

Worship Material
God stood by me
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 26th October

Begin with an opening prayer

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!

We long to be with you.

Draw us closer to your ever-loving presence.

Draw us deeper as we sing and pray to you.

Let us find our home in you, the God who never leaves us.

Let us rest safely with you, as you walk by our side.

Amen.

Read 2 Timothy 4:6-8,16-18

Bible notes

As he approaches the end of his life, Paul doesn't see himself as the victim of other people's desertion or harm (though he mentions them in 4:10-16). He prefers to imagine himself as wine or another precious liquid being poured on the earth as a sacrificial offering. Like Jesus, he has given himself away for others, in particular the Gentiles who have received the gospel through him (v.17). He is like a soldier and an athlete in their perseverance and single-mindedness (v.7; cf 1 Timothy 1:18, 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3-5). He is proud of what he has achieved, but without losing sight of the One he serves. The 'reward' is not Paul's to deserve, but the Lord's to give, when God's kingdom appears in its fullness (v.8): and then not only to Paul, but to all who have served as he has.

The letter includes several references to God's sustaining strength (e.g. 1:7-8, 1:14, 2:1, 3:11), summed up here in verse 17. This is the source of Paul's irrepressible courage and confidence, as in Philippians 4:13: 'I can do all things through him who strengthens me'. This signature statement (he makes a similar one in 1 Corinthians 15:10) ensures that when he tells the story of his apostolic ministry, he points beyond himself, not at himself. He is like his ancestor in faith Daniel, who was also 'rescued from the lion's mouth' by God (Daniel 6:10-24), and the psalmist who prays for the same (Psalm 22:21). If he expects to be martyred soon, Paul can hardly believe that he will always be rescued from the risks of apostolic ministry. His enduring hope, and his experience of the powerful presence of God when he is abandoned by colleagues he might have relied on, show that he is reliably rescued from

despair rather than danger. As he puts it elsewhere, '(we are) always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. ... So we do not lose heart.' (2 Corinthians 4:10,16).

Prayer

When life gets tough:

God, stand by me and hold me close.

When I go my own way and forget to follow:

God, stand by me and bring me back to you.

When life is good and all is well:

God, stand by me and help me rejoice.

When life is just normal:

God, stand by me and help me keep my eyes on you.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Go with God, encouraged by his presence.

Go and look for him in the joys and in the sorrows.

Go and share his love with others.

Go in the knowledge that he stands beside you.

Go in peace.

Amen.