

Paul and Timothy: Passing the Torch

Let's Get In Trouble Together

Rough Transcript

Patrick Morley

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Good morning. Morning. And welcome to Man in the Mirror Bible Study. If you're visiting with us for the first time, welcome. We're glad to have you here. We're here every Friday, except the day after Thanksgiving and between Christmas and New Year's. So today, we wrap up **Paul and Timothy: Passing The Torch**. We're going to be speaking today on the topic about getting in trouble together. **Let's Get in Trouble Together** is the name of the talk.

Steve Jobs very famously said that he wanted to leave a dent in the universe. We are believers, and what you and I are trying to do, we have a great cause, a noble cause ourselves, and that's to take the dent out of the universe. Steven Jobs approached John Sculley in the early 1980s when John Sculley was the president and CEO of Pepsi, to recruit him to come to Apple Computer when Jobs was 27 years of age. And he said to John Sculley, "Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugar water, or do you want to come with me and change the world?" And he did. He took his moonshot.

We're going to be looking back a little bit at Paul here, who took his moonshot, who took the dent out of the universe, who did something similar by recruiting a group of men who did change the world. In fact, if you think about the relationship between Adam and Moses, Adam is the first father of all men, but Noah is the first father of all men, too, right? Jesus Christ put together His band of brothers that changed the world. But if you think about the Gentile world, our world, the world we live in today, Paul is like Noah. Paul is the one who put together the team of men who really changed the world and created the world that you and I live in today. He took his moonshot. It was powerful.

TWO RELEVANT PROBLEMS TO SOLVE

The first thing I want us to look at, two relevant problems to solve in today's text. Here's the beginning of the text. We're going to be looking at verses 9-22, but 2 Timothy 4:9, Paul is ending the book of 2 Timothy, and he says to Timothy, he writes, "Do your best to come to me quickly. Do your best to come to me quickly."

So what's the situation? The situation is they took their moonshot, and they were very successful. But now it's towards the end of Paul's career. We know that he's sitting in a prison in Rome. It's probably his second imprisonment. The first time he is there for a couple years under house arrest, has his own house, but now he's probably in a jail cell, chains are mentioned, Caesar is the emperor, and tradition has it that not long after this letter is written, that Paul is beheaded by Nero. And he's in isolation.

And so, the two relevant problems that each of us face is that we all want our lives to count. We all want our lives to make a difference. We all want to do something that leaves the world a better place, while at the same time, not ending up without any friends when it's all over. I started a group called NCMM in 1996, National Coalition of Ministries Men. And at the first meeting, 25 invitations were sent out. All 25 leaders cleared their calendars and came. It was a very robust time in the men's movement.

We used to have annual meetings, quarterly meetings, all kinds of meetings, monthly phone calls. And I used to tell these men all the time. I said, "I don't want us to be successful on our mission, on our cause,

and then not end up having any friends at the end." And that's kind of like what... And so, I've spent my life trying to make sure that I just don't take the moonshot and succeed or fail with whatever it is, I don't want to just take the moonshot and end up with no friends.

And I think these are the two problems that this text addresses or helps us understand a little bit more. Number one is, how do you take the moonshot while at the same time, not ending up without any friends at the end? And Paul writes to Timothy, "Do your best to come to me quickly." So, after you finish all your wonderful plans, after you finish your moonshot, after you try to leave a dent in the universe or take it out, after you finish your noble cause, after you try to make a difference, after you do something significant with your life, and by the way, that's what we're called to do is to try to make a difference. But we don't want to end up without any friends at the end. And so, I'm going to go ahead and give you the **Big Idea** for the day. **Make friends, not just coworkers.** Make friends, not just coworkers.

IT WILL GET MESSY

However, as you do this, it will get messy. It will get messy. John Doerr is thought by many to be the single greatest venture capitalist of all time, ran Kleiner Perkins, the VC company, Kleiner Perkins.

John Doerr was interviewed one time by Fast Company magazine, and he was asked this question, "If you were a 28-year old engineer, and you got invited down to the house of pancakes after work one night to discuss a new business idea, a new way to leave a dent in the universe, how would you decide whether or not to join the group, to be part of the team, to be part of the team that wanted to change the world?" And he said something very interesting. He said, "Well, after you've talked about it for hours, you're on your 11th cup of coffee and it's midnight, what you should do is you should take a look around the room and ask yourself, 'Are these the people that I want to get in trouble with for the next 5, 10 or 15 years?' Because if you go forward, that's exactly what's going to happen. It's going to be messy."

I remember when Brett Clemmer became the president and CEO of Man in the Mirror. The first thing I suggested to Brett, or actually a little bit more than a suggestion, but suggested to Brett is that, "Build your team. That's the first thing I want you to do, is I want you to build your team." I've started 59 companies and partnerships, so I know a little bit about this, and I know that it takes about five years to figure out where the bathrooms are. Anytime you start something new, it just takes about five years to figure out where the bathrooms are. And so, you need a team of people to do it. You can't do things by yourself, you need a team. You need different expertise, you need different temperaments, you need different skill sets, you need different networks of relationships, all these things working together. You need to have a team, but it's going to be messy.

And so, we're going to take a look now at how messy it got for Paul. Okay? He says to Timothy, he's made a friend out of Timothy, not just a coworker. And he said to Tim, "Come to me quickly." And then goes on, and he explains the relationships, or talks about many of the relationships that he's had over the years. He said, "For Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica."

All right? Notice that I put the names of different people, I've highlighted them in yellow, and I put the names of the different geographical locations here in blue, just to give you a sense of the breadth of what was going on here. So like I said, it's going to get messy. So you've got one guy, he loved this world, and he took off. "Crescens has gone to Galatia." This is the only mention of Crescens in the whole Bible. We don't know anything else about him. And then, "Titus to Dalmatia." Now, Titus is another young spiritual son like Timothy. There's another letter to Titus, where Paul calls Titus his spiritual son. "Only Luke is with me." Luke is a physician. Some people think that Luke may have been an attending physician that traveled with Paul to help Paul with some of his physical ailments. We don't know.

"Get Mark and bring him with you, because he's helpful to me and my ministry." You remember, Mark is the one that Paul split with. There was a dispute with Barnabas. Well, Paul and Barnabas split over Mark, because Mark had kind of let Paul down at one point, or at least Paul thought he did. But they obviously had become friends and not just coworkers. And then, "I sent Tychicus to Ephesus." Tychicus is a very interesting person. He's only mentioned a few times, but he seems to be the guy you call on to go and plow new ground, to break things open.

"And then when you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus," another person that's only met you one time," at Troas and my scrolls, especially the parchments." It's kind of a tender, sort of personal... These are probably things that brought comfort to Paul. Well, a cloak, you needed a cloak in those days just for shelter and then physical warmth, but it's probably something that had some sentimental meaning to him as well. But then his scrolls and especially the parchment, so he had these texts that were important to him that he had left for safe keeping. And now, he's in prison and he's probably anticipating his death.

It's interesting, because Paul would know that would take three or four months before Timothy could make the trip to see him. It's not like today, where you just hop on a plane or hop on Zoom and say hello, so it was going to be a while. So Paul was not anticipating an imminent death, but he knew the end was near, but he wanted some comfort things.

And then Alexander, just another illustration of how messy relationships are with coworkers can get. "Alexander, the metal worker, did a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he's done. You two should be on your guard against him because he strongly opposed our message." So Alexander, I think was with him at one time and then wasn't.

"At my first defense," this was when he was under the house arrest for two years, "no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me, everyone deserted me." Now, in literature, when you see the word everyone or everything or always or every time, it never really actually means that, so it doesn't mean everyone deserted him. And we know that's true, because we know that Onesiphorus did come and greet him, so it wasn't everybody. But generally speaking, people scattered just like they scattered at the arrest of Jesus. "May it not be held against them." Again, just another evidence of how messy it could get in these kinds of relationships when you're trying to change the world.

"But the Lord," and I put "the Lord" in yellow because the Lord is a person, right, "stood at my side and He gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it." So the Word of God, this team had come together. Paul had recruited this team of people to go and change the world, to make a difference, to leave a dent, a noble cause. And the idea was very clear that, "We want to proclaim the gospel to all the Gentiles."

"And I was delivered from the lion's mouth." And so, this would be from the authorities. "The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen." So Paul was resolute at the end, that God would take care of him, that God would rescue him. But he said to Timothy, "Please come to me quickly, because I'm a human man, and I don't want to just sit in this cell all alone by myself." Although Luke was with him. "I want to have some friends around me as well."

And so, the final part of the book are just some greetings that Paul wanted to give, again to these coworkers of his who had become dear friends. "Greet Priscilla and Aquila." You probably have heard of them before in the household of Onesiphorus. "Erastus stayed in Corinth." Erastus had been the city manager of Rome, so kind of a big deal in Rome. So he would have been a Gentile. "And I left Trophimus sick in Miletus." And Trophimus was also a Greek. "Do your best to come here before winter. Eubulus greets you and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the other brothers and sisters. The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all."

And so, just then you see all these different people. I didn't count them up, and by the way, there are many others that were involved as well, that Paul didn't happen to mention in this particular letter. So he was not trying to create a comprehensive list of all the friends, but just the people that had come to his mind as he was writing this letter who were not only coworkers but friends.

And so, just a few takeaways here from this. There is probably nothing revolutionary, but good reminders for all of us. First of all, these men were no different from us. They were all wanting to make a difference, they were all hard at it. And Paul had the wisdom to put this team together with all these different skill sets. And at the end of the day, they were friends who united around a common cause.

And most of our friendships, if you think about it, we unite around a common cause. By the way, this is one step down from family, family first, and then your friends and your cause. So we would never be promoting that we would unite around a common cause that would be more important than your own family. Your first discipleship ministry is your family. Until you have discipled your family, and if you can't, you can't. But if you have the opportunity to disciple your family, that comes first and then other people.

And then another takeaway, you could see from the text, that friendships are messy. This guy Demas just didn't work out, and Alexander was really a mess. Friendships can be disappointing, so, you can imagine how Paul would have felt. You've felt this way, too. I know I've felt this way.

I won't go into too much detail on it, but I do have one story. I've told it here before, I'm sure, but I had a business deal that had gone sideways. It was my fault, but I had to go see the investor up in the Northeast. And I called my three best friends on the phone. I said, "I have this meeting coming up. And if it doesn't go well, I'm probably going to be forced into bankruptcy. If it goes well, I'll have other problems to figure out, but things will probably work out. And they said, "Oh yeah. I feel it." Of course, they had also known about this problem developing for a year or so, but this was the moment of truth. So I called them, all three of them, on the telephone and asked them if they would pray for me as I went to this meeting the next couple days.

So I flew up to the Northeast, had the meeting, everything worked out fine. I came back. A day or two go by, I hadn't heard from any of my friends. A week goes by, I haven't heard from my three best friends. 10 days go by, I haven't heard from any of my three best friends. So I called each of them on the phone. I said, "I know that you've been very concerned about whether or not my life has come to an end, so I wanted to give you a call and let you know that the meeting went well."

"Oh, yeah. I've been meaning to call you." So we've all had these kinds of disappointments, right? And friendships can be disappointing, but friendships are worth it. Those three men remained not just co-laborers in ministry, but deep, deep friends. They were disappointing, but worth it.

And then, friends are not acquaintances. So, I remember early in my career, telling a friend, a guy I was in a small group with. I said, "I've got 50 friends." He said, "No you don't." I said, "What are you talking about? I've got 50 friends." He said, "No, you don't." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, you might have 50 acquaintances, but there's no way that you can have 50 friends. It's just not possible. It's not humanly possible to have deep friendships with that many men."

So just to keep in mind that... Sometimes I've even had people that I've met once or twice that are professional colleagues, maybe somebody who's written a book, like I've written a book and maybe we endorsed each other's books. This has actually happened. And it's gotten back to me that somebody said that they should contact me. He said, "Yeah. So and so said I should contact you because you're a really good friend of his." "Well, honestly, I only met him one time, so we're really, really good acquaintances, that's what we really are."

And then, friendships are intentional. We see that Paul was very intentional. He gave them assignments, but then he also spent time with them. There are other things that have been said in the series about

this, but if you want to have friendships, you have to be intentional. You have to make that phone call when you've been disappointed and clear the air about what has happened. And then, friendships require effort. All these things are pretty obvious. The Big Idea today, just make friends, not just coworkers. Make friends, not just coworkers.

WHAT WILL YOU WRITE ABOUT, AND TO WHOM?

And the final thing I want us to talk about too, what will you write about and to whom? So Paul is writing this letter, and to whom is he writing it? He's writing this letter, "Come to me quickly." He's got people that he can write to. What will you end up writing your letter about at the end of your life, and to whom are you going to write it? Are you going to just have coworkers, or are you going to have friends that you can write about? Are you're going to have somebody in your life that you can say, "Come to me quickly." Are you going to have somebody like that? It requires effort. You have to be intentional about it. It'll be messy, but it will be worth it.

We have a man who used to be a leader at this Bible study named Jim Walton. Some of you might remember Jim. Jim was my first mentor after I became a Christian. They invited me to become a member of the finance committee at our church. The first year, went to the finance committee meeting and it was chaos. There were like 30 items on the budget. We started at 7:30, we went home at 11:30 only having settled on three of the 30 line items on the budget. It was horrible.

The next year, Jim Walton was the new chairman. He walked into the meeting and presented a draft budget. In other words, he had made an estimate for each of the 30 items. And so, we started the meeting at 7:30, and so what we talked about for an hour is whether we should go \$100 to the left or \$1,000 to the right, and we adjourned the meeting at 8:30, having approved the budget, because he walked into the meeting with a draft instead of a blank sheet of paper. A very powerful lesson, which I've used for the rest of my career.

Jim took an interest in me. I was not just a coworker with him. He wanted to be my friend. Now, I didn't really understand this as a young man. That's not the way I grew up. He befriended me. He didn't want to just be a coworker, he wanted to be my friend. And so, he included me in things. And I thought it was pretty astonishing that when we started the Bible study, that he wanted to be part of the Bible study, because he wanted to be a friend. He just didn't want to just be a co-committee member, a co-worker, a co-laborer, he wanted to be a friend. And so, it seemed natural to me that if he wanted to be part of the Bible study, that it'd be good for him to be a leader, too.

And so anyway, Jim and I were friends, and we were co-laborers, coworkers together. And we walked through so many different challenges over the years, as we were trying to figure out, how could we straighten out the dent among the men in this community? How could we find the guys who needed the gospel of Jesus in this community, and then invite them into a relationship where they could know Jesus and then also grow in Jesus, and then go serve Jesus, or like we've talked about last week, not "grow, go," but "called, equipped, and sent," the process of making discipleships.

We engaged together in a mission. We took our moonshot, and there are thousands of men in this community that because Jim and me and others of you and others who have come and gone, joined together in this moonshot to change the landscape of Orlando, and continue to do that, and now we have a whole new group of workers together. But I'm just saying, let's not just be coworkers, let's be friends. Let's figure out how to be not just coworkers, let's be friends.

It happened like this. Jim Walton and his wife celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and had a party over here at Calvary Assembly Church, that's where it was hosted. My wife and I were invited to come, and touched and honored to be invited to attend. Jim said some very lovely things about his wife, Thelma. Thelma said some very lovely things about her husband, Jim. They have four children who thought enough of their mother and father that they flew in from around the country, and each of the

four children said some lovely things about their mother and father. The pastor of the church thought enough of Jim that he was willing to take time out of his busy schedule and come to the party. And the pastor of the church said some wonderful things about Jim and his wife.

And then, I looked around the room and there were about 40 or 50 of us in the room. And I thought to myself as I was driving home that evening, I said, "What more could a man want than to have a spouse who is willing to say something nice about you, to have children who loved you enough that they'd be willing to fly in for a celebration like that, a pastor that you had been and participated enough in the life of the church that he'd be willing to say some nice things about you, and then to have maybe 40 or 50 friends hanging around?" What a wonderful achievement.

And so, what will you write about and to whom? Who will be those people that are with you at the end? After you've taken your moonshot, after you've pursued your noble cause, who is going to be there with you? The Big Idea today, make friends, not just coworkers.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for the series that we've been through, looking at the life of Paul and Timothy and the spiritual father relationship, spiritual son relationship they had. And then, just down here at the end of it all, the value of being friends and not just coworkers, and to see this network of men who literally shape the world we live in, and the different relationships they had. And even though it was messy, it really did change the world. Help us to be in our generation, men like these men were for their generation. And we ask this in Jesus' name, amen.