

~2 Timothy~

Lesson 22 – A Life of Faithfulness

Let's begin by reading our text today- **2 Tim 4:6-8**

These are such precious words. Words of encouragement for Timothy and all who believe in Jesus. And they are so concise, but so impactful. These are words that you can take with you every day through the sufferings and trials of this earthly life. Words that will carry you on into the hope of eternal life. It is in these words that we can truly “lay hold on eternal life in Jesus Christ”.

Last week we finished the final exhortations that Paul will ever give in his life, passing his mantle to Timothy. And now in these next three verses we see a glimpse into Paul's mindset concerning eternal life and the hope in Jesus.

So let's get right into are study today:

2 Timothy 4:6 †For I †am already being poured out as a drink offering, †and the time of my departure is at hand.

† ⁶ For I... ἐγὼ γάρ,

- Paul begins this statement with “for” because it is relating to verse 5, specifically the last phrase, “fulfill your ministry”. It is because of what is happening in verse 6, that is driving Paul to tell Timothy, “fulfill your ministry”. **Lets read verse 5 down into verse 6.**
 - Paul is saying because I am going on to my departure, you therefore Timothy, fulfill and be established in your ministry and carry on the work of the gospel.

† ⁶ For I... *am already being poured out as a drink offering...* ἤδη σπένδομαι,

- This statement is only two Greek words, ede spendomai, ἤδη σπένδομαι. This word spendo, σπένδω, to pour out as a drink offering, is only used twice in the NT by Paul, but many times in the OT in the LXX.
 - The use of this word in the OT is specifically referring to the drink offering declared by Moses in the Law, Num 28:3-8, and we also see it used as an offering of honor and praise to the Lord, Gen 35:14; 2 Sam 23:16.
 - I believe this is the sense in which Paul uses this word because both times he relates this drink offering to his martyrdom for Christ, Phil 2:17; 2 Tim 4:6.
 - Paul had spent his entire life being a living sacrifice, as he says in Rom 12:1, and now the time has come when he is faced with his own physical martyrdom. Paul is being poured out as a drink offering, and his life and blood is being offered as a sweet aroma to the Lord.
 - Paul is pouring out everything he has for the glory and honor and praise to God
 - Paul has been strengthening Timothy, encouraging, and preparing him to, kakopatheo, κακοπαθέω, suffer evil afflictions in his own life, 2 Tim 1:8; 1:12; 2:3; 2:9-10; 3:12; 4:5. And as we know from church history that Timothy was indeed martyred in Ephesus in 97AD.
 - Paul knows he now is going to his death and his departure is standing near...

† ⁶ ...and the time of my departure is at hand. καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῆς ἐμῆς ἀναλύσεως ἐφέστηκε.,

- “departure”- analisis, ἀνάλυσις, compound of ἀνά (rise up) + λύω (to loose or release)
 - This is such a beautiful imagery of the Christian's death. When our physical body dies, we are loosed from the burdens of this life and risen up to be with our Lord.
 - Clement of Rome (35 – 99AD) wrote in his epistle to the Corinthians... ⁵ *Blessed are those Presbyters who finished their course before now, and have obtained a fruitful and perfect release, analisis, ἀνάλυσις, in the ripeness of completed work, for they have now no fear that any shall move them from the place appointed to them.* Clement I, & Lake, K. (1912–1913). The Apostolic fathers. (K. Lake, Ed.) (Vol. 1, p. 85).
 - Paul's earthly life was full of struggles, sacrifice, persecution, tribulation and more than all that he

says, “*what comes upon me daily, my deep concern for all the churches*”, 2 Cor 11:28.

- This is why Paul says in Phil 1:23 ~ for me to depart, ἀναλύω, (same word) and be with Christ is far better...
- This is laying hold on eternal life in Jesus. This is having an eternal life mindset. This is how Paul can say, “*Death is swallowed up in victory, O death where is your sting*”, 1 Cor 15:54-55.
- Paul knows where he is going. He has full confidence that his physical death is bringing him release. He is being released from the struggles of this life, released from the burden of sin, released from this old, dead, stinking flesh strapped to his back, and he is entering into eternal glory.
- “*is at hand*”- ephistemi, ἐφίστημι, we saw this word in 4:2. Be ready... stand bold and confident, unwavering, immovable.
 - In this case, his death is standing bold in front of him, and is immovable. It is going to happen.

2 Timothy 4:7 †I have fought the good fight, †I have finished the race, †I have kept the faith.

In verse 7 Paul makes three statements of how he lived his life. They are so concise, but yet so moving and compelling and so we will look at these carefully. All three verbs are in the perfect tense meaning these are actions completed in the past and are producing a result that exists in the present. In the perfect tense, the focus isn't so much on the completed action, but the state of affairs resulting from the past action.

He doesn't just say, “I fought the good fight...”. Instead, he says, “I HAVE fought the good fight... I HAVE finished the race... I HAVE kept the faith”, implying there is something more coming. The perfect tense tells us there is something more to be added. So, the idea of this verse is..., “because I have done these things, I am therefore being loosed from my body to live forever with the Lord and there is a crown of righteousness awaiting me.”

These three statements of faithfulness line up perfectly with what Paul said in **2 Tim 2:3-7** with the Soldier, the Athlete and the Farmer. The Soldier fights the good fight and pleases the One who enlisted him; the Athlete finishes the race with discipline and receives the crown; and the hardworking Farmer keeps the seed pure and is faithful to care and tend for the seed so that it produces a harvest.

† *7 I have fought the good fight...* τὸν ἀγῶνα τὸν καλὸν ἡγωνίσμαι,

- “*fight*”- agon, ἀγών, (noun) and agonizomai, ἀγωνίζομαι, (verb) means a struggle, as in, one who is engaged in a contest.
 - This is the life of a faithful Christian. It is the walk of sanctification. It is being on guard, watchful, sober, standing with God and standing away from unrighteousness. This is cleansing yourself away from the dishonorable vessels and being a vessel of honor, sanctified and useful to the Master, 2 Tim 1:13-14; 2:16, 20-23.
 - This is the good fight of faith, **1 Tim 6:11-12**.
 - Why is it a good fight? Because it is the struggle to lay hold on eternal life, and if you do this faithfully, there is the promise of a crown of righteousness, 2 Tim 4:8; a crown of glory, 1 Pet 5:4; and a crown of life awaiting you, James 1:12.
 - The struggle brings us to glory, **Rom 5:3-4**; 1 Pet 1:6-7; James 1:2-4
 - Jesus uses this same word, agonizomai, ἀγωνίζομαι, saying, “*Strive to enter the narrow gate*”, Lk 13:24
 - Paul says in Acts 14:22 after he was stoned in Lystra, “*we must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God*”
 - In Romans 8:16-17, Paul says we are joint heirs with Christ **IF**-“*...we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*”
 - Why does it have to be a struggle? It's a struggle because this world is contrary to God's will, **Gal**

5:17, John 3:19. And when you choose God, you are moving against the current of the world. Like swimming upstream. It's a struggle and it's not an easy path, but it is the struggle that produces in us a far more exceeding weight of glory, 2 Cor 4:17.

- The struggle brings us to glory...
- This is why Paul, Peter, James, and even Jesus tell us to rejoice in suffering, rejoice in the struggle, not for struggles sake, but for the glory of the Father.
 - The stance for Truth will result in persecution, 2 Tim 3:12
- This struggle is prevalent through the entire NT, **1 Tim 1:18**; **Phil 1:27-30**; **1 Pet 5:10**; **Jude 3**
- Paul relates this struggle to a contest, like a sporting event or the Olympic games or the Isthmian games that were held in Corinth every two years. We know this is what Paul has in mind here because of his other writings on the matter. This leads into the next statement:

† **7** I have fought the good fight... *I have finished the race...* τὸν δρόμον τετέλεχα,

- “**race**”- dromos, δρόμος, course, as in, the course of life, a mission, race course
 - Remember what we just read in **2 Tim 2:5**. In order to contend for the faith and receive the victor's crown we must compete according to the rules.
 - These rules are: Discipline and Faithfulness
 - Single minded devotion, discipline, a separation from the world to be humble and faithful to Jesus, **1 Cor 9:24-27**; **Phil 3:12-14**; **Heb 12:1-2**
 - Paul was driven to fulfill the course of his life, **Acts 20:22-24**; **21:12-14**.

† **7** I have fought the good fight... I have finished the race... *I have kept the faith...* τὴν πίστιν τετήρηκα,

- “**kept**”- tereo, τηρέω, Paul uses this word other places in 1 Timothy in the sense of keeping and preserving Truth away from evil and perversion, 1 Tim 5:22; 6:14.
 - This is what he has been admonishing Timothy to do:
 - “*hold fast sound doctrine*”, 2 Tim 1:13; “*keep what was committed to you by the Holy Spirit*”, 2 Tim 1:14; “*guard the Truth*”, 1 Tim 6:20; “*rightly divide the Truth*”, 2 Tim 2:15.
 - By saying, “*I have kept the faith*”, Paul could also be saying that he has held fast to his trust in God. He has maintained and kept his faithfulness to God's call on his life, 2 Tim 1:12. Or in other words, “I have kept the faith and fulfilled my ministry”

Now as we enter verse 8, we see Paul's hope of salvation, his laying hold on eternal life in Christ Jesus

2 Timothy 4:8 †Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, †which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, †and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Verse 8 is the result of Paul's faithfulness to God. It is a glimpse into eternal life through the eyes of the Apostle Paul. Eternal life with Jesus was the motivation for his commitment to the gospel and in verse 8 Paul tells us he is confident that he will receive the crown of righteousness, a reward for his faithful service.

I want to spend the remainder of our time talking about the REWARDS OF THE FAITHFUL, which will then set us up for our discussion on verse 8 for next week.

Many times, we see rewards promised to the faithful:

Psalm 58:11-... “*Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who judges in the earth.*”

Hebrews 11:6- ... *He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

Jesus tells those who are persecuted for His name to, “*Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven...*”, Matt 5:11-12.

Paul tells us there are rewards given to those who endure and we will be judged on our faithfulness, 1 Cor 3:12-15; 2 Cor 5:10; Rom 14:10-12.

Peter had his eyes fixed on Jesus Christ and the inheritance in Him, 1 Peter 1:3-4-³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,* ⁴ *to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

The Hebrew Christians were able to, *“joyfully accept the plundering of their goods, knowing that they have a better and enduring possession in heaven.”*, Heb 10:34

And Paul tells us not to *“cast away our confidence in Him because it has a great reward... that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise”*, Heb 10:35-36.

So, is it a selfish thing that we would do something for a reward? The short answer is no and let me explain why I think this. Firstly, God promised this to us, so it is not selfish to want something that God promises. God is so good, and He wants to spend eternity lavishing His goodness on us, **Eph 2:4-9**. What we just read is the gift of eternal salvation, to all, and upon all them who believe, Rom 3:22. This is a picture of eternal life by grace through faith in Him.

But in addition to the gift of eternal life, I believe there are individual rewards based on faithfulness and you see this portrayed in **Eph 2:10**. In verses 4-9, Paul speaks of justification by grace through faith, and then in verse 10 he says, now that we are born again, there is an opportunity to walk in the good works that God prepared for us. And I believe it is our faithfulness in how we walk in these good works that will result in our individual rewards. Remember our study on **2 Tim 2:10-11**, there is eternal life with Jesus and then there is eternal life with eternal glory. I want the eternal glory part. Again, not out of selfishness, but because I want to serve Him and be as close to Jesus as I possibly can be for all eternity, I want the reward of being His bride and reigning with Him in glory, Rev 19:7-8; James 1:12. The rewards of the faithful Christian will determine the level of our service in His kingdom for all eternity. Those who were faithful in this life will be given responsibility in eternal life, Matt 25:14-30; Rev 3:21; 2 Tim 2:11-12.

These individual, eternal rewards are based on, and a result of the motivation of our heart. Are we serving Him and humbling and submitting to His will or are we puffing ourself up with pride?, Matt 23:11-12. God promises individual, eternal rewards, but it is only to those who are faithful, to those who are committed to His will, to those who diligently seek Him. We obtain the reward through complete submission of our will to Him and when WE are glorified, it is actually Him and Him alone that receives all the glory, honor, and praise, because it was His work accomplished in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is why we see the 24 elders casting their crowns before the Lord in Revelation 4, because our crown is a result of His perfect work in us.

Now, consider this faithful service to God's will and overlay it with what we have learned today. ⁶ *“I am already being poured out as a drink offering [as my life and blood is being offered as a sweet aroma to the Lord in an exultation of honor and praise to God] and the time of my departure [being loosed from the burdens of this life and being risen up to be with the Lord] is standing bold and immovable in front of me.”* ⁷ *I have fought the good fight, I have engaged in the contest with struggles, I have endured to the end and finished the course that God has called me to, and I kept the faith by preserving the Truth and maintaining my trust and fidelity to God and His calling on my life...* ⁸ *Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

Next week we will be looking at verse 8 and we will discover three things: 1) what exactly is the crown of righteousness 2) when will this reward be given and 3) who will receive the reward?