

~2 Timothy~

Lesson 23 – The Rewards of the Faithful

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

Last week we began looking at Paul's final salutation. His final words before he departs this life. And in these three verses, we see a glimpse into Paul's mindset concerning the hope of eternal life in Christ Jesus.

For 30 years, Paul gave his life as a living sacrifice to God, and now, as he is in a dungeon awaiting his imminent death, he tells Timothy in verse 6, that he is being poured out as a drink offering as his life and blood is being offered as a sweet aroma to the Lord in an exultation of honor and praise and the time of his departure, *ἀνάλυσις*, his being released from the burdens of this life and a rising up to be with the Lord is standing bold and immovable in front of him. This is why he told Timothy in verse 5 to "fulfill his ministry" because he is departing to be with the Lord.

And we learned of Paul's faithful service to God in verse 7. He says, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." We saw how this relates to what Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:3-6 describing the conduct of the Christian as a Soldier, an Athlete and a 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 faith and is faithful to care and tend for the seed so that it produces a harvest.

So now this brings us to verse 8 that we will study today. Last week we laid the foundation for this verse as we discussed the rewards of the faithful. These rewards are given to those Christians who have done what Paul did: those who fight the good fight, they strive to walk in holiness through living a life of sanctification. Those who run the race and press toward the prize of the high calling, and those who keep the faith and are faithful to maintain their trust in God. In short, as verse 8 says, rewards are given "*to all who have loved His appearing*". The rewards are the result of the motivation of our heart toward God, **Acts 20:22-24; 21:12-14**.

These rewards will determine the level of our service in His kingdom for all eternity. Those who were faithful in this life will be given greater responsibility in eternal life. These rewards are the opportunity to reign with Jesus and to be His Bride in everlasting life. This is eternal life with eternal glory, 2 Tim 2:10-11; Rev 19:7-8; Lk 19:11-27.

Today we will answer three questions:

1) what is the crown of righteousness; 2) when will this be given; 3) who will it be given to?

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.

The Crown of Righteousness

† ⁸ *Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness...*

- "Finally"- *λοιπός*, all that remains
 - I have lived my life as a living sacrifice to God and now I am being poured out as a drink offering and I have lived my life faithfully for Him so... *finally, all that remains...* is the impending judgement and the crown of righteousness that awaits me in everlasting life.
- "laid up"- *ἀποκειμαι*, ,
 - Compound of *ἀπό* (away from) + *κειμαι* (laid in place) = laid away from, to be kept and put away in a safe place, Col 1:5; Lk 19:20.
 - This is a present tense verb saying, "the crown of righteousness is **being reserved for me presently** as I live my life now and I will receive the reward in the future on that Day".
- "*the crown of righteousness*"- *ὁ τῆς δικαιοσύνης στέφανος*,

- “**crown**”- stephanos, στέφανος, a victor’s wreath. A laurel wreath twisted together made of plants and leaves, placed on the head of a victor. This was the practice in the Isthmian games. The victor would be “crowned with honor” by having a wreath placed on his head.
 - Not a diadema, διάδημα, a crown of authority
- The word order in the Greek is slightly unusual, ὁ τῆς δικαιοσύνης στέφανος, which doesn’t really change the meaning, but because of this unusual word order, we see that Paul is emphasizing the righteousness, δικαιοσύνης, in this statement. Which in this case, δικαιοσύνης, righteousness, comes before, and is emphasized above stephanos, στέφανος, the victor’s wreath.
 - I say this because it’s not the crown that is of main concern, but more of the righteousness that the crown is representing.
- What does it mean to be given the “crown of righteousness”? This is not imputed righteousness. Imputed righteousness is the transfer of Jesus’ righteousness to us the moment we apprehend His grace through faith. It is at this time when our spirit is accounted righteous. This is justification, Rom 4:23-5:11.
- The crown of righteousness is not justification. This is not having righteousness imputed to us. This crown isn’t so much what it is doing to us, but what it is representing. It is a reward.
- The stephanos, στέφανος, is a victor’s wreath that awards full access to righteousness. It is a representation that we are a full partaker of His righteousness in His kingdom. It is a symbol of perfected righteousness. It is the expression of perfected righteousness and the fullness of righteousness given to the faithful.
 - Even though we have imputed righteousness that grants us eternal life with Jesus there is still a yearning to be a full partaker of perfected righteousness,
 - Galatians 5:5 says, “*we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*”
 - This is a yearning for His perfect righteousness
 - Peter says something very similar concerning the crown of glory that might help us understand this idea, **1 Peter 5:1-4, 10; 2 Peter 1:2-4, 10-11**.
 - This is being a full partaker of perfected righteousness
 - The hope of righteousness is being a partaker of the divine nature, obtaining perfected righteousness, and walking in eternal glory for all eternity.
 - I believe the crown of righteousness is the symbol of just that. The symbol of the fullness of God’s righteousness in effect in our eternal lives.
 - Those who are partakers of the divine nature and have been crowned in perfected righteousness will be given the right to rule in righteousness and the privilege of reigning in righteousness with the King for all eternity, Rev 3:11-12, 21; 2:26-27; 5:10; 20:4; 2 Tim 2:12.

This answers the question, “what is the crown of righteousness?”; now we need to know, “when is the crown being given and by whom is it given?”

† ⁸ ...*which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day...*

- “**the Lord, the Righteous Judge**”- in our study on **4:1**, we laid the groundwork for this verse. Paul makes a solemn charge to Timothy on the basis that Jesus is the Righteous Judge, and all judgement has been given to Him by the Father, Acts 10:42-43; 17:31; John 5:22, 26-27, 30.
 - Jesus is the perfect Judge who will judge in perfect righteousness and justice. He sees all and will never judge wrongly- He is the Righteous and Perfect Judge, Heb 4:12.
- “**will give**”- apodidomi, ἀποδίδωμι,
 - Compound of ἀπό (away from) + δίδωμι (to give) = to give away,
 - This word is used many times in the NT and all of which have the sense of a payment for a service, or to repay what was owed, or a reward. And there are two verses that I want to share with you that fit perfectly with what Paul is saying in our text, **Matt 16:24-27; Rev 22:12**.

- “on that Day”- Paul is speaking of a specific time and event when his crown of righteousness will be given to him. Paul has already mentioned “that Day” two other times in this epistle and alludes to it in a third, **2 Tim 1:12, 18, 4:1**. Let’ read **1 Cor 3:12-13; 2 Cor 5:10** to find out when “that Day” occurs.
 - This is the Day when rewards are given to faithful Christians in heaven at the Bema Seat Judgement.

Bema Seat Judgement

The Bema, βῆμα, Seat Judgment is only for the righteous in Christ and this is the only judgement that we are given rewards for faithfulness, and these rewards are displayed as the laurel wreath of victory, a stephanos, στέφανος, crown, 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Cor 3:9-15; 1 Cor 9:24-27; Rom 14:10-12.

This happens in heaven after the rapture and before the Second Coming of Christ. And for those Christians who are caught away at the rapture, this Judgement happens immediately after being caught up and before the Great Tribulation begins. We see the evidence of this in Rev 4:4, 10-11. The 24 elders, who represent the raptured saints, all have stephanos, στέφανος, crowns and they cast them down before the throne of God. And then Jesus begins to loose the seals on the scroll and this begins the 70th week of Daniel, the Great Tribulation week.

The Bema, βῆμα, is an evaluation when rewards are given to the faithful and we are examined by the fire of dokimazo, δοκιμάζω, an examination to prove our genuineness, **1 Cor 3:11-15**. This is when all the sin and selfish desires of this old man are burned away and we walk into glory purified, as gold is refined in the fire, and we are purified for all eternity, 1 Cor 3:11-15; 2 Cor 5:10; Rom 14:9-12; Dan 7:9-10. It is a judgement in which Christians are examined according to their faithfulness to Jesus, and the condition of their heart toward God, and rewarded for the proven genuineness that endures the fire of judgement and remains, Rev 3:11; 22:12; 1Cor 9:25; Matt 5:12, 16:27; 2 Jn 1:8, Lk 14:14.

The Bema, βῆμα, doesn’t condemn, katakrima, κατάκριμα, Rom 8:1, you for the bad or useless things you have done in life, it just burns them all away, thank you Jesus! The wood, hay and stubble are the things done in this life that had no eternal value. They don’t even have to be sinful, they are just the things that weren’t built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. It’s the things that endure the fire, the faithfulness we had in this life to the Master to be a useful vessel. This proven genuineness is refined in the fire, and will remain. And it is this that remains, that we are rewarded for. We aren’t punished for those useless things that burned away. In fact, this burning away is a kind of freedom from the flesh. The Bema is an exciting time, because it is the culmination of the sanctification process that began on the earth and will be complete in heaven as we walk into eternal glory in Him. This is when we are honored to be His bride.

This is what Paul was striving for when he says, he presses on toward the prize of the high calling, Phil 3:12-14. When he says he runs the race to obtain the crown and he disciplines his body so he isn’t disqualified, adokimos, ἄδοκιμος, **1 Cor 9:27; 2 John 8; Rev 3:11**. We must strive and be faithful so that we will receive the reward...

This brings us to our final question- Who will be given the crown of righteousness? Paul answers this in the final statement, “...to all who have loved His appearing.” This is it. It’s not complicated, but it does take discipline, hard work and faithfulness. Remember the analogy to the Athlete, 2 Tim 2:5, “he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules” And these rules are: Discipline and Faithfulness, or we can sum it up in this one statement from verse 8, “...to those who have loved His appearing.” It’s strictly a matter of the heart.

† ⁸ ... and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

- “have loved his appearing”- ἡγαπηκόσι τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ,
 - Loved is agapao, ἀγαπάω, the verb of agape, ἀγάπη, unconditional, Godly love. This is the love of Romans 5:5- “the love of God that was poured in our hearts by the Holy Spirit”. But just because you have the love of God in your heart, doesn’t necessarily mean you love His appearing. There are many

Christians who are distracted with the affairs of this world and they could care less of His appearing.

- It doesn't mean they will burn in hell, but they have forfeited their inheritance, they won't be caught up to be with Jesus at the rapture, and they surely won't have any rewards.
- Also, notice the tense of this word. It is NOT to those who WILL love His appearing (future tense), but those who HAVE loved (perfect tense). This is a decision we must make while we are on the earth in this life. We must have loved His appearing in this life, otherwise, you miss out on the rewards, the inheritance, the glory, and the opportunity to be His bride for all eternity, 1 Cor 15:31-34, 51-58; 1 Pet 5:1-11; James 1:12; Rev 2:10, 2:26; Lk 12:42-44; Matt 25:14-30;
 - This is a life of faithfulness that starts right now. Be ready and watchful now, 2 Tim 4 5; 2 Cor 6:2; Heb 4:7.

His Appearing

“**Appearing**”- epiphaneia, ἐπιφάνεια. We studied this word back in 4:1. It is a compound word meaning, “to shine upon”. The epiphaneia, ἐπιφάνεια of Jesus is when He has shined His light upon men.

There have and will be Four Appearings of Jesus Christ

1) His first coming, His incarnation, John 1:4-5, 14; 2 Tim 1:10; Lk 1:17; 2) He appeared again for 40 days after His Resurrection, Mk 16:14; Lk 24:31; Jn 21:1,14; 3) His third appearing will be at the catching away of the saints, the rapture, 2 Tim 4:8; Col 3:4; 1 Pet 5:4; 1 Jn 2:28, 3:2-3; 4) and finally, His fourth appearing at His second coming when He defeats the anti-christ, 2 Thess 2:8.

When we read verse 8, I think most of us think of His future coming, and we are not wrong to think this. “*Our blessed hope is the **appearing** of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ*”, but go with me to **Titus 2:11-14**. It is not just His future coming we need to be in love with, but more importantly His first appearing when He conquered death, paid for our sins, and rose from the dead to bring us life in Him, **Heb 9:26-28**.

You can never lose focus on the cross. And when you look at the cross, you see the future life He bought for you. This is why Paul says, we preach Christ and Him crucified. Paul tells us to run the race with endurance “*focusing on Jesus who endured the cross, despised the shame and is now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*”, Heb 12:1-2. The cross will always bring you to the future, our eternal life in Him. This is why in heaven Jesus is portrayed as the Lamb slain and the 24 elders who have been given these crowns are circled around the Lamb singing, “*worthy is the Lamb who was slain, for you are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and nation, and You have made us kings and priests to our God and we shall reign on the earth*”, Rev 5:9-10, 12. For all eternity we will never forget the cross and the redemption we have because of His blood.

Finally, all that remains is that which is reserved and laid away for me in heaven, the victor's crown of righteousness, [a symbol of perfected righteousness granted to the faithful in Christ], which the Lord, the Righteous Judge will reward to me on that Day [at the Bema Seat Judgement], and not to me only, but to all those who have loved his appearing [to those who have loved his first appearing when He put away sin and abolished death by the sacrifice of Himself and now we too are watchful for His glorious appearing when He will come to catch us way to Himself into eternal life with eternal glory].

John 14:1-4, 6, 21-23; Rev 22:12-13, 17, 20