letter by Paul to Timothy we have covered several great themes:

Guard the treasure of the gospel (chapter 1);
Be prepared to suffer hardship (chapter 2);
Persevere (chapter 3);
Preach The Word (chapter 4).

In this last chapter Paul gave a final charge—Preach The Word (vv.1-2;5) and reach the world. There was a final warning; men will someday turn from sound doctrine and embrace satanic doctrine (vv.3-4). What you believe matters. Paul warned about a dangerous man named Alexander the coppersmith who had done the apostle great harm (vv.14-15). The subject of apostasy means we have to sometimes name apostates; false teachers and false prophets (Matthew 24:24). Paul's final testimony; he as fought the good fight; he has finished his cause; he has kept the faith (vv.6-7). Some final requests to Timothy included come quickly (v.9); bring Mark (v.11); and some precious articles; a cloak, some books and parchments (v.13).

Do you remember Paul's final sorrows and his final song? Demas had forsaken him (v.10) along with some other Roman friends (v.16). Samuel Butler wrote that friendship is like money; easier made than kept.

But Paul's attention quickly turns to what God has done in his life; deliverance from a lion and eventual deliverance to the Kingdom of Heaven (vv.17-18).

In our culture we usually end our correspondence with something like "Yours Truly" but in the age of electronic mail we don't even say that. In the ancient world correspondence began with self-identification and then ended with personal notes. These are final greetings to dear friends.

Who are these people and why did they mean so much to Paul?

I think some of you might be able to guess the answer. Ministry requires friends. We all need friends. Some of our friends might be downright famous. Some might be well known, less known and unknown by and large.

These names at the end of this precious book may not mean much to you; but they meant the world to Paul.

Special Friends (vv.19-20)

*2 Timothy 4:19–22 (NKJV) 19Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.
20Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.*

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Paul begins by asking Timothy to *greet (aspazomai; Strong's greek # 782)* a dear couple and the household of Onesiphorus.

The Beatles in 1967 had a famous song; “You say goodbye and I say hello.” The word greet meant to open or enfold arms or embrace. In the South you might meet someone who says; “I’m a hugger.” The word came to mean, salute, or welcome joyfully but in its roots it contains the elements of affection.

Prisca and Aquila are better known as Priscilla and Aquila. In the book of Acts (18:1-3) we discover that Paul met and befriended the couple in Corinth and then travelled with him to Syria (Acts 18:18). We know Aquila was a Jew born in Pontus and the couple had come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had commanded that all Jews leave Rome.

In the book of Romans he sends his greetings to “*Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house*” (Romans 16:3-5).

Like Paul they shared the occupation of tentmaker. Paul calls them my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. Paul also notes that they put their own lives at risk to save Paul. High praise. In 1 Corinthians 16:19 we see Paul greeting Aquila and Priscilla again and “with the church that is their house. 20 All the brethren greet you.” Wow. The church met in their home in Rome and met in their home at Corinth. It may be that Paul stayed with the couple for a year and half (see Acts 18:18,19, 24-26). **The early church met in homes and conducted worship, communion, prayer and study together (see Acts 2:46, 5:42; 10:23, 27-48).**

Later in Acts 18:24 we are introduced to a man named Apollos from Alexandria who is described as eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures. He came to Ephesus but apparently was only familiar with the baptism of John. “*When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately*” (Acts 18:26).

Let’s connect the dots. Paul met these faithful friends in Corinth after they had fled Italy after their expulsion by Claudius (January 41 AD—January 53 AD). They ministered for some time together in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19) and then the couple later returned to Rome (Romans 16:3); and then returned to Ephesus (67-68 AD?). This means that Paul knew the couple for many years.

Onesiphorus was mentioned in chapter 1:16 where we read; “*The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; 17but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. 18The 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 in Ephesus.*”

This special friend of Paul must have played a major role in Paul’s life and ministry.

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The apostle speaks words of blessing; grant mercy “he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain”. Onesiphorus conducted an aggressive search and found Paul.

(v.20) Paul mentions a man named *Erastus*. There is another Erastus mentioned in Romans 16:23 where Paul offers greetings from Erastus the city treasurer to the brethren in Rome. Paul wrote the book of Romans from Corinth in about 56 AD.

Trophimus is mentioned in Acts 20:4 and Acts 21:29. This man came to Christ in Ephesus and travelled with Paul to Jerusalem. The religious leaders believed Paul had taken him into the temple. Paul tells Timothy that he left Trophimus **sick in Miletus**.

This verse tells us something very important. In the New Testament we see Paul used by God to pray for the sick and the sick experience miraculous recovery. If Paul had the gift of healings why did Paul leave Trophimus sick at Miletus? Some have argued that this verse proves the supernatural gifts of healings are subject to the sovereign will of God. The gifts of healings did not operate as a matter of personal convenience but rather served as sign for unbelieving Jews and Gentiles that the gospel is true.

Special Request (v.21)

21 Do your utmost to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.

A Final Blessing (v.22)

22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

The way this verse reads in the original language leads me to believe that the phrase “The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit” is directed to Timothy (*your spirit is singular*). The next phrase; “Grace be with you” is directed to all who are with Timothy. You—is plural.

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Chuck Swindoll: “*Even as he wrote, Paul felt the approach of death, and he knew the time to pass the torch had come. By virtue of this letter, the flame of divine truth passed from the hand of Paul to the hand of Timothy. . .and eventually to your hand as well*” (see Swindoll’s *Living Insights; 1&2 Timothy p. 155*).

William MacDonald writes; “Here he lays down his pen. The letter is finished. His ministry is ended. But the fragrance of his life and testimony abides with us still, and we shall meet him again and talk with him about the grand themes of the gospel and the church” (*Believer’s Bible Commentary; p. 2128*).

Conclusion