Today our devotional is again in 2 Timothy, this time a small section dedicated to a man named Onesiphorus (1:15-18). We talked yesterday about the faithfulness of Timothy gleaned from what Paul asks of him. Timothy was faithful. Today we get to hear from Paul a description of one of his friends.

First Paul is remind Timothy to retain the standard of the gospel preached. He then reminds him to guard the Gospel, as a treasure through the Holy Spirit who is his strength. In the middle of this admonition, Paul remembers the response of believers in the province of Asia of which Ephesus is the capitol. They all abandoned Paul when he was seized by Nero’s troops; they all- except Onesiphorus.

Onesiphorus only appears here. He probably lived in Ephesus or a nearby city. He is said to have a household, meaning a family, and some degree of stability. He may have been wealthy or just a common land owner or had some prospering trade. It would seem that his family shared in his faith and shared his support of the ministry of Paul.

Basically, we need to understand him as a normal citizen of Ephesus who had found Christ through the ministry of Paul. He would have come from an extremely pagan background and habits. Onesiphorus was such a changed man that he eagerly helped Paul. Let’s not skip the adverb “eagerly.” Sometime in Ephesus he helped Paul actively and often. It would not have been popular to change from the accepted pagan worship to this new Christianity. Onesiphorus was not ashamed to be boldly known as a Believer and to actively participate in ministry. But Onesiphorus goes beyond just helping Paul when he is around. He travels to Rome in the midst of his condemnation by Nero and “eagerly” helps.

Paul stops in the middle of his letter to Timothy to praise and offer a prayer for Onesiphorus. He is asking the Lord to remember Onesiphorus with mercy on “that day.” This is the same “that day” that Paul mentions is verse 12 and for himself. He trusts that God will keep all his works until the day of Jesus Christ’ return (1 Cor. 1:8.) Paul prays that God will also not forget the work of Onesiphorus.

No one realized the faithfulness of God more than Paul. He knew that God would never forget the least part of a good work we have done for Him. So why does he mention this here for a man we see doing nothing else in all of the New Testament? To point out that when we are called upon to be faithful, we are not alone. Even in the midst of many people’s failures in faithfulness, there are still others who eagerly shine in the darkness. Paul is not alone. Timothy is not alone. We are not alone.

If Paul can stop in the middle of his letter to praise the faithfulness of a brother we really know nothing about, then we should stop and take the time to thank those who are faithful in our lives. Just saying “thank you” can demonstrate the love of Christ to the body of believers here at Pine Ridge. It can mean so much to another believer and remind them they are not alone.

Thank you all

Pastor EA