

# The Last Words of Paul

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[ 0 : 00 ]     2 Timothy chapter 4. Many people think these are some of the last recorded words of the Apostle Paul.

! And so at the end of his life, this is what he has to say to his son in the faith, Timothy. 2 Timothy chapter 4, we'll read the first 18 verses. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge.

Preach the word. Be prepared in season and out of season. Correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and careful instruction.

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations. Endure hardship.

[ 1 : 18 ]     Do the work of an evangelist. Discharge all the duties of your ministry. For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure.

I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Do your best to come to me quickly. For Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crustians has gone to Galatia and Titus to Domitia.

Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas and my scrolls, especially the parchments. Alexander, the metal worker, did me a great deal of harm.

[ 2 : 27 ]     The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message. At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me.

May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and all the Gentiles might hear it.

And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack, and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever.

Amen. Well, it is our privilege to welcome to our pulpit, Alan Beardmore. Brother, come and preach the word for us. Well, since you have your scriptures open to our text today, we'll be preaching from 2 Timothy chapter 4, and focusing on verses 1 through 18.

I want to draw your attention again to verses 16 through 18. Let me just read them once more. I'll be reading in the ESV. Paul writes to Timothy, So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.

[ 4 : 06 ] The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever.

Amen. As our brother mentioned earlier, these are the last recorded words of the Apostle Paul. He wrote them to Timothy, pastor in Ephesus.

And perhaps some of you have been by the bedside of a loved one or a friend at the time of their passing, and that is a very serious time.

It's a very sober time to be in the presence of death when someone whom you love, someone with whom you've had a relationship, is about to enter into eternity, and their soul is about to be required of the Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's a very solemn time. It's a time when we pay very close attention to the words which they have to speak to us. We pay close attention perhaps because they have been our mentor all of our life.

[ 5 : 15 ] Every time that we have had a difficulty, we have gone to them, we've known that they're going to pray for us, we've taken our deepest concerns to them. They know our every weakness.

They know our struggles. And we want to listen to their words one last time. Perhaps it's a time when there has been a rift in the relationship, and it's our last opportunity in this life to be reconciled to them and to speak to them, to tell them what's really on our heart, to know that they'll listen to us perhaps now more than they would before because they understand that they are about to pass from this life.

It's an opportunity to speak the Gospel one more time to someone who perhaps has rejected it their entire life. It's a very solemn time. And Paul is speaking words to Timothy that I'm sure Timothy never forgot.

Timothy received these words very seriously. And yet, we find that when Paul speaks these words, they take place in a very strange location.

Usually, when someone is passing away, there is a quiet moment that we can have with them, perhaps in their house or perhaps in a hospital. We can send others out of the room, and we can be alone with them or just with very close family members.

[ 6 : 41 ] And it's a quiet and an intimate time that we have together. But the Apostle Paul spoke these words on a battlefield. Paul spoke these words as he was dying on the field of battle.

Paul spoke as a general committing the cause of the war to his captain Timothy. Paul spoke these words on a battlefield. You'll notice that this is a military text.

There are a number of military terms in our text. You'll see in verse 10 that we have deserters. Timothy, or excuse me, Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me.

And then again in verse 16, at my first defense, no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. There are deserters in this text. There are casualties of war.

Look over in chapter 2 in verse 17. Paul mentions Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who initially accepted the truth of the gospel, and yet now they've swerved from the truth.

[ 7 : 43 ] And then you'll see casualties of war in chapter 2, verses 25 and 26, that there were some individuals that had been taken captive by the devil to do his will.

They had fallen into the snare of Satan. Satan is a real being. He is active. He is against the saints. He is against all those who profess Christ.

There are enemies in this text. In verse 14, we find that Alexander the coppersmith did a great deal of harm to Paul. Paul came under attacks by Alexander.

And then in verse 15, it says he strongly opposed our message. In verse 18, Paul says that there are those who are doing evil deeds against him and that the Lord is going to have to rescue him from the evil deeds against him.

And then even in verse 13, there are supplies that Paul needs to be able to fight this battle. He needs his cloak to keep him warm before winter. And then, of course, the parchments so that he could study the word of God and better be able to preach the gospel, even right up until the last breath.

[ 8 : 50 ] And so Paul is teaching Timothy in this particular text the truth that is largely forgotten by modern evangelicalism today. And that is that the church is at war.

We are in the middle of a very fierce spiritual warfare. You personally are fighting this battle. You are either in this war as a soul that is captive to Satan and to your own sin.

And you have taken up arms against Jesus Christ. You have rebelled against his just rule and authority. And you are actively fighting against him today. Or you have been conquered by King Jesus.

And you are fighting on his behalf. And you are seeking to establish his kingdom and his rule in this world. And one of your prayers is that his will would be done. That his kingdom would come, his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And that's the desire of your heart. Each one of us is battling in this warfare. And this warfare has been taking place since the Garden of Eden. You remember in Genesis chapter 1 through 3, we are taught that God, the creator, made men and women in order to spread his purposes on earth.

[ 10 : 09 ] God created us male and female so that we would spread his glory on earth. We were given authority as men and women, but we were given authority to spread God's glory and God's kingdom on earth.

We were to spread and promote his agenda. We were to give glory to God. And yet we find in Genesis chapter 3 that we allied ourselves in Adam, we allied ourselves with Satan, and we decided to take up arms against the God who made us.

And we decided to make an unholy alliance with Satan. And when the gospel goes forward, what is taking place is the fulfillment of what God preached to Adam and Eve in the garden, that Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman, would conquer the serpent.

And that Jesus Christ would drive a wedge between our desire to be with Satan and Satan's desire for our soul. And that God himself would drive a wedge between man and between Satan so that we would once again return and give glory to God.

So each one of us here this morning is fighting this battle. And when a person comes to the kingdom of Christ, it is because they have been rescued from Satan's kingdom. In other words, Christ's gain is Satan's loss.

[ 11 : 27 ] This is a zero-sum gain. When one kingdom advances, the other kingdom crumbles. And when the other kingdom advances, the other kingdom is beaten back. And we need to understand that when the kingdom of God advances, it advances against Satan and against his hosts.

And it advances by capturing and redeeming souls to the Lord Jesus Christ, redeeming them from the kingdom of Satan and bringing them into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Paul here in our text is giving Timothy instruction for how to wage this warfare. And the first thing that I want to point out from our text this morning is where the battle takes place.

Where does the battle rage? Where is the battlefield where we need to be engaged in warfare? And Paul points out two places of battle.

And the first place that he points out is in the heart of man. And you'll see that very plainly in verse 10. The heart of man is a battlefield. We find in verse 10 that Demas, the deserter, was in love with this present world.

[ 12 : 36 ] Now, some of you have been Christians for many years. And some of you have known men and women to profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then you have known them to turn away. And the question always comes into our mind, how is it possible that someone who could have professed Christ, someone who outwardly walked with Christ, walked with his people for many years, could turn away from Jesus?

How could someone possibly do that? Demas was someone that traveled with the apostle Paul. He heard Paul preach. He saw Paul's tears for the lost. If anyone knew that Paul was not a hypocrite and that Paul was doing this simply because he loved Christ and loved sinners, Demas would have known that.

Demas himself had no doubt been engaged in the preaching ministry, actively promoting the gospel. And yet Demas falls away. He deserts Paul. He deserts the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it is difficult, in a local church especially, when someone whom you have known for a long time turns away from Christ. And the question comes, what has happened to that person?

[ 13 : 52 ] Why would they do such a thing? And Paul tells us that in the case of Demas, it's because he loved this present world. He lost the battle for his heart. He failed to understand the greatest, one of the greatest commandments in the Old Testament from Solomon when he said, My son, guard your heart, for out of it flow the wellsprings of life.

Guard your heart. Guard your heart. Demas failed to watch his heart. He failed to watch the affections of his heart. It's interesting, our text doesn't tell us exactly what it was that Demas loved.

And the reason for that is because Paul doesn't want us fixating on the object itself. He doesn't want us to get carried away with the fact that perhaps Demas loved money or perhaps Demas loved a woman or perhaps he loved fame or perhaps he loved ease of life.

He was tired of living a difficult life with the Apostle Paul. He doesn't tell us that because he wants us to understand that fundamentally the problem is a first commandment issue.

He set something else up in his heart rather than God. He had another God other than the one true God. And he wants us to examine our own hearts. You children perhaps have enjoyed playing with magnets at home and you know that if you take a magnet and you put a piece of wood right next to that magnet nothing happens.

[ 15 : 20 ] But if you take another piece of metal and you sort of push those two together there's a moment where all of a sudden they jump together. They're attracted to one another. And our hearts are attracted to this world because of remaining sin.

And if we do not guard our hearts and we allow them to get closer and closer and closer to the things of this world our hearts will suddenly make a jump for the world.

And the world will pull our hearts and there will be a connection point. And that's what happened with Demas. He didn't guard his heart. He didn't understand. He failed to keep watch that there was sin in his heart.

Perhaps he thought that because he traveled with Paul he didn't need to watch himself. Perhaps that's the attitude of some of you here. You think well we have a wonderful pastor. We hear great sermons every week.

What need do I have to guard my own heart? But you need to understand that if you are a Christian you have remaining sin in your heart that reaches out for the world.

[ 16 : 24 ] And you must guard your heart. Guard the affections of your heart. Satan is a master tempter. He is a master at coming into our life and tempting us with self-pity.

You've worked so hard. You deserve this. You deserve that. No one in this congregation recognizes your gifts. You deserve to take something to yourself that no one else in this congregation is acknowledging and giving to you.

Your spouse doesn't realize how wonderful you are. They don't realize how difficult you've had it. And little by little your heart starts going out to the world. Your parents don't understand you says Satan.

Your parents haven't given you enough says Satan. And he tempts young people with the world as a promised place where they can gain satisfaction for the desires of their heart.

Satan did this to the Lord Jesus Christ in the wilderness. Satan said to Christ if you will bow down to me I will give you all the kingdoms of the world. And sometimes we wonder well what was the temptation in that?

[ 17 : 32 ] Well the temptation was simply this. That Jesus Christ as the God man was going to be given authority over heaven and earth by his father. But the means by which that would happen was the cross.

He was going to have to deny himself and take up his cross and follow his father and be obedient even unto death on a cross. And Satan was saying I will give you the kingdoms of the world without the cross.

All you have to do is bow down to me. And the Lord Jesus Christ said worship the Lord your God. Do not put God to the test. Christ watched over his heart.

Demas forgot the command of John the apostle in 1 John chapter 2. Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world the love of the father is not in him.

The world and its desires are passing away. And Demas forgot that. And we need to guard ourselves. We need to guard our affections and our desires of the heart. Now secondly Paul tells Timothy that the battlefield where spiritual warfare is fought is not only the heart of man but it is the mind of man.

[ 18 : 45 ] The hearts of men are turned away from Christ but also the minds of men. And you see this with two examples. And the first example is in verse 14. Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm.

The Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself for he strongly opposed our message. That is that when the truth of the gospel came to Alexander the coppersmith and to others like him there was something in his mind that rebelled against the truth being preached.

And he opposed not just Paul personally although that was true but he opposed the message itself. He was against the gospel being preached.

Some unbelievers like to profess that well I don't like that pastor because he has oddities or because he does you know he's too cold to me. He's not warm enough or he doesn't do this or he doesn't do that. And Paul goes straight to the issue and he says the mind of Alexander was against the message.

He didn't like the message being preached. And when the truth of the gospel is shined into the darkness John tells us that the darkness does not love it. We love our evil deeds.

[ 19 : 58 ] And the question becomes why in the world would someone's mind be against the preaching of Jesus Christ? When you read the gospels does it amaze you that people hated Jesus in the message that he preached?

Why would you hate Jesus when he is healing everyone that comes to him for healing? How could you possibly be against Jesus when everyone who came to him for forgiveness of sins he forgave?

What in the world is there that would make someone hate the message about Jesus? When a man stands up and says now I'm going to tell you about someone who is perfect who was meek who was gentle who loved sinners who cared for women when they were being cast aside by society who cared for the tax collectors when people hated them why would someone oppose that kind of message?

Well there's a number of answers but one answer is found in Proverbs chapter 29 and verse 27 where we read that an unjust man is an abomination to the righteous but one whose way is straight is an abomination to the wicked people hate the message of Jesus Christ in their mind because when Christ is preached he is so straight he is so perfect that it shows up their crookedness and it shows up how clearly their mind is warped and perverted and bent and twisted and sinful when Christ is preached people realize how bad their thinking is even as Christians we understand that it is embarrassing sometimes to hear a sermon or to read God's word and realize how twisted our thinking is have you ever been convicted as you've read God's word and you think I've been a Christian for 30 years 40 years 50 years and I still find that when I read God's word my thinking is off

I need to be corrected here I'm still thinking sinfully I'm still thinking according to my own desires and when the gospel is preached the minds of men and women are twisted and perverted and they reject the message in their mind they also reject the just death of Christ when the gospel is preached it means that we preach the crucified Lord and when sinners hear about the just death of Christ that he took sin on himself and God the Father justly punished him for that sin their mind rebels against that doctrine because it is the doctrine of personal responsibility for sin and men and women hate personal responsibility for their sin I'm a victim it wasn't my fault it was them I'm sorry that you got hurt when I did something that I wish which I wouldn't have that is hardly an apology that is hardly personal responsibility for my sin and we see that over and over and over again in our world today when public figures are caught in sin it is the hardest thing in the world for them to admit personal responsibility and you yourselves know when you have sinned against a brother or sister in Christ how hard is it for you to get up out of your pew to walk across the aisle and to look that brother or sister in the eye and say

[ 23 : 12 ] I have sinned against you that is one of the hardest things to do in the local church to tell your brother or sister in Christ that you've known for most of your life I've sinned it was my fault please forgive me and men and women with our indwelling sin and in our natural state we hate that doctrine of personal responsibility for sin and our minds oppose the message the mind of man opposes the message of the gospel because it thinks the resurrection of Christ is ridiculous modern day scientists or modern society can't abide the message of the gospel because a man stands up in the pulpit and says 2,000 years ago a Jewish carpenter rose from the dead and people think that's ridiculous the mind of man rejects the message of God because it is supernatural it is above us it has to be revealed or we can't figure it out and the mind of man hates that we want our reason and our ability to be God and then when faith and repentance is preached the mind of man hates that message because it means we have to accept

God's evaluation of our hearts rather than our evaluation if we are told that we have to repent if we are told that we have to put our faith in Christ it means we are not able to save ourselves and we have to bow the knee and trust another to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves and the mind of man hates that message so for all of these reasons Alexander the coppersmith opposed the message of Christ with his mind and then the second example you'll see is in verse 4 of chapter 4 Paul says that some will have itching ears in verse 3 and it's interesting Proverbs 18 15 that you're memorizing goes perfectly in line with verse 3 and it says in verse 4 that they will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths there are some people that hear the message preached and immediately their mind is opposed to it they are against it but there are others that sort of say well I'm not necessarily opposed to that sure you know that's fine whatever

I mean you know you like to you know you want to talk about Jesus that's fine with me that's fine I'm not going to be against that but neither do they cling to the truth neither do they put their trust wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ and instead they swerve away from the truth they wander away from the truth in chapter 2 in verse 17 and 18 we mentioned earlier Hymenaeus and Philetus swerve away from the truth that is to say that they make the truth compatible with their way of thinking they receive the truth but they sort of shave off the hard rough edges that they don't really like or they add some parts that they want to use to make it more palatable so they can get it down they swerve away from the truth it's the attitude of Satan in the garden Satan when he came to Eve in the garden did not begin by saying God's a liar and you should just do what you want he began by saying to Eve did God really say and you see how flattering that is

Eve gets to decide what God said and what he didn't say as if somehow her decision makes any difference as to what God actually said or not and yet we love that we ourselves want to be in control did God really say that well I'll decide I'll decide what God said and what he didn't say and if I decide that it's truth for me right now today then I'll take it and if I don't decide that it's truth for me right now today then I won't that is swerving away from the truth you've wandered away from the truth what you think doesn't change what God has said and what you think right now today does not alter reality but when people start going down that path they wander away from the truth and it's a very very powerful temptation now the question that we need to ask is if this is where the battlefield is being fought in the hearts and minds of men and women the question then becomes how do we fight this battle successfully how do we tear down the strongholds that men and women have built up in their hearts and in their minds and the first thing that we find we break this into two categories and the first category is Paul's assault against those who would be opposed to the message that is how we deal with the warfare in an external sense how we carry the battle to others and Paul makes very plain in these verses in both the early part of chapter 4 and then again in verse 17 that the way in which we fight the battle as Christians against the minds and the hearts of men that are opposed to the gospel is that we fight it with proclaiming the truth

Paul tells Timothy that you are to preach the word in verse 2 preach the word be ready in season and out of season reprove rebuke and exhort with complete patience and teaching and then in verse 17 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 one of the instant responses in our world today when people are taught the truth that the minds of men are against the message when the hearts of men are against the message their instant response is to say well then the problems with the message we have to alter the message the problem can't possibly be with the hearts and the minds of men so if they're rejecting the message then we need to change the message and Paul says no you preach the truth some of you may be hunters in Louisiana many many people hunt and they fish all the time but it is a wonderful thing to be a pastor it's much better to be a pastor than a hunter because as a hunter you are only allowed to hunt in season but Paul here says that pastors are allowed to hunt for souls out of season as well and there is no limit on the souls that you can take and so he says to Timothy you need to hunt for these men and women in season and out of season and there is no bag limit you can get as many as you want and bring them into the kingdom of God and Paul is saying that they must preach

[ 29 : 39 ] Timothy must preach the truth when it's acceptable to people and when it's not acceptable to people and we live in a day and age of course when preaching is out of season when it's not acceptable right now to preach the truth and Paul understood that that was going to take place and he has an answer you preach the truth anyway proclaim the gospel that is how the hearts and the minds of men are overcome is with the truth we do not change our message we preach the truth and we trust that the Lord will do the work in saving souls and we reprove rebuke and exhort with complete patience and teaching Paul understands that this will take time it will take great thought we don't just shout the message at people and say well why don't you understand this you foolish person how could you not get this the first time that you've heard it those of you who have grown up in the church like I did understand that you have heard the gospel thousands of times how many times did some of you young people in this church hear the gospel preached from this pulpit before the Lord saved you how many thousands of times did your parents teach you the word of God at home how many prayers did they offer on your behalf before you became a Christian my own testimony

I estimate that I heard the gospel preached or read publicly from the word of God over 4,000 times before God saved me that is a hard heart that is a proud heart it takes patience it takes time to overcome people's resistance to the gospel but the gospel will overcome it the gospel when God has determined that it will succeed it will succeed in the hearts and minds of men even though they hate the truth and you know that that's the case if you're a Christian here today that God overcame your resistance to the truth but then secondly Paul wants to tell Timothy how to fight this battle on a very personal level how do you personally guard your heart so that it is not drawn out with love for the world how do you personally keep your mind from being hardened to the gospel truth how do you keep your heart warm with love how do you keep your mind fresh to be able to receive the truth that is a great lesson in the life of the Christian and until you learn that lesson you will be in great great danger of falling away and being swept away by the flood tide of sin in this world and the sin of your own heart you need to learn this lesson and Paul points out two realities and the first reality is in verse 17

Paul says that his heart was kept with love to the Lord because in verse 17 the Lord Jesus Christ loved him the Lord stood by me and strengthened me you as a Christian will never be secure in your walk with the Lord until you grasp something of the height and the depth and the length and the breadth of Christ's love for your soul do you know what Christ had to do to rescue your soul from your own captivity to sin do you understand what Christ had to do Christ had to live for 33 years as a perfect man he had to undergo sleep deprivation he had to undergo persecution mocking he had to die on a cross for your soul one of the greatest lies that Satan has convinced believers of is that God doesn't really love them

God is being harsh toward you and you need to understand how to meditate on the cross of Christ so that you will never ever be taken in by that lie because when Satan can get you to think that God doesn't love you he will present another object for your affections so that you will find love somewhere else Paul says that everybody deserted me but not the Lord Jesus Christ do you know that Christ will never desert you do you really understand that and believe that do you know that Christ is a friend that sticks closer than a brother that even though all of your friends all of the people around you that you thought were Christians and now have turned away do you realize that Jesus Christ is perfectly faithful and that Christ himself will never leave you or forsake you everyone else deserted me but not the Lord Jesus Christ I forget the man's name but a minister was under intense persecution and his friend asked him how he was able to withstand the persecution and his response was



Christ and I are able to bear it Christ and I are able to bear it he never considered himself as a man fighting the persecution alone he never thought I'm the one doing this I'm going up against this battle all by myself he knew Jesus Christ loved him he knew Jesus Christ cared for his soul every day do you realize that if you are here this morning you are dressed you're in your right mind you want to hear the gospel preached to you do you realize that that's because Jesus has never deserted you not for one moment you see some of you have been coming here for so long that you seem to think sometimes it might be sort of routine and some of the young people in the church you see the older folks here and you think well of course they're here they're always here you know I come and this older person they're here they're always dressed like that they're always sitting in that pew they're just here all the time and sometimes as older Christians we get to think that way too we think well of course I'm here it's Sunday morning where else would I be you are only here because

[ 35 : 55 ] Jesus Christ has never deserted you you are only here because Christ loves you you're only here listening to the gospel and enjoying the gospel because Christ is your lover he is your friend he is your husband who takes care of you it's because of the Lord Jesus Christ Paul says this in 2nd Thessalonians he says for not all have faith or he says pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men for not all have faith but the Lord is faithful he will establish you and guard you against the evil one and we have confidence in the Lord about you he doesn't say oh I know you're going to do a good job he says I have confidence in the Lord about you he is trusting in the Lord's love for sinners that's what Paul is doing you will never overcome the world until you understand that the power of Christ's love is greater than the power of the attraction of the world those of you who are husbands it is very very difficult to deny yourself for your wife every day it is very difficult to get up and to continue to go to work when your co-workers drive you crazy it is very difficult to love your children and to sacrifice yourself from them how do you keep making that sacrifice how do you women keep sacrificing your career your talents your abilities and submitting them to your husband and using yourself to promote him and to advance him how do you keep making that sacrifice and there's only one answer and the answer is because you are loved by the

Lord you don't need someone else's love to fulfill you Christ loves you you can sacrifice for your wife because you don't need her to fulfill you you have Christ who has cared for you more than anyone else in the world far more than you have ever cared for anyone else in the world and you can continue as a wife and a mother to love your children to get up in the middle of the night to educate them to love your husband to keep coming to church because you know that the Lord is your husband and he loves you and he takes care of you and then secondly Paul says that not only ought we to know the love of Christ but in 2nd Timothy chapter 4 in verse 18 he knows that Jesus Christ has personally made a promise to him Christ in verse 18 the Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom now Paul when he was on the road to

Damascus had the Lord appear to him and at that time the Lord promised him personally that he would rescue him I want you to turn to Acts chapter 26 Acts chapter 26 in verse 17 Paul is recounting his Damascus road experience and Paul says this in verse 16 you'll notice if you have a red letter edition that these are Christ's words to Paul Acts 26 16 Christ told him but rise and stand upon your feet for I have appeared to you for this purpose to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles to whom I am sending you the reason that Paul was able to remain faithful to Christ was because Christ had looked him personally in the eye and said

I will rescue you and every Christian has had Christ make that promise to them that I will rescue you I will bring you to glory I will bring you to heaven to be with me you will never be on your own you are mine !!

will rescue you the world is very powerful the world is in disarray and yet every Christian has the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ and Christ rose from the dead to prove that his words are true to prove that God speaks the truth and when you committed your life to Christ as a Christian you committed yourself to him because he spoke the truth to you Christ never lies to his people other people will fail you they will let you down but Christ never will he will rescue you from every evil deed that doesn't mean that you will not go through trial but it means that he will make every trial a means of your sanctification and a means of drawing you closer to him if you are an unbeliever this morning you need to evaluate the reign and the rule of king Jesus and the reign and the rule of Satan and your own sin you need to be very honest with yourself especially those of you who are young people this morning and you need to ask yourself has anyone in my life ever spoken the truth like

[ 41 : 09 ] Christ speaks in the word of God do I get the truth from my friends is that what they are going to give me are they going to be with me even if everyone else deserts me has my sin fulfilled all the promises which it told me at the beginning of my life some of you perhaps are older and have not come to Christ has your life of sin really given you a life of happiness!

Are you freer today than you were as a young person or has your sin gradually over time tightened its grip and you have given your life to that sin and you have not received anything in return but heartache and disappointment the consequences of sin giving a life to sin and it never gives anything back until at the end of your life it leaves you as well and you're left to face God's judgment all on your own you need to evaluate the rule of Christ did anyone ever love a sinner like Christ has anyone ever ruled so kindly and graciously in a person's life like the Lord Jesus Christ Christ is a wonderful savior a wonderful king and if you're a Christian this morning you need to understand that you have remaining sin in your heart and that remaining sin will find an outlet unless you understand the love of

Christ for your soul and unless you understand that you can commit yourself to the promises of Christ saint and sinner alike need to remember the promises of the Lord what has he said in his word come unto me all you who are weary and I will give you rest have you found that to be true in your own life what did Christ say whoever comes to me I will never cast out and whoever comes to me I will raise him up at the last day do you have someone in your life that can defeat death the Lord Jesus Christ has conquered death the Lord Jesus Christ has conquered every enemy do you have someone in your life that has ever been able to say I am the way the truth and the life that's what Christ said about himself if you're a Christian you have the Lord Jesus Christ and if everyone in the world turns away from you you still have eternal life you still have the

Lord Jesus Christ and if you're a Christian today you know that there is nothing in the world so precious as the one who has spoken peace to your soul peace and reconciliation between God what a wonderful gift we have from Christ this is how we fight the spiritual war let's pray our heavenly father we ask for forgiveness for failing to think about Christ and his promises for failing to see the beauty of our savior and our husband and our friend we pray that for those who are struggling with indwelling sin this morning we pray that you would not allow that indwelling sin to drag them away from Christ but we pray that they would have a new glimpse and vision and understanding of the love of God for their soul to hold them and we pray that for those who are lost we pray that they would give an honest examination of their life honestly assess their sin and then look to the

Lord and come unto him and find eternal life because he is the friend of sinners we pray in Christ's name alone amen