

Godly Responses to Hardships

Let us turn to our Bibles to 2 Timothy 4. 2 Timothy 4, verses 9-18. We're winding up here this book. We finished 1 Timothy, we're finishing up 2 Timothy, and next I will hit Titus.

2 Timothy 4, verses 9-18. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God. Be diligent to come quickly.

For Damas has forsaken me, having loved the present world, and has departed for Thessalonica. Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Domitia, only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for the ministry.

And Techias I have sent to Ephesus. Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Traos when you come, and the books, especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm.

May the Lord repay him according to his works. You also must be aware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words. And at my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me.

May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, and the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for his heavenly kingdom.

To him be glory forever and ever. Amen. Let us pray.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as we are gathered here this evening to honor your name, to seek your blessing, God Almighty, to hear your truth and to grow thereby. May you guide the preaching to be edifying to the listeners, but above all to glorify your name and to bring forth the truth therein in this passage, our God, that we would see that there is an example here in Paul's life of godly responses to various hardships in his ministry. And may we too learn such proper responses.

We ask this in the blood of Jesus Christ. Amen. Here at the end of Paul's letter, a prison letter for the young pastor Timothy, we encounter the human side of the difficulties and the trials that we don't read much of elsewhere because he's often writing about the difficulties and trials of other people and other churches.

He is alone, as we see, so he petitions for support in the opening verses here in verses 9 and following. The apostle then describes in verses 14 to 16 a serious injustice done to his work in God's kingdom. And so he prays for justice and reply.

And at the end, in spite of all the hardship and obstacles, he praises the Jesus for deliverance through them at the time and also for future deliverance when kingdom of glory comes in full power and majesty there in verses 18 at the very end. So let's see in particular what this looks like, a godly response to hardship. First of all, we have a petition for support by Paul himself, verses 9 through 13, a petition for support.

Petition for Support

Be diligent to come to me quickly. He's writing to Timothy. He wants the man to attend to his needs.

As we know, Timothy is apparently one of his converts, a man he raised and trained up in the ministry. Paul mentored him. And he says, come quickly.

Paul is eager for his assistance. Paul is eager for companionship. He doesn't say those words, but clearly he goes to this list.

Look, this guy left me, Demas left me. These other men aren't here to support me. The implication, of course, being he's alone.

And that's especially highlighted there, right? In verse 16, but all forsake me in his trial before the Roman empire. For ourselves, for yourself, perhaps, you're most likely a leader somehow in your life and your family, as a mother or father, on your job, perhaps in your community and the like. You may need help and companionship as well.

You may feel out by yourself and alone. It doesn't mean you shouldn't ask for help. Paul the apostle himself asked for help.

This is a human thing to do. It's a Christian thing to do. In fact, the world was created so that we would help one another.

The vast majority of history, we recognize this. That's why we have communities and cities and countries. We know we need the support and interconnectedness to preserve our way of life, preserve our family and the like, and to get the support that we need.

Adam needed a helpmate and Eve. And so God gave him Eve. The family needs one another.

The family, in fact, uses children for a long, long time for labor at home. We've been blessed in the last 50 to 100 years, not to have to do that, to be sure, with technology. But nevertheless, the principle is the same, and it's true in the church of Jesus Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 12, it reminds us, right? We are one body, and all of us have a different responsibility and placement in the body that's an aid or assistance to one another. And Paul is recognizing this and saying, Timothy, I need your aid. He's not going to be so prideful and say, what do I need you? I'm an apostle.

I've got the Holy Spirit. I can do miracles. What more do I need? There are prideful people, unfortunately, today, and sometimes perhaps it's us, you, who thinks we don't need one another.

And that's not the case at all. If it's true for the apostle Paul, all the more is it true for us, that we need encouragement. We need different gifts for one another for the good of the church and God's kingdom.

Now, we have a list of names here where Paul unpacks and shows us a little bit of his life and how he is indeed by himself, without support and the like. So we have, first of all, in verse 10, for Demas has forsaken me, having loved the present world and has departed for Thessalonica. He was a companion and fellow laborer of Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome.

We read about that in Colossians 4.14, for example. It appears, however, that this love of the world afterwards mastered him, and he deserted the apostle, as you read here, one of his last letters, his second imprisonment, as we'll see. Having loved this present world.

It is a fact, it's a sad fact, people who are baptized, people who are members in the church, eventually fall away. They apostatize is the word we use. Paul sought his own ministry, showing us, again, that we live in a fallen world and that we cannot expect perfection in our churches or our leadership, that they will have people who follow and follow Jesus, but eventually fall away, sadly enough.

Next, we have Crescens, his unusual Greek names, right? Not much is known about him, perhaps a Christian from Rome. Tradition has it he's one of the 70 of the disciples that Christ sent out, but we really don't know. So Crescens was sent or is at Galatia.

It's only Demas, let's make it clear here, that had forsaken Paul. The others have departed. Demas for Thessalonica, Crescens departed, that's the implied verb for Galatia.

Titus departed, the implied verb for Dalmatia, et cetera. So the rest of the list here is not a list of bad people, but just people who are not with him anymore, presumably men who were good. He doesn't say anything bad about them.

Of course, we know about Titus, that's the next book we're going to get to. Titus for Dalmatia. Titus is one the Bible Dictionary Easton points out.

Honorable was with Paul and Barnabas and Titus, excuse me, at Antioch and accompanied them at the Council of Jerusalem, Titus said. Although his name nowhere occurs in the Acts of the Apostles, he appears to have been a Gentile and to have been chiefly engaged in ministering to Gentiles. For Paul sternly refused to have him circumcised, as you may recall in Acts, and as much as in his case, the cause of the gospel liberty was at stake.

Paul understood the situation and said, don't, we're not going to do this. With Paul and Timothy at Ephesus, that is Titus, once he was sent by Paul to Corinth for the purpose of getting the contributions, right, the support and the material aid for the churches of the church there on behalf of the poor saints at Jerusalem sent forward. We read about that in 2 Corinthians 8 and 12.

He rejoined the apostle, that is Titus, when he was at Macedonia and cheered him with the tidings he brought from Corinth. Read about that in 2 Corinthians 7. Titus, of course, is a bigger name. He's a minister, a co-pastor with Paul.

Paul's an apostle, yes, but Paul is also a minister or a pastor. And so with respect to that office, he is the same with these men. Another way of looking at it is they have the same responsibilities and authorities he has.

He has an additional authority, of course, as being an apostle and therefore additional responsibilities. Titus was engaged in the organization of the church at Crete, the island of Crete there in the Mediterranean. That's why children, you need to learn a little bit of geography.

I know you don't like some school stuff, but this is why it's helpful. The last notice of him is 2 Timothy here, 4.10, where we find him with Paul at Rome during a second imprisonment. From Rome he was sent to Damasia, no doubt on some important missionary errand.

We have no record of his death, and he is not mentioned in the book of Acts. God, in giving us a New Testament, didn't give us a genealogy or a list of all these names. It's a window into actual events that occurred.

That's what these letters are. It's like someone picked up our stuff 2,000 years from now and got a little picture and a glimpse into our life. But, of course, it's inspired.

So what we see there are things that we can learn and should learn and know and grow thereby. Next we have Luke and Mark. We already recognize those guys.

It's the same ones. We have the four Gospels, the written Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Again, they're just simply described as missing.

They're not there, so Paul is alone. Luke, the physician, of course, wrote the Gospel of Luke. Mark, he was the son of Mary, a woman apparently of some means and influence, and was probably born in Jerusalem, Euston's Bible dictionary here, where his mother resided, Acts chapter 12.

Of his mother we know nothing. He was a cousin of Barnabas. I didn't know that.

Colossians 4.10. It was his mother's house that Peter found many gathered together praying when he was released from prison. Right? That incident there in Acts. And it's probable that it was here that he was converted by Peter who calls him son.

So Mark was called Peter's son, 1 Peter 5.13. It is probable that the young man spoken of in Mark 14.51, if you recall, and 52 at the end of the Gospel there, it speaks of a certain young man. It's probably referring to himself there in the third person. He went with Paul to Barnabas on their first journey about 47 AD as their minister, but from some cause turned back when they reach Perga at Pamphylia in Acts 13.

Three years afterwards, a sharp contention arose between Paul and Barnabas. You may recall when I preached the book of Acts, Acts 15, because Paul would not take Mark with him. We don't know why.

He says, we have this conflict. Do you want to take Mark? I don't want to take Mark. So we're just going to go our separate ways.

Again, the apostles were human. They had these debates and disagreements with one another. He was that as Mark was evidently at length reconciled to the apostle for he was with him in his first imprisonment, we read in Colossians 4.10. At a later period, he was with Peter at Babylon, 1 Peter 5.13, then and for some centuries afterwards, one of the chief seats of Jewish learning, the city of Babylon.

And he was with Timothy at Ephesus when Paul wrote him during his second imprisonment. Again, it's right here. Second Timothy is considered his second imprisonment.

That's verse 11. Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him back for he is still useful for me in the ministry.

I have something for him to do. We don't know exactly what. There's a lot of tantalizing details, but not enough to tell us exactly what is going on, exactly how they are being used, but they are being used and Paul needs them.

Reminder again, Paul is an apostle still can't do everything by himself. And don't think you can do anything by yourself either. We need one another.

So next we have Tychicus. The name means chance. Clearly he was a pagan, that is a Gentile, an Asiatic Christian, a faithful minister in the Lord, Ephesians 6.21 and 22, who with Trophimus accompanied Paul on a part of the journey from Macedonia to Jerusalem.

We read in Acts 20. He is alluded to also in Colossians and Titus and elsewhere as having been with Paul at Rome. Once he sent him to Ephesus and probably for the purpose of building up and encouraging the church there.

So we see here how many were available in fact to assist the apostle. He had Demas. Demas left him and he had these other men.

One, Crescens, Titus, two, three, four, five. Paul had a very expansive ministry. He did many things.

He was able to travel many places because of this support. Some of them were messengers. Others as we know, Titus was a pastor.

Maybe some carried supplies while others did secretarial work or a combination of all these things. But whatever it was, they were all involved in some way. And Paul, the great apostle by the mercies of God, was given such men to assist him.

Now he specifies here in verse 13, some particulars that he wants also brought, not only humans, he'd like to have humans, of course, men. Bring Mark back, please. But also bring the cloak that I left with Karpus at Traos and the books, especially the parchments.

Traos, a city on the coast of Mycenae in the northwest of Asia Minor, it's the right Turkey area, named after ancient Troy, which was at some little distance from it, about four miles to the north of Troy. Karpus, the name common enough in Paul's day, signifies the word fruit. The word here indicates that Paul must have been very well acquainted with the family of Karpus.

The way it's written, he was probably one of his converts and the apostle must have lodged with him and also have been considerable confidence in him since he committed to his care, not only the comparatively valueless cloak, just get the cloak, you can get any cloak you want, but especially the priceless books and parchments, priceless books and parchments. We have mass production of these things. It is so cheap.

So when I was able to finish up my book on issues of homosexuality within the churches and conservative churches in particular, I can go to Amazon and they published it for me. Relatively cheap. I didn't have to go through a big name publisher and try to beg and plead for people to get my book or something.

I was able to do it. They couldn't do it back then. You had to find an expert scribe and someone who knew how to take, in the case of parchments, animal skin and things like that and dry it out just right so you could write on them.

They didn't have paper like we have paper today, nor the kind of binding and mass production that we have. So asking this man to get a book on a parchment is a serious thing back then, unlike today. Those are precious items that not many people had access to.

Of course, the cloak is there for warmth, perhaps a personal cloak of his. Parchments may be his own personal letters and notes and reflections upon his research and study in the word of God. Again, we don't know.

Paul, in other words, still needed the mundane things of life. Companionship as an apostle and physical, tangible things like a cloak and books. Think about it.

He didn't say, grab me a Bible, please. Perhaps some of these were Bibles. We don't know.

But he specifies books on one hand and parchments on the other. He's not so heavenly minded and so godly that all he has is a Bible. He certainly has other things.

His book's plural, parchment's plural. Multiple things. Multiple things in life that all of us have.

We don't just read the Bible all the time. Pastors don't even just read the Bible all the time, although in one sense, it's my job compared to you is to study and to study well. But I read other things in life, and that's OK.

It doesn't make me less of a Christian. That's the point. Paul still needed the mundane things of life.

Intellectual matters, as with the parchments, again, perhaps other commentaries and the like. We today need books. We even need phones.

We're using a phone right now. The transmit for Facebook, because it's relatively cheap for advertising and help people who can't get access to the church. These are wonderful, great blessings from the Lord.

Many earthly things, money, material goods, a strong back, young men. That's why we like to have young men in church, right? They can do the strong things. That's true, too.

But also their zeal and the like and the old man with their wisdom. But we need material things. God has set the church, has set you as believers, the kingdom of God, in a material world.

And that's why the churches have budgets. Again, you might take it for granted, but there are Christians who are confused about these things. You're going to run across them sometime in your life, especially your kids, who think somehow money just flows out of nowhere.

God will supply somehow. A bus will crash and money will fall on our lap. I heard all those stories when I was as charismatic as a young man.

They're always, they're frankly made up, I believe. The older I get, the more I hear these stories that are second and third hand. That's not how God works.

He works through ordinary means. Parchments, books, friends, contacts, letters, people who have experience and contacts other people don't have so they can help one another. And of course, the spiritual things, prayer, advice from the word of God and the like.

But here we can see clearly Paul lived in the world as we did. He wasn't so heavily minded that he didn't think that he needed material things and we should be the same as well. Prayer for justice, verses 14 through 16.

Prayer for Justice

So next we have another way in which Paul deals with hardships in his life. First he has a petition. He asks for help.

Presumably he gets it. Here he asks for help from God himself, a prayer for justice. Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm.

First thing to note, Paul wrote this down because it was so serious. He had to tell the young pastor. He didn't just let it slide, did he? I'm currently in my other committee researching these matters such as the Sermon on the Mount for our presbytery because the issues before us about natural law and what they call radical two kingdom touches everything in the Christian life including the Sermon on the Mount which talks about private revenge.

Private revenge. That's significant because public revenge or avenging, the same word in Romans 12 where Paul says what? The magistrate avenges in the name of God. He brings justice or he's supposed to bring justice.

And we have here then is Paul contradicting Jesus. Jesus says turn the other cheek. Walk the extra mile.

Writing it up. Clearly he's not walking the extra mile. He's remembering it and reminding someone else about it.

The simple answer is because he's a public officer. He's a pastor. He's an apostle.

And what Alexander the coppersmith did was assault and attack him that is verbally and spiritually publicly deriding his ministry in the name of Jesus and dragging him through the mud. So Paul responds with a man with authority. Jesus and Paul the apostle and the others did not denigrate the authority of the magistrate nor of the church.

The name Alexander means literally defender of men so it's almost ironic because he wasn't defending men but he was attacking a man, Paul. The name Alexander mentioned in the Paul. There's another mention of an Alexander in 1 Timothy as you recall we went through that who was a teacher of false things denying even the resurrection.

And then we have this text, Alexander the coppersmith. So the question is is it the same Alexander? This one he specifies coppersmith. The other two it doesn't.

Right? So Easton says in regard to this it should be remembered that all three of these Alexanders were resident at Ephesus. What are the odds of that? Right? And it is especially to be noticed that the fourth or that is he gives a list of four and five. I'll only give you three of these names.

These last two I mentioned here reside in the city at much the same time. Same city, same time frame for these three Alexanders. The interval between Paul's references to these two being not more than one or two years at most of the time elapsed between 1 Timothy, Alexander the one who preaches against the resurrection, and 2 Timothy the coppersmith.

It is therefore quite possible that these two Alexanders may be one and the same person. And that's not a definite to be sure but it seems pretty certain. What did he do? Alexander the coppersmith, clearly a man with influence and power.

He's got the job description. Apparently a man with means so he can get things done and push back. He didn't mean much harm.

He must be aware of him. Beware. Beware or be wary we would say of him for he has greatly resisted our words.

Of course Paul doesn't care about his words as such but the fact that his words of course are supposed to be Christ's words. He's preaching the gospel and bringing forth the glad tidings of Jesus Christ and of course teaching the resurrection. And Alexander resisted that.

What that looked like we don't know. If it's the same one in the book of Acts, he got his power connections and tried to kick Paul out of the city. That's the kind of influence some of these men had.

They used their power, they used their money and connections and tried to go after the church and go after the ministers and tear down the truth. Resist the truth of Jesus Christ either in total the entirety of it or in part of it like the resurrection as we read in 1 Timothy. Whatever the case was, it was pretty serious.

So serious Paul spends two or three sentences here talking about the man to young Timothy so that Timothy would be aware of who this guy is and therefore respond and understand what this man is up to. Whatever he could do or not do or avoid him perhaps as the case may be. Again I remind you here it was not a personal attack upon Paul.

Personal attacks we turn the other cheek. You have a neighbor, he's causing you trouble. Hey your fence you know look look what happened you broke my fence.

You can fight with him or just fix it and swallow the money. I've done that perhaps some of you have done that as well. It's not worth fighting them over.

They're not trying to take your life. It's a little bit of money whatever the case is turn the other cheek. Paul's not going to do that to matter of public matter to a public office and so Paul responds and responds with respect to justice.

What does he say about Alexander the coppersmith in the second part of verse 14? May the Lord repay him according to his works. May the Lord repay him according to his works. Do we really think Paul is saying he's doing good things so God bless him? It's implied isn't it? He's not saying he did anything good.

In fact he says the opposite in verse 15. You must beware of him. Watch out for him.

He's a dangerous man for he has greatly resisted our words. That's a bad thing. His works were bad.

Paul is asking for public justice from God that somehow in some way Alexander would be shut down for he is a danger to the church. He speaks as a man of course and we have to deal with things as men and women in this world and he's been harmful to Paul's ministry. I don't think that precludes Paul believing and desiring that he be repentant of course.

We should all have that. We could pray for the protection of church. We could pray for justice.

At the same time we can ask and desire the Spirit. We'll convert those who hate the church and try to tear it down. There in the Middle East, there in Africa, there in China, in North Korea where they come after Christians and hound them to underground and try to kill them.

They can pray for their souls as much as we can pray for their justice. You can do both. You have that in the Bible.

I preached on that. I won't do that here. Maybe I'll do that next time on the imprecatory psalms.

So he requests justice from God Almighty and so his response in other words is like a police officer or a judge. Do you want them to say, you know I'm a Christian so let me turn the other cheek. Just walk over me and steal and rob and rape.

Now last time I checked the only kind of Christians that do that are called Anabaptists historically and we are not that. We shouldn't preach that or believe that. That's an error and a misunderstanding of God's truth.

There is a time in which you should push back especially for the saving of souls and of bodies that is death and murder. He's alone here again in verse 16. At my first offense no one stood with me but all forsook me may it not be charged against them.

So we have an opposite here for Alexander. He prays to the Lord to repay him according to his works and here he pleads to the Lord not to bring this charge of something along the lines of betrayal. They forsook him.

That's a strong language isn't it? They forsook him. So what we have here is we go through this verse in particular verse 16. At my first offense that's the word apology.

Probably heard that in English we have apology and it sounds like you're making excuses and can't you just man up and admit that you did wrong. That's not what it means. That's not how it's used here.

It's a legal term often. Give a defense, a formal explanation and a protection of your good name before the court. That's what it often is and so his defense in the court here perhaps at his first public examination.

This is why we think there are two imprisonments by Paul because it happened here and we know it's happening again. He's in prison and this is the last time he's in jail and in chains. Timothy knew nothing of this.

That's why he writes to him. I was left alone at my defense here before the Roman court. So now Paul informs him and during his former imprisonment at Rome we read of there in Philippians 1 and 1, 1 and 1, 7 Timothy was with him.

So that's the first imprisonment, the first time he's not there to hear about his defense. This must have been, one commentator points out, therefore a second imprisonment. He must have been set free before the persecution in AD 64.

That's the Nero persecution where Rome was burning and Nero blamed the Christians and his response to the Christians that he gathered up was to burn them. You're going to burn Rome, I'm going to burn you. He used them as human candles.

He was a disgusting, terrible, wicked tyrant. It didn't happen to Paul of course. He survived so he must have been cleared of all charges but this time around as he's now in chains again in 2 Timothy and we know historically that's the last we hear of him.

He goes to Rome. We don't hear anything more at the end of Acts that he is likely sentenced for starting a new religion without Rome's authorization. That's what Christianity was.

It was able to survive through the book of Acts, I'll remind you, because the Roman Empire thought it was just a sect, an offshoot of Judaism and then they realized it's its own religion, that is Judaism became its own religion frankly. The Old Testament was Christianity before it became Christianity and they went off the wrong way actually but anyways that's probably likely the case. You're not allowed to do that back then so sadly here when he's before the judge, before Caesar or before probably Caesar's representative, he was left alone.

No one came to his aid. We don't know who they are. They forsook him but the Apostle's compassion is such that he says what? Bring no charge against them.

Don't hold it against them. I understand. He's saying as a father to children, I understand why you weren't standing with me.

Maybe he knew they were weak. Maybe he knew something that we don't know about them and their situation that they're new converts or something like that. We don't know but we know Paul does indeed show compassion here.

And then lastly, thirdly, the way Paul responds to hardships here is to praise God for deliverance. In Romans 17-18 he praises God for deliverance. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me so that the message might be preached fully through me and the Gentiles may hear it and the Lord will deliver me, verse 18, from evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom or the coming of the kingdom of God's glory.

Praise for Deliverance

He praises God, verse 17, even though people forsook Him. Can we do that if we're left alone? Do we still praise the Lord for being with us and preserving our soul especially? The Lord will never ever forget you nor leave you or abandon you. Although you may feel that way, brothers and sisters, that's your emotions talking, not the eyes of faith.

It's your fleshly eyes looking around saying no one's here to support me. I've got no help. It's just me against the world or me against Satan, me against my sin.

God is with you through Jesus and the power of the Spirit. You have His Word. You have His truth.

You must continue to pray and ask for His guidance and protection, and He will be with you in His time to be sure, but always He will be there. And He delivered Him and strengthened Him. So we read, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me so that the message might be preached.

This is part of how He was strengthened and how He was even delivered. He was delivered from being silent and not able to speak. He was able in this case to speak, to preach fully through me that the Gentiles might hear.

What Gentiles? He's using the court system to preach. If I'm going to go to Rome, I'm going to use every occasion to preach the good news of Jesus Christ to my audience. They want a defense.

They want to argue about theology. I'm here. I'm for it.

And He praises God for the opportunity even though with respect to His outward form, He's in chains. Spiritually, He is free in Jesus Christ. And He's free and bold and He preaches accordingly.

He is strengthened by God to resist and overcome temptation, strengthen Him so that He can preach mightily before any and all emperors, Caesars, judges, and the like. And so up to the point of the trial, He was free to preach the truth and He was happy no matter His physical or outward estate. And the deliverance therein by the power of God and preserved Him and will preserve Him for heaven.

That I was also delivered out of the mouth of the line we read at the end of verse 17. Commentators are divided on this. Either it's referring to Satan and his temptations.

Others think it's about Nero and his first persecution that I just mentioned in 64 AD. Whatever the case is, Paul rejoices before God for his providential protection. And we ought to do the same thing.

Again, not take it for granted when we are protected in our life and our travels. It happened to my family recently. They almost forgot to tell me.

They're on their way to the light. It's a double right lane. And the left or I don't know, double right lane, the left lane goes left.

That's it. Off the highway, off of 6th. The guy was coming this way to go on the 6th the wrong way.

I almost hit my family. And should praise God for that. Not take it for all.

I was just, wow, you're lucky. No, luck had nothing to do with it. Luck had nothing to do with it.

God preserves us. Body and soul, but especially the soul because the body will be taken eventually in His timing, but our soul will always be preserved and we'll be given a better body anyways. The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, verse 18.

Not only every evil work then and there and so far as people lying like Alexander Coppersmith and going against the truth, but especially I think he means ultimately when

Jesus Christ returns and all evil will be wiped away and God preserves him for the heavenly kingdom. That is the kingdom of glory when Jesus shall return. What we have here is Paul showing us a godly response to various difficulties in life.

We may be alone. You may be alone in your time of need. You may be unjustly judged by others, persecuted.

Yet in all these things, whether we get help or receive justice or not in our own timing and in our own impatience, Jesus our Lord is always with you and will recompense us with more grace. Trust in Him at all times, brothers and sisters, knowing that His glory and His grace is greater than your hardships. Let us pray.

Indeed, spirit of life and truth guide us back to this reality that we would see beyond our eyes and into the spiritual truth that you are indeed with us and you've given us aid as well, a human physical aid, as we read of Paul here in which he asked for help from Mark and others and Timothy, that we do the same thing, Lord. Sometimes the answer is right there before our face. Our God, may we have the courage and humility to reach out and to do what we can to get the help that you've offered us, Lord, but in all things always to rely upon you.

By the blood of Jesus we pray. Amen.