

WISHFUL THINKING

WISHFUL THINKING was a common phrase I grew up with to describe a desire that was a far stretch but not totally out of the reach of possibility.

The Greek's used the optative mood to describe the mood of wishful thinking.

Paul used the optative mood to describe a wishful desire about a strong possibility dependent upon the will of God.

Paul used it twice in our lesson text (didomi / a.a.opt.3ps) (2 Tim.1:16, 18). The first time he used it with "house of Onesiphorus." The second time he used it with Onesiphorus.

**This lesson will study four aspects of Wishful Thinking
taken from Paul's used of the Greek optative mood.**

1. Paul used the optative mood to describe the wishful desire for the Lord to grant mercy to Onesiphorus and his household regarding persecution by the Romans.

"The Lord grant (didomi / a.a.opt.3ps) to him to find (heurisko / a.a.infin) mercy from (para+abl of source) the Lord on (en+loc. of time) that (ekeinos lsf) day (te hemera)." (2 Tim.1:18)

There are two opinions of the meaning of the phrase – "on that day." One meaning is the Judge Seat of Christ. The other is the day of arrest and persecution like Paul. I believe the second meaning suits this passage.

I don't think Paul would use the optative mood of wishful thinking regarding "the Lord grant mercy" for the JSC. But I do think he would say it about the prospects of persecution by Rome at this time.

2. "The Lord grant mercy" was a wishful desire of Paul's based on the memory of Onesiphorus' ministry of refreshment to Paul while suffering for Christ.

He did this at great risk to himself and family by the Romans – "And was not ashamed of my chains. But when he was in Rome, he eagerly (spoudaios) searched (zeteo / a.a.ind) for me, and found (heurisko / a.a.ind) me." (2 Tim.1:16-17)

This was a mind set of Onesiphorus as a loyal friend - "You know (ginosko / p.a.ind) very well (beltion / rare adverb - only time used) what service he rendered (diakoneo / a.a.ind) at **Ephesus.**" (2 Tim.1:18)

Onesiphorus had a ministry to Paul as well as Paul to him - "For he often (pollakis) refreshed (anapsucho / a.a.ind) me." He knew how to minister to Paul in order to cheer him up amidst great conflict and stress.

This is the gift of mercy working on behalf of Paul's stressful life of ministry – "He who shows mercy, with cheerfulness." (Rom.12:8)

3. Paul's wishful desire is that the Lord grant Onesiphorus and his house MERCY (eleos).

I thought that mercy was an interesting choice of theological words (Eph.2:4-9; Titus 3:5).

Mercy refers to meeting a distressed need without consideration of a person's merits or demerits (Luke 1:57-58; Rom.9:15-16).

Grace is the provision of its relief (Luke 10:29-37) [Good Samaritan Parable]. "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need." (Heb.4:16)

4. Onesiphorus was not a fair-weathered friend. He was a loyal Christian brother. "There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." (Prov.18:24)

Onesiphorus was not influence to abandon Paul by what others did or thought.

Paul had lost a lot of friends and comrades in ministry due to NV and reversionism regarding the teaching of grace – "All who are in Asia turned away from me." (2 Tim.1:15)

"Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, **not according to our works**, but according to His own purpose and grace which were granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity." (2 Tim.1:9)

Paul and Onesiphorus maintained a grace mental attitude through this stressful time of persecution and desertion – "At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. **But the Lord stood with me**, and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear, and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen." (2 Tim.4:16-18)

- In Acts 20 (56AD), all of the elders of Asia Minor appeared to be doctrinally on board with Paul. However by 2 Timothy (67AD), all have deserted Paul but a few loyal grace believers.

"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." (2 Tim.2:1-2)

Paul's wishful desire was that the Lord grant Onesiphorus and his family MERCY when persecution for Christ and grace knocks on the door of his house.

"And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." (2 Tim.3:12; Phil.1:29-30)