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This week we finished our series in 2 Timothy as Paul signed off the letter, urging Timothy to help with various practical needs.

We began the sermon by thinking about the incredible connectedness of our society with the decreasing in size global village, the ability to speak to and see people from all over the world and yet statistics showing us that we're more lonely than we've ever been.

We were made, not to be islands (John Donne) , but to be community - to be interdependent.

In this final chapter of the letter we see something of Paul's fragility and need of others in a variety of ways.

We need one another

Relational needs. This is a chapter about people. People whom Paul has invested in & sent out, people whom he wants Timothy to greet in the Lord, but also people who seem to have wandered off (definitely from him, possibly from the Lord). As Paul is nearing the end he outlines how very alone he felt (humanly) as he was deserted by friends. He longs that it may not be held against them (v16), whilst wanting Alexander to pay for his active gospel opposition.

Ministry needs. One intriguing thing in this chapter is that Paul wants Mark to be brought to him. It's ingraining for 2 reasons: a) because initially he fell out with Mark but that seems to be in the past, but b) it's secondly intriguing because his ministry is nearly up. Is Paul wanting Mark to continue his ministry there? Is he planning ahead for the future when he's gone?

Physical needs. Again Paul's frailty is seen in his need of a cloak and of his scrolls. His cloak presumably because he's cold but his scrolls again are interesting as he has (presumably) little time to read them! Perhaps again they are to pass onto others.

We need our God

This isn't just a chapter about the reality of our need of community, this is a chapter about how we need God to help and strengthen us. In v16-18 we see that even though Paul was humanly alone, he was not actually alone. God was with him strengthening him and

empowering him. The actual episode Paul is talking of is not completely clear, however it is likely he was up before Emperor Nero (and crowds) in Rome - the highest court in the land. Which means as he is strengthened by God to preach the word (out of season) the gentiles who have gathered hear and pass on the message to those at home - the message ripples out from them.

Here are a few questions to start discussion off - as always, feel free to adapt for your group

Has anyone started 1 in 21?!

And because Paul was rescued here, so he looks ahead and has hope that God will bring him to be with him.

What has been the main thing you've taken away from 2 Timothy?

When do you feel lonely or isolated?

Do you feel able to be honest with people about your vulnerabilities and weakness?

Do you feel like you can help others with theirs?

How can we help each other as a church to be better at this?

Why do we struggle?

Do you ever feel like God has abandoned you?

What truths in v16-18 do we need to hear and when?

What 1 thing can you take away from 2 Timothy?