

Fresh Oil



April 2017

Dear Fellow Servants,

We all need a little encouragement from time to time, even those who seem to have it all working for them. It would be easy for us to read the epistles of Paul in the New Testament and think that this giant of a man in the faith was constantly firing on all cylinders. Much of the time he was, but not always. The great apostle also had his low moments and this stands as a reminder to us of the need to encourage and support one another in the walk of faith.

I want to draw your attention to 2 key verses that he penned to two of his sons in the faith, Timothy and Titus. Let's first look at what he said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:21:

"Do your utmost to come before winter..."

These words appear at the end of Paul's last letter, which was written to Timothy, the young pastor leading the church at Ephesus. Paul had mentored this young man and had become a father in the faith to him over the years. Now the aged apostle is in prison, on death row, and feeling the loneliness and discouragement that can come in a situation like that. It is a simple plea, really, but conveys an important principle in church life: *we need each other!* Timothy would not be coming as a lawyer to posture himself before the authorities to procure a plan for Paul's release. No, he had no such power. He would simply come to visit Paul in his time of loneliness and despair. His mere presence would be cool water to a thirsty soul. Do you know someone who needs that? Your touch and your smile and your presence are worth more than you could imagine to someone in such a situation.

The second verse was addressed to another young pastor, Titus, who was leading a church on the island of Crete. Here is what Paul said to him in Titus 3:12:

"When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there."

Did you notice something about these two verses? They both mentioned 'winter' (which I underscored for emphasis). Winter is a season when things are bleak and barren. The warmth of autumn is past and the freshness and newness of spring is still yet to be tasted. Days are shorter and nights are longer. It can be a difficult season to get through. Paul was in the winter of his life and he needed encouragement. He was in a cold prison, facing imminent death, and he needed the warmth of Christian fellowship to help him finish his course.

... I have been anointed with fresh oil

PSALM 92:10



It is the month of April and spring has sprung, so we may not be thinking too much of winter at this point. However, winter can strike at any time and we, as caring Christians, should be at the ready to be a Timothy or a Titus and reach out to those who are facing difficulty of one sort or another. Look around you and pray and ask God to lead you to those in need. Who knows? Perhaps there is someone not far away who has been praying for the Lord to send them someone "before winter." You could be that someone!

Your fellow servant,

Pastor Brian