



Touching Lives
with James Merritt



SERMON SINGLES

Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

Where Is God?

2 Timothy 4:16-18

INTRODUCTION

There is not a greater teacher in life than trouble. Quite honestly, you learn a lot more about yourself and about life in the hard times than you ever will in the good times. Not to mention we can always count on when hard times hit, people of faith and no faith, religion and no religion, church and no church, come out of the woodwork and they ask the big question, “Where is God?” There is a man in the Bible who was probably outside of Jesus, the best known, and his name was Paul. If anybody had a right to be asking that question it was him. He blazed a trail for the Christian faith that no one else has come close to doing. He became the greatest missionary, the greatest apologist, the greatest church planter, the greatest evangelist and the greatest theologian that the world has ever known. What did he get for all of this? The words we are going to study today are in a letter he wrote to a young pastor named Timothy. He wrote sitting in a Roman dungeon, from which he would never escape, facing imminent death, and yet he answers this question: Where is God?

NOTES

KEY POINTS

1. God Is Walking With Me

In our key passage, here was Paul in his greatest hour of need, and he couldn't find one person anywhere that was willing to stand up and say a word in his defense. So, some might say, “Yeah Paul. Where was God in all of this?” Well, Paul lets us know that though it looked like he was alone, he was not. “But the Lord stood at my side...” (2 Timothy 4:17).

Paul was basically saying, “Everyone deserted me, but the Lord stood with me.” Now what does that tell you? It means that everyone doesn't always mean “everyone.” If you are a follower of Jesus, in a real sense it is impossible for “everyone” to leave you.

Where Is God?

2 Timothy 4:16-18

2. God Is Working Through Me

The number one thing that really matters when you are in trouble is not how the trouble turns out, not how the circumstances end, not how the story is concluded. The most important thing is that God is glorified. What God always wants to do through us is to glorify Himself. I want you to remember this. Everything has a purpose – good times and bad times, triumph and trouble, sunshine and rain. God always has a purpose for trouble. You may not see it and you may not understand it, but He always has a purpose.

He always has lessons he wants to teach and a work he wants to do in you and through you even more than for you. God never takes a break or a vacation, and He never runs away from trouble. When trouble comes, remember God is wanting to use that trouble to work through you.

3. God Is Watching Over Me

Paul pens these words knowing he may very well be looking at the sunset of his life. Knowing full well that these may be the last words he would ever write (and by the way they were.) He doesn't get out of that prison alive, but then he makes one of the boldest statements of faith you will read anywhere in the Bible. "The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom..." (2 Timothy 4:18).

It would be very easy to misunderstand what Paul said or just refuse to believe it, because we know that Paul did not make it out of that dungeon alive. You would say that evil won, and Paul was not rescued. But when you read that Paul said, "The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack," you can only draw one conclusion. If the Lord does not rescue you from something, then it really isn't an evil attack. The only thing that is evil to a child of God is anything that is outside of the will of God. God is watching over you as His child. And He will protect you, in His own way and according to His own will.

NOTES

Where Is God?

2 Timothy 4:16-18

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. When was a time you felt completely alone and like you had no support from anyone? Did you sense God's presence with you during that time?
2. What is an example of God working through you in the midst of difficult circumstances?
3. Has there been a time when God protected you from something hurtful? What can you learn from that experience?
