

The background features a light green gradient with several overlapping green circles of varying sizes and thicknesses. Two thin blue lines cross the page diagonally, one from the top-left to the bottom-right, and another from the top-right to the bottom-left. The entire design is enclosed in a thin grey border with small corner markers.

Finding Treasures In Our Trials

New Bethel Progressive Missionary Baptist
Church

Winning Souls for Christ, One Sinner at a Time

Bible Study
2 Timothy 4:9-18

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Introduction: Whether we are young or older, we all enjoy finding treasures. This is one of the reasons the Easter Egg Hunt is so popular. Children enjoy going around finding treasures that are hidden. It is easy to look and find treasures in a good situation like the Egg Hunt. *But, do we look for treasures when things (circumstances) are not so good?* The Bible promises that for a Christian this is possible. We can find treasures in our trials (2 Corinthians 1:4) (1 Peter 5:10). Today we are going to read a passage from the life of Apostle Paul. Here we will see the treasures he found in the midst of his trials. Let's learn from his mind set and apply it to our lives.

Verses 9-13

The Heart's Desire

Here we see Paul's desires. Paul longed to see his dear (beloved) co-worker, Timothy. Paul was facing many trials. This letter was written by Paul to Timothy while the Apostle was in a Roman prison. Unlike his first imprisonment, when he expected to be released, this time Paul had no such hope. That is why he is asking Timothy to come quickly (vs. 9). Paul knew his days were numbered. *Have we ever felt hopeless like Paul?* The text tells us that Paul was alone except for Luke. *When was the last time we felt alone?* Demas, who was one of Paul's close associates, had left him (Colossians 4:14). Verse 10 tells us that Demas had become distracted by the world ("loved this present world") (Matthew 6:24). **We may disapprove of Demas' behavior, but have we ever forsaken or not supported our brothers and sisters in the church, family or at work?** When we hear others gossip about fellow Christian(s) do we stand up for them, stay quiet or give our two cents in support of the gossiper. Even though Paul was alone and in prison, he is able to find treasure. *What was he treasuring?* He treasured Mark's companionship and asks Timothy to bring him (Mark). He says that Mark "is profitable to me for the ministry." Remember, Paul had an issue with Mark in the past (Acts 15:37-39). *Do we hold on to past hurts or harms done to us by others?* We are told that Paul desires to have "the books" and the "parchments." The books could be the Old Testament and the parchments are extremely expensive sheets, which could have been copies of letters he had written or blank sheets to write letters on. In other words, during these difficult times, we find Paul treasuring the Word of God and the Work of God. *What do we desire when we are going through a difficult time?*

Verses 14-16

The Harm Done

These verses show us the harm done to the Apostle by Alexander. *How would we describe Paul's situation based on these verses?* Paul was in a bad situation. It is believed Alexander opposed Paul's teaching and spread his own false doctrine. He may have been instrumental in Paul's arrest and may even have borne false witness against him. What does the phrase "first defense" mean? The Roman legal system allowed two hearings for a person. The first to determine/establish a charge and whether there was a viable case. The second one was to determine the actual sentence of guilty or not guilty. Here Paul is refereeing to the first trial. So Paul is stating that at his first trial all forsook him. *How does he respond to this?* Paul left the vengeance or revenge to God (**Romans 12:19**). Paul realized that one day everyone will have to give account of their actions (**Romans 14:12**). Like others in the Bible, Paul forgave others (**1 Peter 3:9**). Can God get the same response from us? Even though Paul was selected by God, he still had opposition. So, when we face trials let's not wonder "why me". The Bible promises problems and pains. All of this is a part of life (**James 1:2-4**). Greatness is not measured by what a man or woman accomplishes, but by the opposition he or she has overcome to reach his goals.

Verses 17-18

The Hope Displayed

These verses show Paul's hope. His words convey to us that the Lord stood by him, strengthened him when others left him. His (negative) situation gave him the opportunity to preach before the Roman court who was unsaved. In this way he could preach the Gospel to all the gentiles and kings just as God had foretold ("that all Gentiles might hear") (**Acts 9:15**). In spite of the dangers and being alone, how could Paul display such hope? This was because he kept his eyes on the Lord and only *glanced* (not stared/focused) at his problems (**Isaiah 26:3-4**). At times we may get bogged down by our circumstances because we are looking at our difficulties and glancing at Christ (**Hebrews 12:1-2**). Paul's focusing on the Lord allowed him to find his treasures. *What are our treasures?* He knew that God was in control, always present, never changing and ever loving towards him (**Jeremiah 32:27**) (**Hebrews 13:5**) (**Romans 8:38-39**). Our joy can't be based on our circumstances. We need to be happy when our circumstances don't suit us and not live a yo-yo life, which moves according to our situation. During tough times, we need to go more often to the throne (*of God*) than to the phone. Remember, God plus no one else is more than enough. The level of stability we live with everyday does more (in other's lives) than our quoting scriptures to them. Remember, that we have special grace for every situation in our lives (**2 Corinthians 12:9**).