

# “CARRY ON THE WORK”

## II TIMOTHY 4:19-22

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### INTRODUCTION

Paul was departing; but he left these instructions for Timothy after he is gone.

Paul is gone. Timothy is gone. All of the persons mentioned here are gone. Many of our believing loved ones are gone.

Just yesterday we celebrated the home-going of Carole Bernick. Last week that of Joy Downs.

We are left here. What are we to do? Why am I here? I'll tell you why—to **carry on the work!**

#### I. FAITHFUL WORKERS IN EPHEBUS (19)

##### A. Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila

Acts 18:2-3

Acts 18:18-19, 26

Rom. 16:3, 5

Here in Ephesus.

##### B. The household of Onesiphorus

II Tim. 1:16-18

#### II. FAITHFUL WORKERS IN OTHER PLACES (20)

##### A. Erastus remained at Corinth.

1. Rom. 16:23—He was a believer and the city treasurer of Corinth [from which city Paul wrote Romans] who joined Paul in his greetings to the Roman church. Earle calls him “the city’s director of public works” (The word means “house steward, manager”).

2. Acts 19:22—Erastus was sent ahead from Ephesus with Timothy into Macedonia, on the way toward Corinth (cf. I Cor. 16:10—Timothy sent to Corinth and Erastus was with Timothy), preceding the Apostle Paul.

3. Here Erastus remained at Corinth.

I am convinced that all three refer to the same man:

- In Acts 19:22 Erastus is sent via Macedonia, but the destination was Corinth (I Cor. 16:10). Rom. 16:23 calls him the treasurer of that same city.
- Both Rom. 16:23 and II Tim. 4:20 show the connection of Erastus with **Corinth**—as the treasurer and here as remaining in that city.
- On Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey, one of Paul’s objectives was to collect funds for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Erastus, being an expert in handling funds from his experience as treasurer in Corinth, would be an excellent man to travel with Timothy.
- Why could not such a man who at times traveled with Paul as a “financial expert” also become city-treasurer of Corinth? It is possible that he remained treasurer for a limited time—perhaps for only one year.
- The office of treasurer was not limited to persons of prominence; Even a slave or a freedman could assume the office.

##### B. Trophimus Paul left sick at Miletus.

Trophimus: Acts 20:4 and 21:29

Both of these men, mentioned in Acts during Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey in close proximity (19:22 & 20:4), had obviously met and spent time with Timothy, who accompanied Paul on this journey for much of the way. Thus Paul mentions them here without further description because Timothy knew them well. In fact, Erastus was sent with

Timothy to Macedonia (Acts 19:22), and Trophimus likewise on the return journey accompanied Timothy and Paul (Acts 20:4-5). We do not know the circumstances behind Paul's leaving him there—possibly Paul was apprehended and was taken to Rome against his will and had no choice about leaving Trophimus there. Paul may have left Trophimus there on his return from Crete; Paul, on his way back from Spain, may have traveled east [maybe going through Crete], then north, then west by way of Miletus [leaving Trophimus], Troas, Corinth [leaving Erastus], on toward Rome.

Paul on this occasion was unable to heal Trophimus—the Lord did not give him the authority or the power to do so here. God is sovereign in such matters, and even great men of God get sick—and yes, even die! For example, Elisha (II Kings 13:14), Hezekiah (II K. 20:1), Paul (Gal. 4:13), Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-27), Timothy (I Tim. 5:23), and Trophimus (II Tim. 4:20). “With His stripes we are healed” does not guarantee immunity from sickness and death, even though many times God does choose to heal in answer to prayer (James 5:14-15). When God chooses to allow his servants to die—as Paul was about to do—theirs is the comfort of such passages as Ps. 23; 27:42; John 14:1-3; Rom. 8:35-39; Phil. 4:4-7; II Tim. 4:6-8; Heb. 4:16; 12:6, to mention only a few among many references. The New Testament is careful not to attribute excessive powers to the Apostles; they were after all men, and partook of human frailties.

### III. FAITHFUL WORKERS IN ROME (21)

#### A. The need to come before winter (cf. v. 9)

- Paul's impending trial
- The cloak
- The books
- Mark as a helper; Timothy as helper and associate
- The closing of the shipping lanes—completely closed from November 10-March 10

#### B. The unknown Believers in Rome (21b)

Eubulus

Pudens

Linus [unlikely the first Roman bishop]

Claudia

All the brothers

### IV. THE GOD WHO SUSTAINS THE FAITHFUL SERVANT (22)

#### A. The Lord's **personal presence** with Timothy's spirit (“you”—sg.); cf. I Tim. 6:21; Tit. 3:15—Grace be with you.

#### B. Grace be with **all the believers** in Ephesus (“you” plural).

### CONCLUSION

Since II Timothy is the last of Paul's epistles, these are the last words written by the Apostle which have survived.

Did Timothy and Mark reach Paul before the end? We cannot know for certain. Tradition does tell us that Paul was found guilty at Nero's court and sentenced to die by beheading. He was likely taken outside the city and executed.

Robertson is surely correct when he states:

**“Our hero, we may be sure, met the end nobly. He is already more than conqueror in Christ who is by his side and who will welcome him to heaven and give him his crown. Luke, Timothy, Mark will do all that mortal hands can do to cheer the heart of Paul with human comfort. He already had the comfort of Christ in full measure” (634).**

Paul was gone, but Timothy and others carry on the work. Wiersbe refers to a remark by John Wesley: “God buries His workmen, but His work goes on.” We also must help carry on the work and be faithful. Future generations must hear the gospel of Christ, be saved, and be disciple for growth. **What is Timothy—and what are we—to do?**

See II Timothy 4:1-8