

Don't Be A Demas!

Ponder: What went wrong with Demas? Could I do the same?

Scripture: "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world . . ." (2 Timothy 4:10a, NKJV).

Demas wasn't always a bad guy. About A.D. 61, he was with Paul during his first Roman imprisonment. From there, he sent greetings as Paul wrote Colossians (4:14); and the apostle acknowledged him as a fellow-laborer in Philemon 24. By A.D. 67-68, during Paul's second Roman imprisonment, the picture had changed. Demas had forsaken Paul, having loved this present world.

"Forsake" is a powerful word! It means to abandon someone, leaving them in dire straits. And were Paul's straits ever dire! Whereas his first imprisonment had been what we call house arrest, he was now in a filthy dungeon awaiting execution. Two of Paul's other friends had gone different directions, probably to continue in the Lord's work (4:10b); Paul does not say they abandoned him. But Demas did. Not to make light of Paul's situation, but think of the Kenny Rogers song, "You picked a fine time to leave me, Lucille!" If ever Paul needed Demas, surely this was the time. So why would Demas bail out on him now, after previously being the apostle's fellow-laborer?

Paul said Demas "loved this present world." World doesn't refer to the material creation, but to the spiritual and moral characteristics of that age. We can't say with certainty exactly what motivated Demas, but a couple of possibilities come to mind:

He may have feared that association with Paul would bring trouble from the Roman government. Perhaps Demas had forgotten the words of Jesus: "Whoever decides to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:35).

More people seem to think that greed motivated Demas. If so, he had forgotten the Lord's words in the very next verse: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

Whether it is due to fear, greed, or some other motive, nothing the world offers is worth turning away from faithfulness to Christ. Don't be a Demas!