

The Missional Community

2 Timothy 4:9-22

Intro

Good Morning church, my name is Austin Davidson and I am the director of worship and city groups here at City Life. It's been a great time walking through 2 Timothy together in this season. Today is our final text from Paul's letter to Timothy.

In this final section Paul is sitting in prison, with death nearing, he has lived an incredibly full life of ministry.

It's as if we are getting one final interview with Paul and he is just saying, "this is what a lifetime of faithfulness to Jesus looks like. This is what being part of a community committed to God's glory looks like".

In this correspondence to Timothy, Paul shows us that the church is a *missional community* and truthfully, as we begin to pull back the layers of what a missional community looks like it's a bit hard to swallow. Fortunately, as we dive deeper we will see *how* we achieve being a missional community.

Let's pray.

Missional Community

So there Paul is, sitting in a roman prison cell writing to his dear friend. His beloved child in the faith. He's pretty sure he's going to be executed as we've seen in previous texts (4:6). Yet in this significant moment of his life, his world seems to shrink and we see this tight knit community he is communicating with. People are being told to go places, directed to other churches, or told to stay. This community is on a mission. They are a **missional community**. What I want to do today is discuss the missional side of this community and the communal side of this specific mission. So we've got mission and community.

When we look at the missional aspect of this community in this text we see that because it is missional **people will be sent and people will stay...**

Some will be sent

Paul begins to name all of these different people. Let's look at the text

2 Timothy 4:10

- ***For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.***

Paul has had an incredibly crazy life of ministry. He didn't do this alone. He had spent most of his time travelling, preaching, and teaching with other ministers in the gospel. People included in this list are his guys who travelled with, and worked preaching the gospel with Paul. But who exactly are these guys?

So who are these guys and where are they going?

- **Crescens has gone to Galatia**

Historically we know that he most likely is leaving on mission, because crescens ended up going to plant churches near Lyons and a few other places in France.

- **Titus to Dalmatia**

This is more than likely Titus going to check on some of Paul's previous missionary locations. Dalmatia is actually the area in which Paul and crew were shipwrecked. They had met some people who showed them hospitality and were kind to them. You can read this account in Acts 28.

- Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. (4:12)

Tychicus is the one carrying his letter to Timothy, since Timothy is pastoring the church in Ephesus

- Get Mark and bring him with you, (4:10-11)

Mark would be picked up somewhere along the way from Timothy as they leave their respective places.

Wow, what a crazy list of people just being sent all over the place. What's the common denominator? All for the sake of the gospel. The common denominator is they are sent, on mission for God's glory through the local church.

When we believe and commit to the church being a missional community, **people are sent**

Application:

When reading this text I immediately began to think about the life of City Life. Since we have been a church, we have sent countless men and women out on mission for God's glory.

More notably, in the next few Sunday's we'll be sending Zach Wallace, our pastoral resident, to go live on mission in Nashville, TN.

Lord willing, in two years, Ivan Valdez will be sent out to spread the gospel in east Austin.

In the past we have helped plant Redeemer Round Rock and a few other churches.

Here's what's cool though. This sending isn't just for those who have gone to seminary or are super-Christians. No, in fact most of these church planters were regular people who received training, they received a heavy level of discipleship.

This is why we have city groups, discipleship groups, city seminary, and Sundays. They are to equip us and send us out for the gospel. Sometimes it looks like moving across the country or overseas. Sometimes it looks like multiplying a city group and moving to the other side of 35

Mission drastically changes how we live and where we live. **Have you considered what it means to view your city group as an equipping hub for mission?** Are you seeking to send out people into the city for God's glory? Maybe God is calling you to go somewhere in the city or to another city through a church plant residency. Because the community is missional- people are sent. Where is God sending you?!

Transition:

Paul intimately knows all of these people and their stories. You can see how tight knit they are. or should I say how bound together they are. Even further as we look at the text we begin to see not only people are sent but also **some stay**

Some will stay

Let's look at the text....

- **Luke alone is with me.** Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. 2 Timothy 4:11
- **Tychicus** I have sent to Ephesus. 4:12

- Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. **Erastus** remained at Corinth, and I left **Trophimus**, who was ill, at Miletus. (4:19-20)

This is a bit of a shorter list but no less important.

There's a little difference in reason for staying, and I'd like to break that down. I think that it is noteworthy.

First, Luke is the only one staying by his side.

Luke is staying in support of Paul during this trying time. Paul is waiting to die pretty much. Luke is a physician who has been traveling with Paul and was his secretary to some degree, helping him document things and write letters. Moreover as we look at scripture we see that Luke is just absolutely loyal to Paul and aiding him.

Application (loyalty)-

Leadership in the church needs these types of people. People who throw their everything behind the mission of the church for the sake of the gospel. I have the tendency to do too much, I have lots of ideas but often lack capacity to execute them very well. This actually ends up really hindering the way I lead. I am so grateful for people on our team from audio, visual, to the folks who lead on Sunday that come to me and say, "hey, I notice you are doing a lot. Could you teach me how to run sound or whatever it is? I'd like to carry some of the weight." Just as church leadership, and elders are valuable to you, you are valuable to them in ministry.

Erastus was on his way through Corinth working with Paul and stayed to continue preaching/teaching there.

I can resonate with Erastus so much. Ask my wife, I am pretty positive every vacation we've ever been on I turn to her and say, "I think we are supposed to stay here and plant a church".

Get ten verses into the book of 1 Corinthians and you'll see it wasn't for comfortability that Erastus was staying in Corinth. Corinth was riddled with division, people serving idols, sexual immorality (the kind even pagans don't get down with), and more. Mission drastically changes how we live and where we live. Erastus stayed because his mission, his aim, was God's glory

Application (staying to meet needs)-

I'll be honest, this is one of the harder points of application for myself. Staying long term somewhere doesn't excite me. Staying to meet a need seems daunting and frankly, just too hard. Some of y'all know exactly how this feels. The city has changed, harder issues to parent through, higher cost of living, more traffic- the list goes on. **Are you ignoring God's call to stay in this city? Don't replace the mission of God for the mission of comfort and ease.** Mission drastically changes how we live and where we live.

Trophimus was ill, and he stayed in Miletus.

Here's the thing. Sometimes staying, looks like staying for healthy (spiritual, and physical reasons). In particular in this season, when COVID first began, it was unwise for some to serve. For those that are high risk, they needed to stay at home, and stay behind from serving. Hear me, you are no more or less valuable to God because of that.

There are seasons for families to throttle their service for the health of their family.

Some of our dear friends were in training to be sent out to a church plant in Utah. About a year into their training, and a year into their marriage they began to realize that they were not emotionally ready to go to such a hard place. They decided to stay back and not go. It was hard for them, they felt like they were missing out on something exciting. But you know what, they remained on mission where they were at the capacity God called them to. They were and aren't any less valuable to God and his mission during times of unhealth.

We are a *missional* community. Some are sent and some will stay. All for the mission of God.

Transition:

As we continue to listen in on this conversation between Paul and Timothy, we get a front row seat to the “communal” side of this **Missional Community**.

More specifically, we see that in a missional **community** people are **healed and people are hurt**

Missional **Community- Healed**

In his letter, Paul makes a few requests. First, he asks for Timothy to bring Mark with him.

- Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. (4:11)

Why? For he is very useful to me for ministry. - Mark is someone who has history with Paul and we'll sink into that a bit more later. But for now, there's a reason why Paul wants him there. He is **useful to his ministry**. As we know, Paul is in a bad spot (sitting in prison, awaiting to be executed). He needs the care, help, and comfort from his friend Mark.

Application (Friend)-

This is what we get out of a missional community. People who will come sit by your side in your darkest times. To help you keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, to encourage you to keep going in mission. Maybe this is your fight club. This is what I love about my fight club and some of my close friends; we all share a common commitment that we will be there for one another at any time of the day. With confidence I can say that I could call up either of those guys and ask for care and they would be there. Let's be people who commit to the care of people in our church in the way that Paul could call to mark for help. Friends committed to one another's health and ministry.

Not only do we see spiritual/mission needs healed. But also practical needs. Let's look at 4:13

- When you come, **bring the cloak** that I left with Carpus at Troas, **also the books, and above all the parchments**. (4:13)

Paul is asking for this cloak because winter is on the way. He has nothing to keep him warm. He also asks for certain documents which are most likely some sort of old testament parchments, maybe notes, and other letters.

Application (practical needs)

- When I see the way that Paul can count on Timothy for bringing these practical things I think about our ladies in my city group. Time and time again I've watched these ladies plan meal trains for expecting mothers, simply offer to babysit so a date night could happen.
- If you are in a community, with people, there are going to be countless opportunities to meet practical needs. Notice someone having just an incredibly busy week? Doordash them some food. Snowstorm and they've lost power? Invite them over. City Life, you do an amazing job at this. Keep going!

How are you participating in the healing work of community? Are you seeking to care for people in your city group? This isn't just for CG leaders, elders, and staff. **We are all saved into this community.**

Missional **Community- Hurt**

Here's the thing, you've probably been looking at this text the whole time going, “Austin, some of this stuff seems great, but we still haven't really addressed the elephant in the room...text”. You're right. Here we are.

Because this is a missional community- people will be sent, people will stay, people will be healed, and people will be hurt...

Let's look at the text.

- Alexander the coppersmith **did me great harm**; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. (4:14)

This language for “did me great harm” is the opposition language is the same used in 3:8, so it is likely that the harm he had done was speaking out against him or having him arrested. Most likely, not physical damage. But, most likely the opposition that led Paul to where he is now. This can easily be brushed off that this guy alexander is not cool. But, Paul uses the language, “great harm”. This is very significant. Paul, who had endured great physical hurt is recalling great verbal and relational harm. Our words are powerful. They wound and they heal. Perhaps, we're not getting our friends thrown in prison, but are we opposing them? Are we seeking to speak in opposition all the time?

Not only was Paul opposed but also deserted.

- At my first defense **no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me**. May it not be charged against them! (4:16)
- For Demas, in love with this present world, **has deserted me** and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. (4:10)

This is such an awfully sad group of texts to read. Here is a guy who has spent his entire life doing all he can to preach the gospel of Christ. He suffered persecution in many cities as he preached, and was rejected by most of his hearers. Yet, along the way developed incredibly close relationships with other believers. But, when it came time for them to testify for him in Rome...all left him. All deserted. Not only did he have believers not come around to his aid on this trial, but some also apostatized from the faith. “Demas, in love with this present world, deserted me”. Christians, who were his dear friends, walking away from the faith. Few things hurt a gospel minister more than this.

Strengthened by God

Guys, being a missional community is not easy. Being the church is life-altering. You might be called to go, away from friends and family. You might be told to stay. You will experience the burden of service from people and receive it in grace. You will be hurt, and hurt others. You can't find a place with people where this doesn't happen.

Some of us right now are feeling the same thing Paul is feeling in this text to some degree. Maybe you are mad that God is calling you somewhere. Maybe you are bitter that he's asked you to stay in a hard place. Perhaps you have been deserted.

In our lives we experience this- parents have left us, people have not showed up for us

What is your response to these things? When people leave? When you have to stay? When people require help? When people hurt you and your family?

Paul's response gives us a clear picture of what is truly at the motor of this missional community.

Look at verse [16 & 17](#)

At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. **May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me**, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.

You see this? Paul, who committed his life through the gospel, suffered persecution, did all he could for the glory of God, abandoned by his closest friends. Left to die.

Yet, he echoes the final words of our savior by saying, “may it not be charged against them!”. It's courtroom language. Many of us hold court with people in our heads when they disappoint us. We charge them with disloyalty, stupidity, etc. But not Paul, and he is on death row because of some of them! How does he forgive like this? And to continue even directing a missional community through sending and staying. And continue to even have faith in the local church during this time?!

Not in his own strength

Throughout all his suffering for God's glory,

He was strengthened by the one who suffered perfectly... Jesus.

In fact, this word strengthened means to empower. Jesus doesn't just help Paul get through it right? I mean, here he is asking for his friends to come and see him, he is requesting needs. It's not like all of a sudden he feels better. He fixes his gaze, his soul, to Jesus. He looks and sees a good king who stands by his side amidst desertion.

Jesus, empowers him to forgive, trust, love, and serve in his desertion! By being fully empowered and strengthened by the one who lived, died, and rose again **for us!**

This moment in Paul's life is so beautiful to me. He puts in place what it really means to live in light of the gospel, a gospel that binds us together for God's purposes.

Closing

Jesus spent about 3 years with the disciples, loving them, teaching with them, training them. Then, there in the garden, when Jesus knew his time had come, he asked his friends to just stay awake and pray with him. They deserted him to sleep. Betrayed by Judas, and denied by Peter, the ones he loved *deserted and hurt him*. Mocked and tortured, not a single person showed to defend him.

Humiliated and crucified Jesus cried out, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

You see Paul in arguably the darkest part of his life. Was empowered by the gospel. He was comforted and empowered by the king of "missional community" that is--the church. He looked to the king who forgives our desertion. The king who heals us. The king who sends us and keeps us for his glory and is with us always. King, Jesus.

How do we do this missional community? We do it in the strength and the grace of Jesus Christ.

No one, no thing, no other organization in the world can empower us like the God who came to take on flesh, lived a perfect life, died, and rose again in glory...for us. Let's live on a mission; sending and/or staying for his glory. Let's go as a community, forgiving hurt, and healing one another. All empowered by Christ

Let's pray.