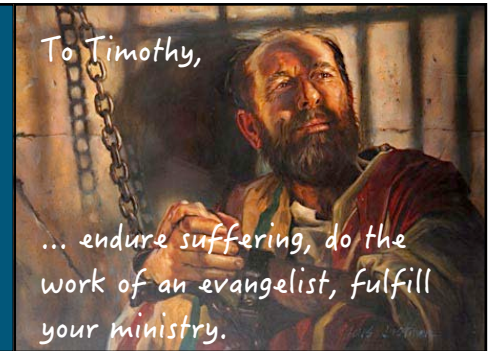


2 Timothy

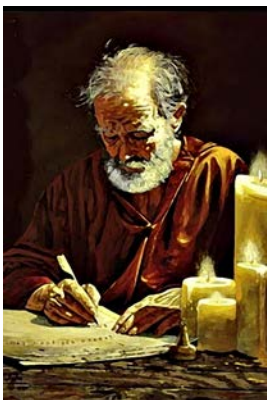
Fulfill Your Ministry

Lesson 11



Paul calls on Timothy to “Preach the Word” in the opening verses of 2 Timothy 4. This was a solemn charge made in the presence of God himself. The content of his preaching was to be Jesus and he was challenge, strengthen, and equip the church. He was to faithfully preach when it was convenient as well as when inconvenient. He was to proclaim truth in an age when people wanted to hear what pleased them instead of what God called them to do.

Faithful and Expectant 4:6-8



Paul is in prison waiting to be executed. He knows his life on this earth is near an end. Paul has been so challenging and direct with this letter to Timothy because he knows it is now up to Timothy and others to carry on the work to which he had given his life.

Either from information provided to Paul by the Holy Spirit, or his own assessment of his situation, Paul expected Nero to execute him. Tradition tells us that Paul was correct and he was martyred by Nero in Rome. With such a short time to live Paul writes to challenge, encourage, and motivate Timothy.

Looking at how Paul faces death and what he expects after death is encouraging and helpful to every Christian who desires to be faithful to the end of life.

Paul says “*I am already being poured out as a drink offering.*” This phrase looks back to the offering of wine, which under the Law of Moses, was poured out at the altar to symbolise the dedication of the worshipper (See Numbers 15:1-10; 28:4-7). This was the last act of sacrifice to be performed after having previously offered the lamb, ram, or bull. Paul uses this phrase to say that his life was complete and he was ready to pour out his own blood in a martyr’s death.

1. What does Paul illustrate from the use of the drink offering in Philippians 2:17?

A second statement Paul makes to say his life was near its end is “*the time of my departure has come.*” This is the same phrase that was used for the unmooring of a ship which was ready to set sail for a new port or a soldier picking up his tent to move to a

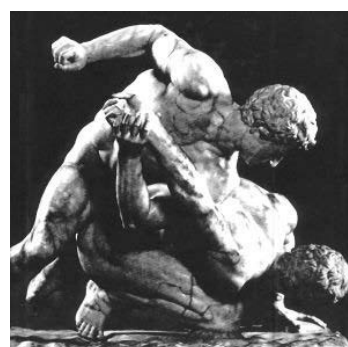
new location. Paul's death was not the end, it was just the method by which he was unmoored from his anchor in this world, to be transported to life in the next.

Paul does not write with fear or discouragement. His impending execution did not fill him with regret or sadness. He has lived his life in anticipation of being with Jesus and he faces death with the hope of heaven.

These first two illustrations show that Paul expected his life to end soon. All of our lives on this earth are transient, but Paul is stressing the immediacy of his impending death.

2. How is it that Paul could remain calm in the face of his quickly approaching execution?

In verse 7 Paul reflects upon how he had lived his life since coming to Christ. He had "*fought the good fight.*" The illustration from fighting probably pictures the boxing ring or wrestling match, though it could also refer to an army on the battlefield. Whichever picture Paul had in his mind it shows that the life he had lived had been filled with conflict and difficulty. He was opposed at every turn by Satan those who were influenced by him. He endured hunger, shipwreck, beatings, and imprisonment. Living for Christ was a daily battle in the life of the Apostle Paul.



3. What should we do today to impress upon all Christians that our life for Christ is a fight or battle?

4. Do we sometimes stress the benefits of the Christian life while failing to adequately describe the hardships that may come? (Explain how and why you came to your conclusion)

The next illustration pictures a foot race, probably the marathon. Paul's life for Christ required effort and moved constantly toward a finish. This race is not run against others, but alongside others. The Christian race is not won by speed, but through persistent endurance to the end.

5. What preparation would be needed to run a marathon and what might hinder a person from finishing a marathon (besides injury)?

Paul ends this reflection of his life with the statement, "*I have kept the faith.*" The phrase that Paul uses doesn't just mean that he has personal faith, but that he had kept the content of "*the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints*" see Jude 3.

The faith is that body of teaching that was handed down to Christians from Jesus and the apostles. Paul was a steward of the truth of the Word of God and he was faithful in handling it to the end.

6. What did Paul previously instruct Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:14?

7. What does it mean for Christians to keep the faith today?

In verse 8 Paul moves to the hope that he has in Christ and his anticipation of being with him. The first hope is a “*crown of righteousness*” that has been “*laid up*” for Paul. This crown is the reward for faithful service. An athlete in the first century received a wreath that would wither away, but Paul knew his reward was everlasting. The fact that the crown had been “*laid up*” tells us that it is already in place, kept, and awaiting Paul’s arrival.

8. How is the crown Christians will received described in the following passages?

A. 1 Corinthians 9:24-25

B. 1 Peter 5:4

C. James 1:12; Revelation 2:10



9. One other crown is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 2:19. What the content of this crown and how it is obtained?

The crown of righteousness, that Paul writes about here, is available to all the saints because our Lord wore a crown of thorns (i.e. he died to pay for our sins.) The King of Kings and Lord of Lords will present this crown of righteousness to his people. It is possible the crown is used as a metaphor for the gift of eternal life; yet the crown stands as a powerful symbol for a people whom Peter calls a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9.)

The crown of righteousness is “*awarded*” by the Lord, who is the “*righteous judge*.” Judges in sporting events are supposed to be fair and above reproach and present awards based on merit and achievement. Earthly judges may be influenced by human error, indifference, or by a purposeful miscarriage of justice. The Lord however is the judge who is completely righteous. He knows all, and sees all, even the heart. His judgements are always right.

The fact that Christians will receive an award is not to say that salvation has been earned. “An expectation of reward is also a recognition of God's grace. Those who anticipate reward will not be able to boast, 'Look at my accomplishments.' They should

be able to offer praise to God by saying, 'Thank you, Lord, for what you have produced in me.' The very expectation of reward is an acknowledgment of God's grace."¹

The crown will be awarded on "*that Day*," signifying the Second Coming and the Final Judgment. Christians, like Paul who die before the Second Coming immediately go to be with the Lord, but their final and complete reward will be awarded at the Final Judgement following the Second Coming of Christ. (See 2 Thessalonians 4:13-18)



Paul makes clear that the reward he will receive is not unique to him, but "*to all who have loved his appearing*." The Second Coming will be glorious beyond imagination for those in Christ. They long for his appearing and will be overjoyed when it comes. For those who have rejected Christ his appearing and final judgment will be terrible.

Verses 1 and 8 of 2 Timothy 4 form a sort of bracket with the Lord as judge at the beginning and end of this section.

[The Lord will judge the living and the dead vs. 1

Timothy is commissioned to preach the word and to fulfill his ministry vs 2-5

Paul reflects on how he had faithfully fulfilled his own ministry vs 6-7

The righteous judge will award the faithful at the final judgment vs. 8]

It is important to constantly keep the Second Coming and our final reward in our hearts and minds. C.S. Lewis once wrote, "If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this."²

10. How does thinking about the Second Coming affect and motivate you in your life?

¹ Lea, Thomas D., and Hayne P. Griffin Jr. *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*. New American Commentary series. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992.

² Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*. Prentice Hall & IBD. 1978