

2 Timothy Lesson 9 Articles

We know so little about Luke. The Bible contains only three references to him (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24), but we can sketch a glimpse of the man whom God used to write more words of the New Testament than anyone else.

Luke was probably a Greek physician and often traveled with Paul (Col. 4:14). Tradition calls him a native of Antioch and says he died unmarried and childless at the age of eighty-four. He wrote Luke and Acts to fellow Gentiles, reassuring them that Christ came for all mankind. Luke's Gospel emphasizes the manhood of Jesus in all its perfection and stresses the plight of women, children, and the poor, sick, and outcast.

Luke labored without regard to himself or the persecution that raged around him. He did so by dying to self and living for the Lord, whom he came to love more and more through his careful interviews.¹

Paul endured prison alone, where he felt deeply isolated. In the last months of his life, he gave us the wonderful secret of what to do in times of intense loneliness.

First, he recognized the presence of God. He wrote that the Lord stood with him (2 Tim. 4:17). Paul couldn't change his situation, but in that lonely, damp prison cell, he called to mind that One remained with him.

Second, Paul dealt with loneliness by recalling how God faithfully strengthened him (2 Tim. 4:17). The Lord supported Paul, infusing him with strength. The apostle knew that no one could take his life without God's permission. We often quote Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Paul sat in jail when he wrote that verse also.

Third, Paul combated his feelings of loneliness by reminding himself that he had the awesome privilege of fulfilling God's purpose for his life. What incredible encouragement that is—to know we are part of God's providential plan!

Still, in his loneliness, Paul treasured his friends. He wrote that only Luke remained with him and that he wanted Timothy and Mark to join him. He mentioned four people by name who comforted him: Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia (2 Tim. 4:21). We know nothing about those four people, other than they stuck with the apostle Paul. That has to be one of the greatest compliments they could have been paid.

Finally, Paul asked Timothy to bring some books with him, "especially the parchments" (2 Tim. 4:13). The books may have been the Gospels, and the parchments may have been the Hebrew Scriptures. Knowing the apostle Paul, we may assume that he hungered for copies of the Scriptures. In an hour of great loneliness, the Word of God brings great comfort. ²

The Christian is a citizen of two worlds. Millions know and love only this world—with its loves and joys, its hates and pleasures. And while the Christian also lives in this world, and loves its joys and pleasures, he also knows and loves even more that other eternal world to which Christ is drawing him ever closer with each day. Demas had forgotten that, and had allowed the glamour of this world to seduce him from his love for Christ.³

¹ ² Stanley, C. F. (2005). *The Charles F. Stanley life principles Bible: New King James Version* (2 Ti 4:11). Nashville, TN: Nelson Bibles.

³ Williams, P. (2007). *Opening up 2 Timothy* (p. 105). Leominster: Day One Publications.