

“Come before Winter”

I have a friend that I went to high school with and he has invited my wife and me to visit. He lives in the Minneapolis area. It is our hope to go and visit before October. A few years ago we were in Fargo, North Dakota. When my high school friend traveled to Florida for a month during winter a couple of years ago he spent the night in Scottsburg. We had a great time reminiscing about our high school days. I told him we had traveled out west and stopped in Fargo and then he told us that we were only sixty miles from where he lives. He lives in the Minneapolis area on one of those many, many lakes and not far from Fargo, North Dakota. One thing I definitely know is that it is too cold for me there. He has sent us pictures of unusual one foot snows in late April. He makes one thing perfectly clear. Travel and visit and spend some time with us so we can show you around. Come early and let the visit be a time of renewal but travel here before winter. Winter begins in October. And winter can be cold, short days/long nights, dark and bleak at times. A lonely time for some. Such was it for Paul as a man on a mission, as a man who had many losses by this time in his life. Paul is also facing the ultimate loss.

Paul writes to his friend Timothy. Paul has lost some of his workers and one has deserted him. Paul is in prison and alone. He craves renewal that can be achieved by seeing friends and having things close to him that are very familiar. "Bring the cloak I left in Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchment," he urges. Paul did speak of the winter as a season but we all know how we can experience the long, lonely and desolate days out of that physical winter season. And during those times we know how it is important for us to have friends, family and familiar items with us. It makes one feel more at home. Never had that kind of experience? Then you definitely have been blessed. But look around you at work, during your social times outside of work or at church. Others have and are experiencing those feelings. Take a careful look at the missions your church supports. If you do not find those that need your comfort locally, those on the mission field surely can use your support. They, like Paul, find themselves separated from family, friends and familiar items. They, like Paul, desire a closeness to that which is not close. Our responsibility is to provide that relationship so that their work can continue here or abroad. Our responsibility is to be of assistance to them before "winter." Our responsibility is to provide for them nothing less.

II Timothy

"This is a very moving document as we see the aged apostle facing death, looking back at his service for God, and taking tender concern for his son in the faith that he be strong in the task to which God has called him."

*Leon Morris
1914-2006
New Testament Scholar*

Richard Hurt, Retired Classroom Teacher