

**SERMON: COME BEFORE WINTER  
(AN URGENT REQUEST)**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:9-21a**

**(9) Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: (10) For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. (11) Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. (12) And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. (13) The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments, (14) Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: (15) Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. (16) At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. (17) Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. (18) And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (19) Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. (20) Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. (21a) Do thy diligence to come before winter.**

**Introduction**

This is Paul's last letter before being executed. At the time of the writing, he is in Rome on death row. The season is later summer or early fall of 66 or 67 A. D. As one of the Pastoral Epistles, the bulk of the letter gives Timothy, a young preacher, one of his sons in the ministry, advice and encouragement. Near the close of this, letter he makes several personal and practical requests of Timothy. For the focus of this sermon, I will only talk about one of these requests. He asked Timothy to come to him as soon as possible and to bring three items with him. As I re-read, this passage several new insights emerged. (I am going to hit some points quickly so please "hang" with me. Some of the points listed are really sub-points.)

## **Exposition**

### **1. There Are Times When “Time Is Of The Essence.”**

(There Are Optimal Times But Never Perfect Times.)

(Strike While The Iron Is Hot But With Caution.)

(There Is A Time To Hesitate And A Time To Make Haste – A Wise Person Knows The Difference.)

(Some Opportunities Are Fleeting - They Only Knock At The Door Once.)

(The Chance Of A Lifetime Does Not Last A Lifetime.)

### **2. You Will Always Have Destroyers, Deserted, And Deceivers.**

(Remember, No Weapon Formed Against You Shall Prosper.)

### **3. Thank God For Supporters Who Will Assist You.**

(A Friend In Need Is A Friend In Deed.)

(Help Ain't Help If It Ain't What You Need.)

### **4. Realize Your Supporters Have Limitations.**

(They May Be Willing But Unable To Do All They Desire To Do For You.)

(Sometimes It Is Just You And The Lord.)

### **5. Winter Will Surely Come - Please Prepare For It.**

(Winter Is Necessary Just As Spring, Summer, And Autumn.)

(Fruit Trees Need The Chill Of Winter To Be Productive In The Spring And Summer.)

### **6. Paul's Urgent Request Was In Preparation for Winter.**

(Bring My Cloak-Physical Needs.)

(Bring My Books-Intellectual Needs.)

(Bring The Parchments-Spiritual Needs.)

### **7. There Will Come A Time In Your Life When Only A Few Things Will Really Matter.**

(Paul Only Wanted Timothy To Bring Three Things.)

(He Already Had God.)

## **Closing Thoughts**

“Please, hurry up and get here,” is the meaning of the admonition to Timothy in verse nine. We are left hanging about the conclusion of the story. We don't know if Timothy got there in time or not. The Bible is silent on that issue. So are the history books. I think God intentionally left us hanging so that we could give a

personal, introspective answer. I would like to think he made it on time, and that there were no circumstances beyond his control that prevented his timely arrival. Now the question comes to us. Are there things each of us needs to do before winter sets in? I am sure the answer is, "yes." Some are small, others are significant. The most important thing is to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior while the blood is still running warm in our veins. (I am sure most of us have done that already.) Let's redouble our efforts to "come" before winter on the unresolved issues in our lives. The older members in the church I pastored in Mississippi would sing a little spiritual medley. The first song was *Time Is Winding Up* and the second song was *Git Right Church And Let's Go Home*. Maybe they were on to something. Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!

### **End Notes**

1. In Paul's day all of the shipping lanes were closed in the winter. All sea travel was virtually impossible and much of the land travel was at a stand-still. Once the winter weather was in full force, travelers who had not reached their final destination, had to shelter in place where they were until the spring.

2. You know I love to research word origins. (It's the nerd in me.) The word "opportunity" is a concatenation of the phrase, "The optimal porting time." Ship could not come to harbor or port until the time was optimal. The wind had to be blowing in the right direction and at the right speed and the tides had to be high enough so the ship would not run aground. All of these factors had to occur simultaneously, or else an attempt to come to port would lead to disaster. After a journey of thousands of miles, the captain still had to wait for the opportunity to port his ship to the harbor and unload the merchandise. After waiting for days, they had to move with haste because these simultaneous optimal conditions would not last for an extended length of time. When the time was right to bring the ship to harbor, at the captain's command, a sailor would alert his shipmates by running all over the ship repeating the word, "Opportunity!"

3. The legendary Charles Spurgeon would preach this sermon every year during the fall season. His congregation expected it. Members would bring their unsaved friend, hoping the sermon would inspire them to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

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