

# 8. God's unexpected provision - A poured out life

Series: God's unexpected ways of provision

## Introduction

We have been following the life of Paul to learn how, late in his life he could utter the words, "My God shall supply all of your needs..."

Today I want to look at the last days of Paul's life with a number of references to his last letter recorded in Scripture which is 2 Timothy

### **2 Timothy 4:6-8 (ESV Strong's)**

*6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*

This passage clearly shows that Paul is very near to his death and carries with it a very strong indication that Paul knew he had finished the race that God had called him to way back more than 30 years earlier on the road to Damascus... "you will be told what you must do" (Acts 9:6). There was a beginning...a race and a completion of God's work.

\*\*\*\*\* I would like to ask you to think for a moment about your life and about what you would like to be able to say to Jesus at the end of it...

Paul said something amazing about his life, he said "*I have finished the race*".

God had provided Paul over all his years, through opposition, danger, shipwreck and all with what Paul needed to finish his race. **Nothing thrown at Paul could stop the provision of God to finish his calling.** But he also says "I have..." and in this same letter he refers to others who loved the world and not loved Christ's appearing, He refers to others who had abandoned him and not stayed on the race...

It is so essential that no one feels this is Paul not me... before we continue listen to what Paul wrote...not once but at least four times in his letters..

### **1 Corinthians 11:1 (ESV Strong's)**

*1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.*

This one in particular is written to the Corinthian believers whom Paul considered still infants in Christ. Even in this letter to Timothy...teach others what you learnt from me who can teach others...

I would like to briefly describe some of Paul's circumstances when he wrote these words. *Most view this as Paul's final imprisonment in Rome probably around AD 64 or 67...which takes place outside the record of the book of Acts. Paul was roughly about 60 years old. The persecution against Christians had been only in pockets for the first years of the church but in AD 64, after the fire of Rome which is believed to have been started by Nero, the Roman emperor at the time. To create a scape-goat for the fire he blamed it on the Christians and under his instruction the most horrific persecution broke out. In this time it is believed that Peter was crucified and Paul re-arrested after having been released some years before.*

From Paul's last letter, 2 Timothy we learn a few things that give the background to the verses we read at the start

- He was in chains
- He needed his cloak which was a warm blanket type garment probably since winter was approaching
- He had been on trial and no one had come in his defence but he writes that the Lord stood beside him and delivered him from the lions mouth (this was probably a figure of speech but it was also a form of execution in those days.
- He mentions a number of his close co workers who had deserted him
- And he confirms that he knows death is awaits him shortly as he urges Timothy to come to him quickly and before the winter.
- He also asks Timothy to bring his scrolls and writing equipment...most likely Scripture scrolls with parchment to write more letters on

Yet from this set of circumstances flow some of the most bold and encouraging verses we use so easily in our day...

## **2 Timothy 1:7 (ESV Strong's)**

*7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*

## **Introducing the term “poured out life”**

But today I want to draw your attention to the following words uttered by Paul in 1:6

*“ I am already being poured out as a drink offering”*

God's unexpected provision- A poured out life

A drink offering was a term borrowed from the Old Testament that referred to a portion of wine that was poured out on the sacrifice just before it was offered to the Lord.

What Paul was saying in this letter is that he viewed his whole life as a sacrifice that was being poured out and now at the end of his life it was used to express his death.

God's unexpected ways of provision to this world and to the church is you and me as we pour out our lives as a drink offering.

**You are God's unexpected provision to the people of this world in your lifetime!!**

When you look what's going on in this world one realizes more and more what they need are not Christians in a huddle, Christians in the back benches shouting opinions and advice... but poured out lives for the people of this world

It is quite something to stop and to think about your life from this perspective. Our natural tendency is to see our lives as something to protect and preserve, retiring with a nice pension watching the sunset... yet Paul sees his life as something to be poured out for the others in the service of Christ.

We often come to God and say here is my cup Lord, fill it up Lord...and by that we mean give me a life I can live for my own desires.

But Paul's view of his life was something he wanted to empty out for the Lord...everything God invested in him he wanted to pour out in service.

**Acts 20:24 (ESV Strong's)**

*24 But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.*

A poured out life is one that is lived from the perspective that I am called to be poured out so that **when I have reached the end of my days there may be nothing hoarded, nothing held back, nothing wasted** but all that God provided in me has been poured out for the sake of His calling.... All Paul materially had left was a cloak and his scrolls..this is a physical reminder that even in material ways he held nothing back.

A poured out life has two main aspects

## **1. It is a life poured out for God first of all**

*There is an account of David in the Old Testament who was leading a band of faithful warriors. He became extremely thirsty and said in a moment how he longed for the water of a particular well that was occupied by enemy forces. Some of his warriors overheard him and went of on own initiative, broke through the enemy lines, drew water from the well and broke out again and brought the water to David. In wonder at what they had done David felt that the price they had paid to get the water out of enemy territory was one he was unfit to accept so he poured out the water as an offering to the Lord.*

This is to me the a picture of the price Jesus paid to retrieve my life out of the clutches of satan, sin and self and to give me a new life. My response to the goodness of God is to say I can not live my life any longer for my own needs and desires but instead I pour my life out as an offering to You Lord

**Romans 12:1 (ESV Strong's)**

*1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

Paul precedes the call to be a living sacrifice with the phrase “**by the mercies of God**”. You see without a deep awareness of the goodness of God we will not fully be able to live a poured out life. But in view of His mercy, in the light of His goodness we will pour out our lives for Him.

I think of the lady who brought a jar of perfume and wept over Jesusw feet...as `Jesus explained to the Pharisee who cared little for Jesus he said this..

**Luke 7:44-47 (ESV Strong's)**

*44 Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”*

There are two people with Jesus who are in focus in this event. Simon had Jesus over to his house and had invited him for a meal. But he was holding back. Jesus was in the house, he was doing what needed to be done but he didn't grasp the depth and the riches of the love of the one there before him

By contrast this lady had brought her most precious possession, unforced and with love she poured out her life on Jesus feet.

Jesus explains, not that she was more sinful but rather that she understood more of the depth of goodness of Jesus towards her and as such she poured out her life for Him.

When things cloud our view of the goodness of God towards us, the result is that we might still do what we need to in serving Him but the pouring our stops. Things like rejoicing in the Lord, giving him our most treasured things of the heart

A particular test of this is suffering...

**2 Timothy 1:12 (ESV Strong's)**

12 which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

When we doubt the goodness of God immediately we will start to hold back the pouring out of our lives for him. We need a theology grounded for all seasons in the goodness of God towards me.

## **2. It is a life poured out in love for all people**

The key element to live a poured out life for others is love, the unselfish love of God. Without it we will not pour out our lives for all people.

*Nobody had stood with him in his hour of greatest need. Others had deserted him even though they had been his fellow workers. Yet here in his last letter in the NT we do not even pick up a hint of Paul holding back on pouring out his life for others. Throughout this letter one hears his love for the brothers and sisters, for Timothy even his note that his one friend Trophimus he remembers is not well. He sends his greetings to his dear friends by name..*

*Over the last weeks too we have seen the love Paul poured out towards the jailor and his family in Philippi. We read how Paul cared for the fellow prisoners, his captors and the deceitful sailors on the shipwreck journey. There was time when he was so severely beaten they thought he was dead and they left him lying there outside the city. He recovers by some means and we read how he goes back into the city. In Philippi after the earthquake and the release from prison, they want to get him out of town quickly but he first stops to encourage the believers and Lydia's house. After 14 nights in a hurricane and then being shipwrecked on an island, bitten by a snake he still has the compassion to go off and pray for a sick man on the island...then they bring him all the sick in the area and he prays for them....consistently on and on we see his life poured out as an offering for all people.*

A lawyer once asked Jesus who is meant in the command love your neighbour...this is what Jesus answered.

### **Luke 10:30-36 (ESV Strong's)**

30 Jesus replied, A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back. 36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?"

This parable covers financial, educational, racial and religious differences. There was a man who had lost everything, there was a priest and a levite who represented the religious upper class of the day and then there was a Samaritan who represents the racial hatred in the community. All of these Jesus puts together in the parable to show us all even in our day we have no right based on race, religion or social standing not to pour out our lives for the benefit of all people God puts on our path.

### **1 Corinthians 13:4-6 (ESV Strong's)**

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

This is the time for God's people to live like Paul urged. Sometimes we need to unpack the term love in other words as we all seem to think we are loving...a poured out life =

- Patient: Are you patient with those of different race, status or religion to you?
- Kind: Are you kind to people of all races, all social backgrounds and religions
- Not arrogant: Because of you race, education, your status or religion
- Not rude
- Not insisting on your way: To those of different culture, background habits to you
- Never rejoices when there is wrongdoing: In fact love mourns with those who mourn

Consider a world where Christians pour out their lives like this to their neighbours...what a different place it might be???

### **3. He knew the pouring out of God's love by the Spirit**

***Romans 5:5 (ESV Strong's)***

*5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

A poured out life relies on the work of the Holy Spirit who pours into us that we may pour out for God and all people.

Paul prays for the Ephesian Christians that the Holy Spirit would give them power in their inner being to know the greatness of the love of God. Without the Spirit's enabling we cannot grasp the greatness of this love that passes understanding

A poured out life is the best container for the pouring out of God's Spirit to provide what we need

The widow who poured out her last oil and flour for Elijah found them full again the next day and the next...

### **Conclusion**

Perhaps your life is not a poured out life for God and a life poured out in love for all people.