

## 2 Timothy 4:9-22 – February 14, 2021

### *Last Days Christians*

JD Farag

All right. Good morning and welcome to our second service. On Sunday mornings, we have two services. The first of which is our weekly Bible Prophecy Update, and then the second service, we're going through the Bible, book by book, chapter-by-chapter, and verse-by-verse. Today we are, Lord willing, going to finish our study, our verse-by-verse study through 2 Timothy.

Our text is going to be chapter 4, beginning in verse 9 and through to the end of the chapter in verse 22. We'll invite you at this time to turn there if you're not there already. For those of you that are here, if you're able, I'll ask you to stand. If not, where you're seated is fine. You can follow along as I read.

Beginning in verse 9, the Apostle Paul by the Holy Spirit, writing to Timothy, says, "Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you because he is helpful to me in my ministry. I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

[Verse 14] Alexander, the metalworker, did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You, too, should be on your guard against him because he strongly opposed our message. At my first defense [speaking of his trial], no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.

But the Lord [verse 17] stood at my side and gave me strength so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord [verse 18] will rescue me from every evil attack. And will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

[verse 19] Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so does Pudens, Linus, and Claudia, and all the brothers and sisters. The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all."

Wow, a little bit of chicken skin there. Can you just picture the Apostle Paul putting down his pen? This would be the last time he would ever write.

Father in heaven, we're in awe as we just had sung together of You. But we're in awe of Your Word. The inspired Word, the Word of Life, in this portion that we have here before us today. Lord, will You, by the Holy Spirit, get our attention and hold our attention, so we don't miss anything that You have for us in Your Word today. Lord, we're here because we're hungry, and we're thirsty for that which we know only You can satiate. So, Lord, will You? We ask You in Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. You can be seated. Thank you.

I want to talk with you today about "Last Days Christians." As we were reading through the text today, did you find yourself kind of asking yourself why in the world would this rise to the level of being inspired canon of Scripture in the Word of God?

I mean, we know that all Scripture is God-breathed, but you know how it is whenever you get to the genealogies and the lists of names. Come on, let's be honest—you kind of just read through them real quick. I think about our study through the Book of Numbers. Oh, you're laughing. I mean, the Book of Numbers gets such bad press. I mean boring. What's the Book of Numbers about? Numbers. But what in the world? Why do I need to know that? Oh!

Do you know what's in the Book of Numbers? It was, I would argue in our trek and study through the Bible, one of the most fascinating studies of all of the books of the Bible. The Book of Numbers, so much within that book as God-Breathed and God-inspired Scripture.

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Well, such is the case with the passage that we have today. There's a reason it's here. There's a reason we have it in our Bibles. I mean, I understand it would seemingly be of no significance or relevance to us in our day. I mean, Paul is listing these names, and he's talking a little bit specifically about who they were, what they did. I would argue that we have this in our Bibles because it is both an example for us and a warning to us in these last days.

Here's how I get there. Paul mentions by name, I counted 17 people. I counted it twice just to make sure. Don't start counting it now. Wait till after we're done if you want to count them. But he lists 17 by name, 17 people, and this is his final letter. He's just got done telling Timothy that this is what it's going to be like in the last days. Perilous times will come. He's preparing Timothy for that time when Timothy will not have Paul around anymore. He's doing everything he can to prepare him for that which is prepared for him.

In this list of names, there is a lesson to be learned, a warning to be heeded, and an example to be seen. As we go through them, it's my hope that all of us, I include myself in this, would allow the Holy Spirit to search our hearts, and I mean, really search our hearts. Give the Holy Spirit unfettered access to that recess in your heart, as we go through them, and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to you. The Lord is always so gentle and gracious. He's a good shepherd. Allow the Holy Spirit to show you what type of a Christian am I. Also, what type of Christians will I, in these last days, encounter?

What follows are eight types of Christians. You might find more, but I found eight. Eight that I think we would do well to consider.

[#1] The first one is in verses 9-10, and it's the "Worldly Betrayers." While we're uncertain about the reasons Crescens and Titus left Paul, there's no mistaking the reason that Demas did.

We're told it was because of his love for this world and the things of this world, which is really sad because Demas, at one time, was very close to Paul. So much so that Paul mentions him as a fellow worker in Colossians, Chapter 4:14, co-laborer. In Philemon 24, he talks about Demas being a co-laborer. Now here to Timothy he says, he deserted me. He betrayed me, and we're told the reason why is because of his love for the world.

The Apostle John, in his first epistle, Chapter 2:15-17, says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them." And here's why. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

Now you've got to love the Apostle John affectionately referred to as the "Apostle of love," but when it comes to James, not so much. You've got to know why, right? James was the half-brother of the Savior. Can you imagine growing up in a house where your half-brother was perfect? Mom and dad are always saying, why can't you keep your room nice like your brother? Because he's God incarnate, maybe that would be why. I say that not to be funny necessarily

but to explain why it is that when you read the epistle of James, you walk away from it going - Ho! I mean, you don't enjoy reading the Book of James. You endure reading the Book of James. It's one of those books where you walk away from it, and you think, am I really still saved - after what I just read? I mean, he pulls no punches - in your face.

And such is the case here in chapter 4 verse 4. I mean, he doesn't beat around the bush, as we say. Just right to the point. "You adulterous people!" How's that for openers? If you preach that in the church today? People won't put up with it. What did you just call me? I'm going to go to that church down the street. The pastor just talks about love. You just called me an adulteress. No, I didn't. I didn't; James, in God's Word did. Yeah, that's my story, and I'm sticking with it.

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"You, adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who [keyword] chooses..." They've made that choice. This guy made the choice to be a friend of the world, and in so doing, he became an enemy of God - spiritual adultery. You're a spiritual adulterer if you are friends with the world, and not only are you a spiritual adulterer, you are an enemy of God. You've postured and positioned yourself as an enemy of God when you pursue this friendship with the world and your love for the world and the things of the world - as this man had done.

[#2] The second one is in the first part of verse 11, and it's: "Faithful Followers." This is interesting. Here, Paul says only Luke was there for him. He's all alone, except for Luke. Do you know who Luke was? First of all, he was Paul's personal physician. He was a doctor. This is also the Luke that God inspired to write not just the Book of Acts but the Gospel bearing his name. This was a faithful man to the end.

I don't know if it's possible to overstate the importance of those who are loyal and faithful, especially in these times in which we live. Loyalty is, if I can say it like this, the lost art in the Christian Church today. There's no more loyalty anymore. Sign of the times, really. And that's what makes the Luke's in this world stand out. It's to the Luke's in this world that the Savior will say on that great and final day, "Well done. Good and faithful servant. Enter in."

Notice, it's not: good and fruitful servant, good and productive servant. No, it's: "good and faithful servant." You were faithful to the very end. It's not predicated upon how much fruit you bore or how much good works you produce. No, just your faithfulness, good and faithful servant. This was a faithful man. This was a loyal man, and I would suggest that it came at a time in Paul's life where he really needed a Luke in his life.

[#3] The third one, and I want to spend a little bit of time on this. I think you'll see why here in a moment. It's in the second part of Verse 11, and it's what I call: "Successful Failures." To me, this is one of the most encouraging examples of how God can turn our faltering and failing into a conquering success and victory.

Mark, do you know who Mark is or who Mark was? This is the same Mark that bailed on and failed Paul on the first missionary journey - early into it. He's like, I'm out of here, and he really disappointed the Apostle Paul. When it came time for the second missionary journey, it's recorded in Acts - Paul and Barnabas. Paul's like, hey, let's go see how the churches that we planted are doing. And here's Barnabas, the uncle of Mark, saying, okay, let me send Mark an email so we can bring him along too.

Paul's like, uh, no, and Barnabas is like, why not? Paul's like, it's not going to happen. We're told in the Book of Acts that this led to a sharp dispute. So sharp was this dispute between Paul and Barnabas that they split ways. As far as Scripture is concerned, there is no record of them ever reconciling after that, all because of Mark. Paul's like, I can't take this guy; he's unreliable. He bailed on us the first time - no way.

Now, all of these years later, at the end of Paul's life, who does he ask for? Mark - wow! What happened, Paul? Mark, is this the same Mark? There were a lot of Marks maybe back then but is this the same Mark? Yeah, it is. What happened? Oh! God, as only He can, restored the failed relationship between Paul and Mark. Not only that, but God would inspire this Mark to write the Gospel also bearing his name.

What's the point? Never give up on people. The Mark that bailed on you, the Mark that let you down, the Mark that disappointed you, never give up on him. God is in the business of restoring failures. I mean, come on, look at yourself in the mirror. There's your first case of God restoring

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failures. God, as only He can, can take the failures when we falter, and He can orchestrate, choreograph if you prefer, the success that comes from that.

Let me take it a step further and say that it's been my own personal experience, in over the years that I've been walking with the Lord, that failures were really never failures because of the lesson that was learned in that failure. I think you would agree that oftentimes you look back on those times in your life, and were it not for that, you wouldn't be where you're at today in the Lord. He works it out for the good. A lesson is learned, and this is exactly what happened to Mark.

You know the ones that, how do I say this? I don't want to mar the beauty in this account concerning Mark. You know the people that have never experienced failure? Those are the ones that I just kind of like, wow, - you need to be broken first. You need to hit rock bottom first. You need to fail, quite frankly. You need to taste from that cup. You need to drink deeply from the cup of failure because unless and until you do, you will never taste from the sweet cup of God's grace when He restores you.

Think about Peter. Not only did he fail the Lord, but he also denied that he even knew the Lord. But God restored him three times, by the way. Because Peter denied the Lord three times, and Jesus restored him three times. It was so powerful and emotional that Peter just broke down because he knew what was happening. Because they made eye contact when he, for the third time, denied that he even knew who Jesus was.

And Jesus sees him. Never imagine that He's looking at Peter with eyes of disgust or disdain. He's looking at him with eyes of love and compassion. In fact, He even tried to warn Peter that this is exactly what he was going to do. And then he did it, and he couldn't believe he did it. Then afterward, the Lord restores him, and he just weeps bitterly.

God is a restoring God. God is very attracted to failures. You know in the Gospels, who do you see Jesus attracted to? Not the elite, not the successful. No, the broken, the failures, the downcast, the weak, the last, the least. That's who he was attracted to. In fact, the harshest words that ever came from the Savior's lips were reserved for the religious leaders of that day. But to the brokenhearted, to the downcast, oh, just love, love, compassion, restoration.

[#4] The fourth one is "Trusted Stewards." We see this in verses 12-13. Again, we're not told specifically about Tychicus, who Paul had apparently sent to Ephesus. But we are told about this guy by the name of Carpus, who Paul said was still in Troas. And then he says, I need my cloak. You've got to know that it's very cold in that dungeon of a prison where Paul was. But he tells Timothy that he entrusted to this Carpus all of his prized possessions. He did so because he knew that when he was arrested, those would be confiscated by Rome.

Do you see where I'm going with this? That which the Apostle Paul prized and treasured the most, the scrolls, the parchments upon which were written Word of God. That is what he prized the most, and he entrusted that which he prized the most to this guy. That's why, well-nigh, 2000 years later, we are reading about his name, Carpus, a trusted steward. I can entrust him with that, to keep that for me. He can be trusted.

I think this is probably as good of a time as any to, just between us and the Holy Spirit, ask ourselves the question: Am I trustworthy? Am I a trustworthy steward of that which God has entrusted me with? To whom much has been given, much is required. How many parables did Jesus teach where stewards were given possessions and then had to give an account for what they did with that they had been entrusted with?

Verses 14 through 18, we take another turn, and we're introduced to this Alexander. Actually, we were first introduced to him in Paul's first letter to Timothy, and Paul tells Timothy that he had to hand him over to Satan. Well, that doesn't sound good, does it?

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[#5] This is what I would refer to as "Dangerous Imposters." I say it like that and refer to him like that is because it's believed that this Alexander may have actually been an informant against Paul, a plant - undercover. Picture this because Paul references his trial; he basically tells Timothy it's not going well. Everybody's deserted me. Nobody has testified on my behalf.

See, in that day, the way it would work - different from our day, is they would have these testimonies from all of these people against you. Then they would also have the testimonies of all of those that were for you, and then the judge would decide. Well, there was nobody there. But apparently, Alexander was there, and he testified against Paul; again, some believe, as an informant against Paul.

Paul is careful to say that this man had done much harm to him, so much so that he even warns Timothy about him. He said you'd better watch this guy. I'm not going to be around much longer, Timothy. Watch out for this guy. He's a dangerous man, and he has done me much harm.

You know what's interesting about this? Paul's response. It was that of his Savior before him in that he prayed it wouldn't be held against him and the others along with him. I have to be honest. I may not quite get there at first. Oh, I'll pray for him. God, get him! I mean, I think about the Psalms when David says, let their teeth get crushed in their mouth and choke them to death. That's not what that says, but that's the JDV.

That's why, by the way, Jesus said, pray for your enemies. There's a reason for that. The reason is you cannot stay angry at somebody that you're praying for. You might start out a little bit with clenched teeth. Lord bless, you know. Like "The Fonz," he could never say, "I'm sorry." He could never say it. And we can never pray it. It doesn't come out easy, right? It's kind of like Lord Bless... We don't want the Lord to bless them. We want the Lord to get back at them for what they did to us.

But here's how it works. You start praying that God will bless them, and you forgive them, and you don't hold it against them. Now, all of a sudden, you have a vested interest in God blessing their lives, and it changes everything in the way you see them.

Even if there is never a restoration or a reconciliation of the relationship, there's nothing you're harboring in your heart. There's no resentment. There's no bitterness. It'll eat your lunch. The writer of Hebrews says, "Do not let that seed even begin to sprout and germinate. It will defile you." You need to forgive them.

Before we move on, I need to point something out here in this regard. It has to do with what Paul says about the Lord being at his side, even though nobody else was; the Lord was. He wasn't alone, and the Lord was not only at his side, but the Lord was strengthening him and even delivering him from what appears to be the lion's mouth. It may very well be that Paul survived being thrown to the Lions, very possible.

But in writing this to Timothy, he's touching on something that is of paramount importance, and we would be grossly remiss were we not to at least take a look at it. There are many Alexander's in life, right? People who hurt us - harm us. One of the things I'm learning in my own life with the Alexander's in my life, of which there are many. I have quite the list. They're all on the mainland, not here on the island - disclaimer, just by way of disclaimer.

But what I'm learning in my life is that it's not what people do to you; it's what Jesus has done for you. When you embrace God's grace, and you're on the receiving end of God's forgiveness, that is how you're, in turn, able to forgive. Lord, forgive us of our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us.

Yeah, but, man, they really did me dirty. They really hurt me. They did me much harm. Yeah, it's not what they did to you, JD; it's that Jesus died for you, JD, and that should change the entire

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complexion of everything. That's how you're able to pray for them. That's how you're able to forgive them. You yourself have been on the receiving end of God's forgiveness.

I think about the marriage relationship when there are grudges that are held. You know how it is, right? I'm not talking about my marriage. I have a perfect marriage because I'm the pastor. You know how it is when you give them the silent treatment. I'm not going to say I'm sorry. They need to say I'm sorry. Sometimes this could go on for days, and you're just holding this grudge, this resentment.

If left unchecked, that can turn into bitterness. Again, it will destroy you. It will destroy your marriage. So, the Lord sees it. It looks like you're giving each other the silent treatment. Yeah! Hmm. Did they wrong you? Yeah. They're the ones that are in the wrong. They need to apologize to me, and they have to say I'm sorry. Okay. Mmm. So you're not going to forgive them? No! Not until they come to me crawling on their hands and knees.

We need to talk. Come here, boy. That's how it sounds to me, for me. Do I need to remind you of all that I've forgiven you of? Oh, if I did to you what you're doing to them, it would not be good. I forgave you, and now you're withholding forgiveness? How does that work? It's what the Lord has done for you. Not what they did to you.

[#6] Verse 19 has number 6; I call this "Steady Eddies." Stay with me on this. We like Steady Eddies. We're told in Acts chapter 18:1-2 that Paul first met Priscilla and Aquila (husband and wife) when he was in Corinth. They were in the same business of tent-making as Paul was. It seems that from Acts 18:26 that they had become very, very good friends, so much so that Priscilla and Aquila pulled Paul aside. This is early in Paul's Ministry. They just gently corrected him and instructed him in a more accurate way. It wasn't that Paul was teaching falsely. It's just that Paul was not as accurate as he could have been, and they took him aside, and Paul received it from them.

That's a friend, by the way. The wounds of a friend or faithful, but an enemy multiplies kisses. A friend will tell you what you need to hear but don't want to hear. Conversely, an enemy will tell you what you want to hear but not what you need to hear.

Initially, you might appreciate it when they tell you what you want to hear. Oh, thank you so much. Tell me more about me... But I assure you, and eventually, you'll resent it. Why didn't you tell me the truth? You must not love me, love me enough to speak the truth in love.

Again, conversely, that's a friend who cares enough and loves me enough to pull me aside and say, Hey JD, uh. Can I just share this with you, and it's corrective? I need to correct you. No, you're not going to correct me. Don't you know who I am? No. Who are you? Does anybody know who he is because apparently, he thinks more highly of himself than he ought?

But Paul was teach-able, correct-able. It would seem all of these years later, I think maybe over 30 years later, we don't know for sure, but he sends them his love. You know what's interesting? This couple is still going strong. That's what I mean by a Steady Eddie. They're just steady, man, rock-solid in their marriage, in their ministry, and Paul, I believe, so appreciated this couple.

All these years later, knowing that it's just a matter of time before his death, he wants to make sure that he sends them his love. To all the Steady Eddies, just a shout out: "We love you, man." We need you! We need Priscillas and Aquilas, the Steady Eddies in life.

[#7] Verse 20, number 7, we might need to spend just a little bit of time on this one. It's kind of a biggie. It's what I'm going to refer to as Suffering servants. Now, at first read, one may ask the question of why it is again that God would deem it necessary to inspire Paul to make mention by name of this man, Trophimus.

There has to be a reason because all Scripture is God-breathed, and so what's the reason? I would suggest that the reason is, is that he represents the many Christians over time that have found

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themselves on a bed of sickness and suffering, and for whatever reason, God has not healed them. God allows them to continue for prolonged periods of time on a bed of suffering.

For Paul to say it the way he said it, I left him there. He's very sick. He's on a bed of sickness. Again, I believe we have this because it's an encouragement to the Trophimus' in life, who find themselves on this bed of suffering and sickness. God will never forsake you.

In fact, sometimes, it's the bed of suffering and sickness that we're the closest to the Lord, and the Lord is the closest to us. The Lord will never forsake the sick. Instead, they are comforted greatly in suffering greatly. By the way, what awaits them in glory? What you sow in tears, you will reap in joy, joy unspeakable.

[#8] This brings us to our last one in verses 21 and 22. You'll forgive me for waxing sentimental with this one, but these are the "Gracious Encouragers." Paul's final parting words, before he puts down his pen, and he makes mention of, in a word, grace and by name, he lists these who send their greeting, these gracious encouragers, these gracious brothers and sisters. That's how he ends, and I can't think of a better way to end the teaching and end this book of 2 Timothy than to spend just a little bit of time talking about how important encouragers are.

I think about the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians Church, his first epistle, chapter 4 verse 17, in the context of the rapture. At the end of that chapter, after he's trying to encourage them because they were, they were just battle-weary, hopeless. They thought they missed the rapture. Paul's like, no, you didn't miss the rapture. The dead and Christ, they're going to rise first, and we who are alive and remain they're going to be caught up, raptured up, to meet the Lord in the air, and forever be with the Lord.

He goes on in great detail, I might add, talking about the rapture. Then when he's done talking about that, he says this: Therefore... Whenever you read the word "therefore" in Scripture, the, therefore, is "there for" a reason. I know that's a play on words, but it's true. What's the "therefor" there for? Oh, it's there for their encouragement.

He says, therefore, encourage one another with these words. It's not just an empty encouragement, pat on the back. Hey, be encouraged! Okay? I'll start tomorrow. I'll be encouraged. No, be encouraged with these words, with the Word, be encouraged as you are even now encouraging one another.

By the way, the very first epistle that Paul ever penned - 2 Timothy, the last - like bookends. Think this through with me. At the very end, he says you be encouraged with these words, and you encourage one another with these words. I get the impression that these Christians in that church in Thessalonica had each other as a lifeline. They were encouraging each other, as Paul mentioned.

Isn't it true that sometimes all you need is just one encouraging word, and it's a word fitly spoken? Sometimes it's just a pat on the back, a hug; maybe somebody saying, hey, I'm praying for you, man. I know you're really going through it. I want to encourage you. God has promises that are faithful and true. God will never forsake you. God will never leave you. I'm praying for you. You be encouraged.

And just maybe weep with those who weep, mourn with those who mourn. Sometimes it's good to have a good cry, right? You know how it is that you feel good after a good cry. Do you know why that is? You're releasing toxins that are built up in your body. God made us to cry as a release. Sometimes you want to cry because you know you feel so good afterward. That's why I cry. That's my story again, and I'm sticking with it.

Hey, Paul cried, right? Book of Acts Chapter 20, by the way. Three years, every day, every night, all day, all night. He would weep because he knew that there would be those wolves in sheep's clothing

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that would come from amongst them and would not spare the flock. I like to say it like this, Paul cried like a man. Hey, Jesus cried. How about that?

Sometimes a good cry could be so encouraging. Just have a good cry with somebody. Just listen to them. Let them pour their heart out. Don't try to be a Christian "Mr. or Mrs. Fix-It." You know what I'm talking about? That's not on our list, but I might as well since I brought it up. You know, we're always trying to, hey, and we start insensitively. That's not a word; let's say it is. We're so insensitive. That's better.

We just started quoting Scripture. You know, be warm, be well fed. No, you know what? They don't need a mouth. They need a shoulder. They need a shoulder to cry on. They need a brother or a sister that they feel safe enough with - to pour their heart out. That will be there, and that will be gracious and encouraging.

I'll tell you sometimes just one encouraging word - I'm good for like a month. I don't need much. Just like, wow, I really needed that. That was the Lord. I really needed that word of encouragement. That was a word fitly spoken. Oh, how there's now a new spring in your step, a new song on your lips. Be a gracious encourager.

Why don't you stand, and we'll pray? Thank You, Lord. Loving Heavenly Father, there's a bitter-sweetness, now I think, in our hearts as we end this letter from Paul, knowing it's his last letter. But at the same time, there's just so much here that we can take home with us and begin that process of allowing the Holy Spirit to bless it to our hearts and apply it to our lives.

Lord, maybe a little convicting, but maybe that's a good thing that it would be convicting, not condemning, convicting, as we look at these people that You deemed fit to include in Scripture for us to read about and know about today.

Lord, what do You want us to know, and what do You want us to do about it? We don't want to be just hearers of Your Word. We want to be doers of Your Word and take heed to what the Spirit says to us, Your church.

In Jesus' name, Amen.