

A True Friend - Onesiphorus

Text: 2 Timothy 1:16-18

Intro:

After Paul's release from prison in Rome in AD 62/63 (Acts 28) and after his fourth missionary journey, during which he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, Paul was again imprisoned under Emperor Nero (c. 66-67). It was during this time that he wrote 2 Timothy. In contrast to his first imprisonment, when he lived in a rented house (Acts 28:30), he now languished in a cold dungeon (4:13), chained like a common criminal (1:16, 2:9). His friends even had a hard time finding out where he was being kept (1:17). Paul knew that his work was one and his life was nearly at an end (4:6-8).

Paul had three reasons for writing Timothy at this time. First, he was lonely. He felt that everyone had deserted him (1:15; 4:10). Titus and Tychicus were away (4:10-12), and only Luke was with him (4:11). Paul wanted very much for Timothy to join him also. Timothy was his "fellow worker" who "as a son with his father" had served closely with Paul. Second, Paul was concerned about the welfare of the churches during this time of persecution under Nero, and he admonishes Timothy to guard the gospel (1:14), to persevere in it (3:14), to keep on preaching it (4:2) and if necessary, to suffer for it (1:8; 2:3). Third, he wanted to write the Ephesian church through Timothy. If you look at 2 Timothy 4:22 you will note that the "you" here is plural, showing that the letter was intended for public use. The word "your" in the first part of the verse, however, is singular, indicating that it was addressed to Timothy alone. In view of Paul's impending death and the solemn charge he gave to his timid young friend, Timothy needed such encouragement.

Onesiphorus probably lived in Ephesus with his family (v. 18; 4:19).

1. **Courage** – not afraid to ID with Paul
2. **Commitment** – searched zealously
3. **Consistent** – "often refreshed me", "ministered in many ways" Either on Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 19) or on his fourth.