



Part 3: Surviving Loneliness & Rejection

The Apostle Paul's final letter, 2 Timothy, was written as he awaited his execution by Nero in 66 AD. He's lonely and rejected. But in 2 Timothy 4 he shows the source of his hope...

Four causes of loneliness

- _____
"... the time of my departure has come." v. 6
- _____
"Do your best to come to me quickly... Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is here with me... I sent Tychicus to Ephesus... Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus." v. 9-11; 20
- _____
"Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm..." v. 14
- _____
"At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me." v. 16

Five choices that help in lonely times:

1. Utilize _____
"Bring the cloak and also my scrolls, especially the parchments." v. 13
2. Minimize _____
"...everyone deserted me... may it not be held against them." v. 16
3. Recognize _____
"But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength..." v. 17a (See v. 18)
4. Empathize _____
"...so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it." v. 17b

5. Improvise _____

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus... Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers. The Lord be with your spirit." v. 19-22

Jesus: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" Mark 15:34

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses..." Hebrews 4:15

Daily Meditations

Here's a chance to "take it home": Thought provoking questions about this weekend's topic!

This week's memory verse: *"Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing."* 2 Tim. 4:8

Monday

Look back over the notes from this past weekend-- read all the accompanying Scripture.

Which of the four causes of loneliness have you experienced? Are you experiencing any now?

Which of the five choices Paul makes is easiest for you? Which is hardest?

How can you -- very practically-- put these five into practice this week?

Ask God to help you through your lonely time. Think of times He's been there when you were lonely. Thank Him for His help. Pray for those you suspect are lonely right now.

Tuesday

Read 2 Tim. 4:6-8. What does it mean to have "kept the faith" and "put up a good fight"?

In what ways can you say you have "kept the faith" and "put up a good fight"?

In what areas do you need to improve your "fight" and "faith" skills?

Do you think often, as Paul apparently did, of the reward that awaits the faithful in heaven? Why or why not? How could this inspire you?

Thank God for his free gift of grace. Ask Him to help you with His power to keep the faith and fight the good fight! Thank Him for that heavenly reward.

Wednesday

Look at these verses from the story of Ruth today as a case study of the choices Paul made in 2 Timothy 4. How do these verses demonstrate each principle?

“Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, died... her two sons also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons or her husband.” Ruth 1:3, 5

• Utilize time wisely

“When she heard in Moab that the Lord had provided food for his people, Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home. With her two daughters-in-law (Ruth and Orpah), she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to Judah.” Ruth 1:6, 7

• Improvise a family

“Ruth clung to her... ‘Your people will be my people, and your God my God.. where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.” Ruth 1:16b, 17

• Empathize with others

“Ruth said to her... ‘Don’t urge me to leave you or turn away from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay...’” Ruth 1:16a

“One day Naomi said... ‘My daughter-in-law, should I not try to find a home for you, where you will be well provided for?’” Ruth 3:1a

• Minimize my bitterness

“Don’t call me Naomi!” she told them. “Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted me!” Ruth 1:20, 21

“The women said to Naomi, ‘Praise be to the LORD... your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given birth...’ Then Naomi took the child, laid him in her lap, and cared for him.” Ruth 4:15, 16

• Recognize God’s Presence

Naomi, Ruth, Boaz, the village elders, and the village women recognize God as the ultimate author of history implicitly throughout the book. Can you find some examples?

Bring to God your bitterness and loneliness. Ask Him to give you a sense of future and hope. Ask Him to help you reach out to others, as both Ruth and Naomi did.

Thursday

Read 2 Timothy 4:9-18. How do you suppose Paul is able to forgive someone like Alexander (v. 14) or the others who betrayed him (v. 16)? How is a reliance on God’s justice (v. 14) helpful for forgiveness?

How does Paul show that forgiving someone is not the same as trusting someone (v. 15)?

What else can you learn from this passage about forgiveness?

Ask God to give you confidence in your future home in heaven. Ask Him to help you forgive those who have hurt you, as Paul did here.

Friday

Read John 14:18 and Hebrews 13:5. What is the consistent promise in these verses?

How does this relate to point three in your notes from this past weekend?

Knowing Scriptural promises of God’s presence is so crucial to surviving times of loneliness and rejection. In effect, you are deciding ahead of time how you will choose to react. Decide today to memorize some of these promises and to decide ahead of time to cling to them.

Make your prayer time today a time of meditation on a verse that you’d like to memorize-- a verse that’s a promise to you of God’s goodness.

Saturday

Complete any devotions you may have missed and polish up the memory verse. *Please pray for the services this weekend. Thanks!*