

2 Timothy 4:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:

Analysis

Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. After theological instruction, Paul makes personal request: "Do thy diligence" (spoudason, σπούδασον) means make every effort, be zealous, hurry. "To come shortly unto me" (elthein pros me tacheōs, ἐλθεῖν πρός με ταχέως). Tacheōs (ταχέως) means quickly, soon—Paul's time is short. This poignant request reveals Paul's humanity: though courageous in facing death, he longs for companionship. Even apostles need fellowship.

The request shows Timothy's importance to Paul—he wants his beloved spiritual son present during final days. It also demonstrates Paul's confidence in Timothy's faithfulness despite earlier concerns about timidity. Paul trusts Timothy will brave the dangerous journey to Rome during persecution to be with his imprisoned mentor. The urgency underscores the letter's occasion: Paul knows execution is imminent; this may be final opportunity for reunion.

This verse humanizes Paul, showing that spiritual maturity doesn't eliminate need for human relationships. Martyrs aren't superhuman but ordinary people sustained by God's grace. Paul's loneliness (v. 10-11 reveals most coworkers have left) makes fellowship especially precious. The request also implies Paul wants Timothy to receive final instructions, observe his death, and carry ministry forward—apostolic succession from dying leader to faithful successor.

Historical Context

Travel from Ephesus to Rome required weeks by sea and land, involving significant danger during Neronian persecution. Christians traveling to visit imprisoned believers risked arrest themselves. Yet Paul calls Timothy anyway, trusting his devotion. Whether Timothy arrived before Paul's execution is unknown. Church tradition suggests he did, receiving Paul's final words. The letter itself preserves those words for all generations. Paul's human need for companionship resonates across centuries—even heroes of faith face loneliness and crave fellowship.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Who are the spiritual fathers, mothers, or friends you should visit, support, or spend time with while opportunity remains?
2. How quickly and diligently do you respond when those you love or respect need your presence and support?
3. What risks are you willing to take to maintain fellowship and minister to those facing suffering or death?

Interlinear Text

Σπούδασον ἐλθεῖν πρός με ταχέως·

Do thy diligence **to come** **unto** **me** **shortly**

G4704

G2064

G4314

G3165

G5030

Additional Cross-References

2 Timothy 1:4 (Parallel theme): Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

