

Text: 2 Timothy 4:6-8,18-20

Theme: Lord Stands By

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our mediation this morning is the Epistle Lesson of Saint Paul's Second letter to Timothy, chapter four, verses six through eight and eighteen through twenty.

Boys and girls, I pray that you are doing well today. Have you ever needed someone to help you? Maybe you were working on a craft and could not use the scissors or glue all by yourself. An adult had to help you. Maybe you were helping set the table and the milk spilled all over, you would need help cleaning it up. Even as we get older, we need help. Moms and dads need to go to experts like doctors for help with sicknesses, help fixing houses and cars, even help walking as we get older. In our text for today, Saint Paul mentions that he needed help. He was being judged. No person came to help him. No one, except the Lord. How did the Lord help Paul? How does He continue to help us today? Ponder that question as you hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

Lord stands by

Saint Paul expected help during his defense at trial. That was one of the duties of the Patron under the Roman system of law. A patron was a wealthy benefactor who had multiple clients

under him. It was his duty to help his clients with whatever they needed. The patrons provided many types of support to their clients who, in turn, rendered services and loyalty to their patrons. Clients were expected to support their patrons in all matters, personal and political. As a result, it was possible for a wealthier patron to count on the votes of his many clients. Meanwhile, however, patrons were expected to provide a range of goods and services including food (which was often traded for cash) and legal counsel. Saint Paul expects this, and yet at his trial, no one helps him. Paul could very well have been angry or downcast but he states, “Let this not be held against them.” Paul makes intercession for the weakness of those whom he still believed to be Christians at heart, asking that his defection might not be charged to their account. No one showed up to help in Paul’s defense, yet Paul was not alone. The Lord stood by Paul, strengthening and supporting him in his defense.

In life: in midst of suffering, strengthens for Gospel Proclamation

The Lord stood by Paul, even in the midst of his suffering in his life. When he was forsaken by men, the Lord Himself was Paul’s patron. The Lord gave Paul the strength that he needed so that Paul could state “I have fought the fight. I have kept the faith.” The warfare for Christ against sin and unbelief had engaged the apostle ever since his conversion. It was a continual, hard, and fierce battle but he had persevered to the end, he had not given way one inch, he could claim the honor of the victor....No matter whether he had often stumbled by the way, no matter whether he had often been on the brink of losing

courage, the Lord had enabled him to endure to the end. He had kept the faith; he had not only been faithful in the work of his ministry, but through the grace of God, he had held his faith in his Redeemer secure against all attacks, in all persecution.

Just as the Lord protected and strengthened Paul so too, He protects and strengthens us in our lives. He gives us strength found not in our own strength or power. Rather, strength found in our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. That in Christ we find our help for every need. Christ has undergone every temptation, every struggle on our behalf and has already won for us the victory through His perfect life, suffering, death, and resurrection. By His temptation, Jesus has defeated Satan. Therefore, when we are under the assault of the devil, we can say, “You liar. The Lord rebuke you.” Jesus has taken every one of our sins to the cross. When we are under assault of our sins, we can say, “That sin has been forgiven, not because of myself or my works, but because of the precious blood of my Lord Jesus Christ, shed on the cross of Calvary for me.” This is the seventh petition of the Lord’s prayer at work in a practical way. From very evil work, from all the cunning, trickery, and power of Satan, from all the wickedness and persecution of the children of the world, out of all these evils the Lord will deliver and rescue His servants, so that, in the end, His enemies will be put to shame. Where the faith of Christ’s servants is rooted and grounded in the Word of God, in the power of the Lord, there all the attempts of their enemies to harm them must come to naught.

In death: At His appearing, will award crown of righteousness

And if temporal death seems to have gained the victory and separates the soul from the body, the believers again are the gainers, for their inheritance in heaven is thereby given to them, they are kept by the power of Jesus Christ, their Lord unto salvation. When the very thought of our mortality assaults us and we are staring the dark specter of death in the face. We can boldly say, “Death, you have no power. My Lord, has risen from the grave. He is no longer bound by you. He has passed through death to life immortal. Therefore, as a baptized child of God, have all gain in Christ my Lord.”

That we can confess with Paul, even if we die that is not the end. “the Righteous Judge at His appearing will give me the crown of righteousness.” It is a characteristic of every Christian’s faith that it trusts absolutely and implicitly in the promises of God, that the believer is altogether sure of his salvation. We are sure of our salvation because of His Holy Spirit at work in us, that Jesus, through His dying and rising, has redeemed us with His blood. That ascended to the right hand of the Father, He is with us always as our Patron on high, strengthening us in every trial and temptation to stand firm in the faith we have been given. Giving us His own body and blood for the strengthening of our faith. Until He comes with power and glory, and we, with all believers, receive the crown of righteousness and are with Him forever.

Therefore, we gladly join in the doxology of Saint Paul and give all honor and glory to Christ, who is God with the Father and the Holy Spirit, world without end.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.