Today our devotional is again from the introduction to 2 Timothy.

Nero is in a tight political spot. These new Christians an easy target for blame and punishment. Truth does not matter; only what is politically expedient for the Emperor. Paul sees his death coming.

So Paul is going to write important things in his last letter. All of his letters are important. They are full of theology, both systematic and practical is if is actually right to separate the two. Here we have Paul writing important things to an old friend. Timothy has been his assistant, his faithful co-worker, and trusted church authority and problem solver. Timothy is picked up in Acts 16 as helper. It is 50 AD and Timothy is probably 18 to 24 years old. Almost immediately Paul will add him to the greeting he gives in his letters indicating equal ministry if not equal authority.

Here Paul is remembering him in the most personal of terms; beloved son. This is not just a friendship, this is a communion between two faithful believers who have worked together, suffered together, and have been victorious together over at least 15 years. Now one of them is facing death. Paul longs to see his friend and beloved son for comfort in these final days.

Paul knows that Timothy is someone who can be called on to come. Paul and *Christians* are facing death, so to come to Paul now has some serious ramifications for Timothy. The minute he shows up at Paul’s cell with the cloak and books (4:13) he will be a marked man. How does Paul know that Timothy will not hesitate to come to him? Because Timothy is someone who serves. It does not matter if it is as a lowly baggage boy to start (Acts 16:1). It does not matter if he is just an assistant teacher (Acts 17:14.) He does not care if he is just a letter carrier (1 Cor. 4:17) or if he is trusted with the simmering problems in the large church at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:2-4), Timothy serves.

This is really the key to all of our Christian growth. We are called to serve. We do not serve only when everything is just right; when is everything all right in this life? We serve because service is necessary. We serve because others need our service. We serve because Jesus first served us and then called us to serve (Matt. 20:28.) Here Paul is calling on Timothy to serve when it may be his death. Of course, they have faced this possibility most every day in their ministry. So Paul knows that Timothy’s proven record will repeat itself here. He will serve even if it means death just as he learned from Paul and just as he has practiced.

It is good to remember what our commitment to Christ means. One, God holds us with the promise of life eternal (verse 1.) Two, that it is a sincere faith that is proven by our life in Christ (verse 5.) Three, that we are not held by anything we do, but by Christ alone and for His purpose (verses 9-10.) And finally that we have a hope in eternal life based Christ (verse 12.)