

Good morning and thank you so much for joining us! We're continuing our vbv study in 2 Timothy, so would you please turn with me to 2 Timothy 4?

## COMMUNION

When folks watch boxing matches, **SHOW PIC** they're always looking for the big knockout punch. That viscous KO is what gets the most attention and oohs and awes from the audience.

**CLOSE PIC**

But I can tell you from experience, the most painful punches I've ever endured are body blows.

What's interesting about body punches is they are small, almost imperceptible. There doesn't seem to be much damage on the outside, but the damage lies beneath the surface, where no one can see.

And I've learned this is how it is in life. Some of the most devastating hurts we endure are not physical, they aren't on display for others to see. But rather our deepest pains are beneath the surface, tucked away from the eyes of others.

This morning we're studying some of the most incredible verses in all of scripture.

We left off in v8 last week, so we'll pick up in v 9 and go to v 16, and the title of this mornings message is **RELEASING THE HURT**  
**LET'S PRAY**

**9 Be diligent to come to me quickly;** One of my favorite things about the Bible is just how real it is. Paul's in a dark, disgusting dungeon, and he's lonely. He knows he's about to die, and he's looking for his young protege Timothy to come visit him.

You know what this means? Paul needed some encouragement. And if Paul needed encouragement, how much more do we need encouragement!!!

But have you noticed that in order to receive encouragement, we need to first be givers of encouragement?

So let's practice being givers of encouragement for a second. Think about it-It would be weird if you were the only one here right?

Just turn to your left and say to your neighbor-I'm glad you're here! Now turn to your right-I'm glad you're here! Wasn't that easy to be an encourager??

Remember, persecution is raging across Rome at this time, and Paul says come to me quickly. I mention this because all the time you hear bible commentators and talking heads say Timothy was scared, he was timid, Timothy was mild mannered. They say that just cuz they read it from some other author.

There's no way Timothy was a scaredy cat. See Paul had enough confidence in Timothy's courage to say Timothy-come quickly to Rome to visit me please before it's too late. No coward

would come to Rome while Nero was burning Christians at the stake.

Btw when you read Hebrews 13 we learn that Timothy had already been imprisoned and released.

Later in his life, Timothy would stand up in the streets of Ephesus and be martyred instead of backing down. Timothy was quite an example.

Look I count at least 5 times in scripture Paul tells us he was afraid or terrified. But nobody says Paul was timid? Listen do your own study, don't just take my word for it, but when I hear stuff like that about Timothy it drives me nuts.

9-10

9 Be diligent to come to me quickly 10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Pause here.

This is not the first time we hear of this man named Demas. He was mentioned in Paul's earlier letters as a fellow worker.

Colossians 4:14 Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.

Also Philemon 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, 24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers

So picture the scene. Demas is in the battlefield of ministry with Paul. Demas has seen the miracles, he's seen and experienced the joys and sorrows, the ups and downs of ministry.

But somewhere along the way, something began to brew inside of Demas' heart. Something that was luring him away from the work of the ministry. Was Demas feeling the pressure of persecution in Rome? Was he homesick? We're not told any of these things.

All we know is this man, Demas, once stood shoulder to shoulder with Paul in the work of the ministry. And at some point, Demas weighs the cost of serving Jesus, and he decides the cost is too much. So he lays his weapon down, and Demas walks off the battlefield of ministry, completely abandoning Paul in the fight for souls.

Now look it doesn't say that Demas is lost, it doesn't say he's an apostate. The diagnosis is that he loved this present world more than serving Jesus.

You know, when Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians where he mentions Demas, he says this, Col 1 1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Evidently Demas had heard that, but it hadn't taken root in his heart. He valued personal comfort in this life more than eternal

rewards. And the aged apostle watches his once faithful friend disappear into the trappings of the world. That's a crushing experience.

Look we're all vulnerable to this, to give into our worldly desires at the cost of serving Christ. We must constantly remind ourselves that the world is not our home: we are literally just passing through

...10 **Crescens for Galatia**, Crescents is not abandoning Paul like demas did. No Crescens has been assigned, he's been dispatched to Galatia,.

Who was Crescens? We don't know-this is the only spot where he's mentioned in all the Bible.

He's one of the multitude of Christians that have faithfully served Christ through the centuries that nobody knows who they are. But they will be rewarded when they come face to face with their Heavenly Father.

And I think about that, and it reminds me of so many of you. There are so many of you here that do similar things-faithfully serving Christ without any fanfare, without any recognition.

Sometimes I hear the stories of how you live out your love for each other, and doing these incredible deeds at great personal cost without drawing attention to yourself. It's a beautiful picture of humility and love of Christ.

See when you're crushed by the experience of a Demas abandoning you, your spirits are buoyed by the Crescens in the midst who faithfully serve. And that's so many of you!

...10 Titus for Dalmatia. Titus was dispatched from Rome to Dalmatia. This suggests that Titus no longer ministered in Crete (which was the focus of Paul's letter to Titus which we'll study on Wednesdays next week.)

11 Only Luke is with me. Pause here. These 5 words are nothing short of incredible.

Remember Paul's background. Phil: 3:5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;

And remember, the religious Jews in Jerusalem viewed Gentiles only as fuel for the fires of hell. They believed that was the purpose of a Gentile. SHOW PIC They considered considered Gentiles as presto logs CLOSE PIC

The religious Jews refused to touch Gentiles, they refused to come into contact with you or anything you touched

For the great apostle to say at the end of his life, only Luke, who was a gentile, is with me, is a beautiful picture of God's design. Jew and Gentile.

It's a reminder that every wall is broken down in Christ. Every prejudice is gone. Folks there's not many races, there's one human race.

Picture the scene. Here they are Jew and Gentile, these two old guys that have been serving the Lord for years together. Imagine the miles they had together, the stories of serving the Lord together. Just think of all we read in their travels and experiences just in the book of Acts! And Luke, a gentile, is still there, ready to minister to Paul.

Luke is a wonderful reminder that there are greater ambitions in this world than just focusing on our own comforts and desires—it's ministering to others. Even at great personal cost.

...11 Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. Paul then says to Timothy, Timothy on your way here to visit me, bring Mark because he's useful in ministry.

This is remarkable, because this John Mark that had many years before this had forsaken Paul, Acts 15 36 Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing." 37 Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. 39 Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; 40 but Paul

chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God.

See the fractured relationship that was so wrought with contention has been restored. Mark, the one who Paul banned from joining his missionary endeavors, had been forgiven, restored through Barnabas and Peter, and John Mark becomes the author of the Gospel of Mark.

What a beautiful illustration of forgiveness and restoration.

**12 And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.** (TOO-HE-KHAS) We hear of him in other places. Paul sent him to Ephesus because Timothy is gonna try to be leaving Ephesus to go see Paul.

Paul was trusting Tychicus to hold down the church and the responsibilities there as Timothy is coming to Rome to see Paul.

**13 Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.** If you knew you had a month left or a couple months to live, what would you be asking for? Bring me my comfy clothes, my warm clothes. Bring my Bible, I want to read it again.

There's such humanness in these verses isn't there?. Bring my cloak. I'm cold. Timothy on your way to come see me, you can get that from Carpus when you go through Troas. And when you come bring the books, bring the parchments.

14-15



14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. 15 You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words. Who was Alexander the coppersmith? Was he the one in Acts 19 who was resisting the gospel in Ephesus? Was this a different Alexander that Paul warned Timothy about in 1 Timothy 1? We can't say for certain.

And look what Paul's saying - be aware of him but stay away from this guy. The Lord will deal with him.

Paul exemplified one of the toughest tasks a Christian may have to do—to leave our hurt with the Lord.

When people oppose us, and undercut our authority, our leadership, or even our friendship, our natural response is what?

**SHOW PIC** We want revenge right?

**CLOSE PIC**

But here's the problem. When we get vindictive and begin to plot revenge, the one who gets hurt the most is us. Because our anger and bitterness cut us off from God's supply of power and love.

For those who wrongfully hurt us, we need to let go of our hurt, we need to release the hurt and leave the judgment in God's hands.

Which brings us to our final verse this morning, v16, one of the most impactful statements in all the Bible, we're gonna break it down in 2 parts

16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. Pause here. The phrase 'no one stood' is a technical term. It describes somebody who would come and testify on your behalf.

For us to fully understand the depths of this sentence, that nobody stood with Paul, we need to do a quick recap of how Paul got here in prison

Back in Acts 21 Paul had gone to Jerusalem hoping to share there with the Jews. **SHOW PIC** His evangelism started a riot, and they drug him up on the steps of the Antonio fortress. **CLOSE PIC**

Paul said let me talk to them. He started to speak to them in Hebrew. They all calmed down. Then when he got to the word Gentile, the riot erupted again. The Roman soldiers had to drag Paul inside because he was gonna be beaten to death.

That's when the soldiers found out Paul was a Roman citizen, so they put him in a cell.

And we see in Acts 23 Paul's discouraged. He's been arrested. **Acts 23:11 But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."**

Paul's not gonna go to Rome on a cruise ship. There's going to be a storm. He's gonna get shipwrecked, he's gonna get bit by a venomous snake. But he's going to Rome and testify for Jesus in front of the Gentiles, too.

So fast forward and Paul's in custody in Rome. Then on the day that Paul gives testimony, they wash him down, they put on a clean court robe that he would wear, and he goes then to what is called the Pauline Basilica in Rome today.

**SHOW PIC** It was a huge area. Up front was what was called the tribunal would be the place where Nero would sit. And then there would be senators and lawyers, accusers all around Paul to answer any questions that Caesar Nero had about the case.

**CLOSE PIC**

In the center of that intimidating scene is where Paul would stand. That part had an open ceiling, so the light would be shining down on Paul. On either side there were long colonnades. Women would sit on one side, men would sit on the other, and thousands would gather to hear, particularly if there were court cases everybody was interested in.

And because Caesar Nero had blamed the burning of Rome on the Christians, because Nero was torturing believers and killing them, this is a big case. So the entire area would be jammed full of people.

And now read the 1st half of v 16 with me again...

**16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me.**

Think of all of the letters that Paul wrote. All the names mentioned that he not only knew but did ministry with that Paul greets in Romans 16-something like 28 names.

Think of all the Paul mentions in all his epistles that he served the Lord with, and Paul utters this heartbreaking statement. **16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me.**

Here's a man who touched so many hearts and lives for the gospel of Christ. In this moment where he needed help the most, Paul found himself alone, and abandoned. Look carefully. No one stood with me, but all forsook me.

In a room this size, I'm sure there are many of you in this room who know the painful sting of abandonment, and betrayal, and hurt. You understand exactly what Paul is feeling... And now let's finish the verse

**...16 May it not be charged against them.**

In that moment, Paul, although he is a prisoner of Rome and about to meet the blade of the executioner, he is more free than he ever has been before in his entire life.

Paul is free from the silent conversations in his mind. He is free from all the what ifs. He has laid his hurts and his disappointments at the foot of the cross.

How can a person who has been so hurt by others, so abandoned by others, so lonely, how can he utter those striking words-'may it not be charged against them?'

I'm sure over the years and countless betrayals and hurts, Paul wrestled with all the feelings we experience.

Could it be that as Paul wrestled with these feelings of hurt and abandonment over the years that he remembered a young man, who 30 years before this was about to be put to death himself, like Paul is now. That young man's name was Stephen.

Acts 7 54 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58 and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

We're then given this nugget at the beginning of Acts 8

1 Now Saul was consenting to his death.

At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.

Paul gave the order for Stephens death. And as that young man was about to die he uttered those incredible soul piercing words. May it not be charged against them.

After his conversion to Christianity, I wonder, how often did Paul reflect on that moment when Stephen uttered those incredible, remarkable words.

I've been circling around the issue long enough, so let me get to it.

We all know to a certain measure what Paul was feeling when he wrote v 16. All forsook. None stood with him. We all have had our Demas' who've betrayed us. We all have our Alexandars who oppose us. We've all had times in our lives when we say 'why isn't anyone here to help me'?

My question is, what is our response to those who've hurt us so deeply?

Can we, like Paul, say may it not be charged against them? Lord, they really hurt me, but Lord, please forgive them?

I wonder, how many of us in this room are carrying hidden hurts because we've refused to release them?

Of course our example is Jesus. Who on the cross said this:

Luke 23:32 There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. 33 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. 34 Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”<sup>[fn]</sup> And they divided His garments and cast lots. 35 And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.” 36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.” 38 And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:<sup>[fn]</sup> THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ,<sup>[fn]</sup> save Yourself and us.” 40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” 42 Then he said to Jesus, “Lord,<sup>[fn]</sup> remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” 43 And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

Jesus was suffering the most horrible, painful death ever devised by sinful man, and he looked at the people responsible for His suffering and prayed for their forgiveness.

Amazing, astounding, unbelievable —choose your adjective.

Then choose to live for this remarkable Savior and to extend his grace, mercy, and compassion to others.

Before we take communion, I'm going to ask you to bow your heads and your hearts. In this rare time of quiet, is there someone the Lord has brought to mind where you need to release your hurt, and forgive them?

If you're holding on to unforgiveness, say this morning, Lord, I forgive them, may it not be charged against them. And release it, give it to Jesus.

Eph 4 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Communion