



PART 4

EPILOGUE

Chapter Twelve

THE MEASURE OF A LEADER'S SUCCESS

THE TEAM HE BUILT THE TRIALS HE SUFFERED

Carpus

Why does Scripture make a point of noting that Paul wanted his cloak? Notice that [verse 21](#) says winter was coming.

2 Timothy 4:21 (NASB)

²¹ “**Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren.**”

The cloak was a heavy, square-shaped woolen garment with a hole or a slit in the middle where it went over the head. It could be worn like a poncho or used like a blanket. Paul needed the cloak in that dungeon to keep warm.

That tells us something about Paul's personal economic condition and the poverty of the church in those days. You might think there was no need to trek across Europe with a coat for Paul. But it was obviously more feasible than buying a new one. Besides, Paul wanted the books as well.

Why had he left his cloak at the house of Carpus? Perhaps he didn't want to carry it in the summer. Or perhaps he was arrested suddenly and not given an opportunity even to collect his personal effects. Either way, Carpus becomes another living reminder of the trials Paul suffered, because he was the one lovingly safeguarding Paul's most precious earthly goods while the apostle was imprisoned.

What are the books and parchments Paul referring to? “Parchments” would be important writings preserved on expensive animal-skin scrolls. The “books” were probably papyrus scrolls. Some of them were surely rare personal copies of Old Testament books. Others may have been



Paul's own letters, of which he kept copies. Some of them may have even been blanks on which he was about to write other things. The point is clear: Paul wasn't finished reading, writing, and studying, and he wanted his books and papers so that he could redeem the time during his final days on earth.

Paul's network included not only people who formed the core of his team, but also people who ministered to him and encouraged him in his trials. Sadly, there were also a few people in whom he had invested his life who proved to be unfaithful to the Lord and disloyal to Paul personally. He mentioned them as well.

THE TREACHERY HE ENDURED

Rare is the leader who doesn't experience disloyalty and defection. Even Jesus had to endure the treachery of Judas. Usually, betrayal comes from where you least expect it. Paul's experience was no exception to that rule. In fact, the wounds of a good friend's defection were still smarting when he wrote this epistle to Timothy.

Demas

We return now to Demas, whom Paul mentioned in [2 Timothy 4:10](#):

[2 Timothy 4:10 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁰“**For Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.**”

In fact, Paul mentioned Demas as one of the reasons he needed Timothy to come speedily: “Come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me.” Why is Demas's defection a reason for asking Timothy to make haste? Could it be that Demas had occupied such a strategic role in Paul's ministry that only Timothy could take his place? The implication is that Timothy needed to come not only for the sake of encouraging Paul, but also for the sake of whatever work had heretofore been Demas's responsibility.

We don't know much about Demas, aside from the fact that he had been with Paul for some time. He is mentioned along with Luke in [Colossians 4:14](#) as one of the esteemed and intimate companions of Paul.

[Colossians 4:14 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁴“**Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas.**”

While Paul was writing to Colosse during his first imprisonment in Rome, Demas was there. Paul most likely wrote Philemon at about the same time, and Demas is mentioned in [verse 24](#) of that brief epistle too. Along with Mark, Luke, and Aristarchus, Paul named him as a fellow laborer.

[Philemon 1:24 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁴“**As do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.**”

So, Demas had been associated with Paul at least since that first imprisonment in Rome. He must have been given some kind of important or strategic ministry. He was no doubt someone in

whom Paul had invested much. He surely knew much truth. And when he deserted Paul, he left a void that Paul needed Timothy to step into.

2 Timothy 4:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“For Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens *has gone* to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.”

The verb translated “deserted” is the Greek word *egkatalaipo*. It is a strong word that speaks of desertion. Its root (*leipo*) means “to leave.” It is compounded with two prepositions (*eg* and *kata*, having the sense of “against” and “alone”), making it doubly intense. In this context, it conveys the idea of “leaving me in the lurch.”

Indeed, Demas had not only abandoned Paul, but he had also left him in a dire situation, at a most inappropriate time.

Perhaps the deprivation had become too much for Demas. It may have been that in the midst of Paul’s most extreme difficulty, he could see the handwriting on the wall. Paul was about to lose his life, and apparently, Demas wasn’t willing to give his life for Christ. He wasn’t that committed.

Maybe Demas had first joined Paul because of the noble cause. But he had never really counted the cost. He may well have been like the rocky soil, where the seed has no root in itself, but when tribulation comes, it withers ([Mark 4:16–17](#)).

Mark 4:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶“In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy;
¹⁷and they have no *firm* root in themselves, but are *only* temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.”

Or, more likely, Demas was a classic example of weedy ground, where “but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful” ([Mark 4:19 NASB](#)).

He probably was never a true Christian at all because Paul said he “loved this present world.” And “friendship with the world is enmity with God” ([James 4:4](#)).

James 4:4 (NASB)

⁴“You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

As the apostle John wrote, “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. **If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him**” ([1 John 2:15 NASB](#)).

Demas had much in common with Judas. He fell in love with the world because he apparently never had any genuine love for Christ. Like Judas, he seemed to follow for a while, but his heart was always in this world.

Why did Demas go to Thessalonica?

Most likely, that was his home. Paul linked him with Aristarchus in Philemon, and according to [Acts 20:4](#), Aristarchus was a Thessalonian. Whatever the reason for the place, the reason for his desertion is clear: He loved this world more than he loved Christ.

[Acts 20:24 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁴“**But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.**”

Virtually every Christian leader will eventually face the desertion of a Demas—someone you pour your life into; you think he is on the team; he is outwardly following Christ; but he brings deep pain and a sense of betrayal when it finally becomes apparent that he loves the present world. This was no reflection on Paul’s leadership, any more than Judas reflected negatively on Jesus’ leadership.

Alexander the Coppersmith

In [2 Timothy 4:14–15](#), Paul mentioned another man whose treachery had caused him great grief:

[2 Timothy 4:14-15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁴“**Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.**

¹⁵ **Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching.**”

Alexander was a common name in the ancient world, so there’s no need to assume that this Alexander was the same one mentioned in [1 Timothy 1:20](#) together with Hymenaeus as a false teacher.

[1 Timothy 1:20 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁰“**Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.**”

Nor do we need to assume that this is the same Alexander mentioned in [Acts 19:33](#), whose testimony sparked a riot. In fact, by referring to him as “**Alexander the coppersmith,**” Paul seemed to set him apart from the other Alexanders.

[Acts 19:33 \(NASB\)](#)

³³“**Some of the crowd concluded *it was* Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly.**”

This man was a craftsman who worked with metals. Perhaps he was an idol maker. Remember that a silversmith named Demetrius had once caused a riot in Ephesus, because Paul’s preaching was a threat to his idol-making business ([Acts 19:24–26](#)).



Acts 19:24-26 (NASB)

²⁴“For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen;

²⁵ these he gathered together with the workmen of similar *trades*, and said, "Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business.

²⁶“You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods *at all*.”

Whatever Alexander’s story, he had caused Paul great harm, and therefore Timothy also needed to be warned to be on guard against him. The nature of the harm he caused is also clear: He opposed Paul’s teaching ([2 Timothy 4:15](#)). That means he stood against the truth of the gospel.

2 Timothy 4:15 (NASB)

¹⁵“Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching.”

Notice Paul’s response: “May the Lord repay him according to his works” ([v. 14](#)).

2 Timothy 4:14 (NASB)

¹⁴“Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.”

Paul was not asking Timothy to take any action against Alexander, only to beware of him. He did not seek personal vengeance. He did not threaten or revile Alexander in return. Following the example of Christ, he simply “committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” ([1 Peter 2:23](#)).

1 Peter 2:23 (NASB)

²³“And while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, **but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.**”

Everyone in leadership and ministry encounters people who set themselves against the truth of God and seek to do us harm. They want to discredit faithful teachers and make them appear as fools, liars, charlatans, or whatever.

Alexander, like Demas, was a living example of the treachery Paul had endured.