Good morning,

There is a lot in 2 Timothy that I am skipping over this morning. We are going to the end where Paul reveals for us his heart in his last days. In summing up his letter he states in chapter 4 verse 9, “Make every effort to come to me soon.” In verse 21 in the middle of his greetings he again states, “Make every effort to come before winter…”

We sit in our homes, staring at our walls, doing puzzles, making recipes we haven’t in years, cleaning things that have needed it for even more years – and we miss one another. The church is a body. It is a gathering. It is you and me and everyone else joining together to be a church.

I know worship needs to be done in everything we do every day and always. But it also needs to be done together. That is why God commanded us to not neglect the gathering of ourselves together (Heb. 10:25.) That is why when most instructions or admonitions are given in the Epistles, it is to the church (Col 4:14.) In the passage we have for tomorrow Paul specifically charges Timothy to read Scriptures [these letters] and expound upon them *in the church*. We may not get to greet everyone or talk to everyone every Sunday, but the presence of us all in one place creates something higher than our individual worship. We need to be with one another. We long for that togetherness just as Paul longed for the comfort of his friend and child in the Lord, Timothy. We miss that corporate worship which just is the church.

I identify most with the soldier who packs up his things and leaves on deployment for six months, a year, two years? He leaves his family behind to adjust and to function without him. And I date back to the time when there could only be one phone call at Christmas and mail took two weeks to get home. We are blessed by technology. We live stream our services. We zoom smaller meetings so we can see each other’s faces and all share. But that is still not gathering.

This letter would have taken at least a month to go from Rome to Timothy at Ephesus. It would have taken him at least another month to get to Paul at Rome. So Paul writes and Paul waits. The worries of all the churches rest on him (2 Cor. 11:28), the worries about Timothy and his journey, and the reality of his own approaching death must worry him.

Did Timothy ever make it in time? We do not know. Hebrews 13:23 may indicate he did make it, was imprisoned himself, but released; Nero’s wrath being spent. Or Nero now dead. But we can imagine Timothy making it just a little while before Paul left this world. We can imagine the reunion that these two men must have had.

We can imagine their reunion, because we can imagine our rather short wait for reunion. So let us pray for a quick end to this quarantine when we can all join together in one place and worship as Pine Ridge Bible Church.

Until then – Pastor EA

When he returned it was great – but there was also major adjustment that needed to be made. Mom was used to making all the decisions without checking with anyone else. The children looked to her for instructions and would tend to ignore this man who had just come home. And the man didn’t know anybody’s schedules to help with.