

Living Faithfully: Living as Jesus' Disciple in the 21st Century

Week 8: Faithful Together

Introduction: 2nd Timothy 4:10-22

God in his wisdom did not just hand down a series of commandments or proverbs, rules for living and precepts to understand (though, of course, some of his Scriptures are proverbs and laws). God was in the world, saving us through the history of Israel and through Jesus. So the Bible recounts and explains these actions of God. The benefits of God inspiring his word like this are enormous. It gives us the context by which we can understand what is said. It means that the book is its own interpreter.

So, throughout this series, I have been able to use 2 Timothy 4 to explain the rest of Paul's letter. We know that Paul was in prison suffering at the hands of enemies and feeling deserted by some of his friends. We know that his (earthly) future was fairly bleak, and that he was presuming that he was coming to his end. So we can understand why he was saying what he said to his young protégé, Timothy.

It is appropriate as we end our journey through 2nd Timothy that Paul's focus is on faithful friends and ultimately on the faithfulness of Jesus over us. That is, in the end, the only thing that helps us live faithfully today!

The Big Picture: Jesus' faithfulness and the faithfulness found in Christian friendship encourages us to live well always!

Discussion:

Open:

- What makes a good friend?

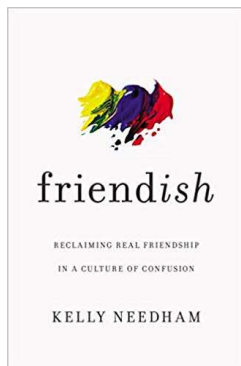
Discuss:

Read 2nd Timothy 4:10-22. Review the sermon. Write down any questions you have or any statements that stood out to you.

At Cornerstone, we believe the following six values will help you live faithfully to Jesus in the 21st Century: grace, growth, gather, gifts, generosity and goodness. These shaping values lead our discussion points.

- **Grace: Experiencing Regular Renewal and Refreshment through the Spirit**
Paul says that the Lord stood with him during his trials. Where do you need to experience Jesus standing with you in your own life?
- **Growth: Learning from and Applying the Word of God to My Everyday Life**
How do your friends challenge you to grow in your faith? Why is this important to your life with Jesus?

- **Gather: Experiencing Christian Community and Gospel Renewal with Others**
Paul mentions being deserted by people he thought were friends. How does being together, in faith, strengthen you when life feels discouraging?
- **Gifts: Applying My Time and Talent for God’s Glory and the Benefit of Others**
Paul says that Mark was useful to him. How would your friends describe your usefulness to them?
- **Generosity: Honoring God by Sharing My Resources to Benefit Others**
Paul asked Timothy to bring his cloak and his books. How does generosity shape friendship?
- **Goodness: Expressing the Gospel at Work through Love and Good Deeds**
How do you think you can be a better friend toward others?



Further Exploration on this Topic:

Friend-ish: Reclaiming Real Friendship in a Culture of Confusion, by Kelly Needham

From the Publisher: As the family unit grows more unstable and the average age of marriage increases, a shift is taking place in our culture: for many people, friends now play the role of family. And just as with family relationships, our friendships often don't turn out quite as we envisioned or hoped, and we wonder, “Is there a better way to do this?”

In *Friend-ish*, Kelly Needham takes a close look at what Scripture says about friendship. She reveals the distorted view most of us have of it and recasts a glorious vision for a Christian understanding. By teaching us how to recognize symptoms of idolatry and dependency, she equips us to understand and address the problems that arise in friendship—from neediness to discord and even sexual temptation. With hard-fought wisdom, a clear view of Scripture, and been-there perspective, Needham reorients us toward the purposeful, loving relationships we all crave that ultimately bring us closer to God.

Link: <https://www.amazon.com/Friend-ish-Reclaiming-Friendship-Culture-Confusion/dp/1400213517>