

## Sermon Notes

# WORSHIP SERVICE - 9.24.2023

## PART 29 - THE FINAL LAP

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### 2 Timothy 4:6-22

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

9 Do your best to come to me soon. 10 For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. 12 Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. 15 Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. 16 At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! 17 But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus. 21 Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.

22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

### II. FINISHING WELL

- This letter to Timothy is an intensely personal letter.
- Paul has expressed his concern for Timothy, he wants him to endure, he wants him to persevere, and to follow Paul in his example of suffering for the gospel.
- Recall from our last teaching, that Paul charges Timothy with his ministry priority—to preach the Word.
- And the charge is urgent because of Timothy's ministry context.
- And the final component of the charge called him to faithfulness and boldness.

- Be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, Fulfill your ministry.
- The link between our text today and the end of v5 is clear.
- *“Timothy, you must fulfill your ministry because my ministry is drawing to a close.”*

### **Paul’s present reality**

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

- Paul is expressing with this vivid imagery his present reality, he is going to die.
  - Imagery is that of a sacrifice of a lamb on the altar and the drink offering (Lev. 23:13; Num. 28:24).
  - Paul saw his whole life as one of sacrifice unto the Lord.
  - Indeed, the life of every believer is to be one of sacrifice.
  - Romans 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.
  - Philippians 3:16-17 holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. 17 Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.
  - That’s how Paul viewed his whole life. He has poured out his life for Christ and his gospel.
  - *“The time of my departure has come”*—this is maritime imagery, the act of loosing a ship from its moorings so it can sail off into the sea.
  - Paul knows the end of this life is the beginning of another.
  - He also wrote in Philippians that it was his *“desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better”* (Phil. 1:23).
  - *“The far better”* was always on the mind of the apostle and that was now in his sights.
- 
- But Paul’s death represents another present reality. It means Timothy will no longer have Paul.
  - He will be faced with a reality that his spiritual father in the faith, his mentor, his friend, will be gone.
  - Paul’s present reality means that it’s time for Timothy to step into Paul’s shoes.
  - He must courageously step up and fulfill his ministry.
  - He must pour out his life for the gospel. His life must be one of sacrifice unto the Lord.
  - Timothy must be faithful in his generation and we must be faithful in ours.

### **Paul's past accomplishments**

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

- The three short expressions sum up almost three decades of faithful ministry.
- Paul gives a three-fold assessment of his service to the Lord.
- *“I have fought the good fight”*
- In his previous letter to Timothy, he called him to *“wage the good warfare”* (1Tim. 1:18).
- The Christian life and ministry is one of warfare.
- Paul has been an example of faithfully fighting the good fight.

- He characterized the nature of the ministry that Timothy was called as that of a soldier who lives to please his commanding officer.
  - Paul was a battle tested soldier of the cross.
  - Paul gives an example of fighting the good fight of the faith when he mentions in v16 how everyone had deserted him at his first defense.
  - But he held his ground. He demonstrated what it means to “be ready in season and out of season.”
  - He fully proclaimed the gospel! He was an unwavering soldier of Christ.
  - Now you and I must also wage the good warfare.
- “I have finished the race”
  - The race is the course that God had set for Paul to run. And Paul had completed his course.
  - Notice he writes, “I have finished the race,” not “I have WON the race.”
  - He has completed everything that God had set before him to do.
  - Hebrews 12:1c ...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...”
  - We all have a race to run that has been set before us by our sovereign God.
  - It was Paul’s passion to finish his course.
  - Acts 20:24 But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.
  - May we make it our mission to be faithful to do what God has called us to and run with endurance to finish our course.
- “I have kept the faith”
  - Paul is saying that he has faithfully kept what he was entrusted with, the good deposit, the treasure of the gospel.
  - He preserved the purity of the gospel that was entrusted to him by our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - Now Timothy is charged to keep it, as you and I are as well.
- This is the summary of Paul’s life and ministry. This is his assessment.
  - But not everyone would share this assessment of Paul’s life and ministry.
  - Some thought Paul had thrown his life away (Philippians 3).
  - Some thought that Paul’s labors were in vain and that his ministry was wasted.
  - He shares his past accomplishments to encourage Timothy.
  - Timothy will have to know how to respond when he is faced by the world telling him that his labors are in vain and that he is wasting his life following Jesus and preaching the gospel.
  - Nothing lived in this life for the glory of God and for the name and fame of Jesus Christ is ever wasted.
  - Paul knew he had not wasted his life.
  - And we must not waste ours!

### **Paul’s future hope v8**

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

- What’s left for Paul? The only thing that remains is the prize for finishing well.
- He calls the prize "the crown of righteousness."

- Notice it is NOT a crown of personal glory, it is the crown of righteousness, which Jesus, the righteous Judge, will award to him at his coming.
  - Paul was already righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. He had always, and even at this point, been trusting in Christ's righteousness.
  - But at Christ's appearing, he will receive the crown of righteousness, the permanent reality of the righteousness that was already his.
  - Paul would be vindicated at the appearing of our Lord.
- 
- But this is not just for Paul, but also for everyone who has set their hearts on his his glorious appearing.
  - The same vindication awaits for all of us.
  - That's the confidence that every believer should have.
  - 1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.
  - Paul is spurring Timothy to faithfulness by fixing his eyes on the prize.
  - Christ's appearing is a motivating hope for every follower of Christ.
  - 1 John 3:2-3 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.
  - Jonathan Edwards, "*Lord, stamp eternity on my eyeballs.*"
  - Paul longed for that Day. He endured unimaginable suffering for Christ because his hope was not in this life.
- 
- Do you long for his appearing?
  - We, like Paul, we must fix our eyes on that future hope.

### III. FINAL REQUESTS

#### HE REQUESTS THE PRESENCE OF HIS FRIENDS

- Paul had already expressed that there were many who had already deserted him.
  - 1:15 ...all who are in Asia turned away from me..."
  - 4:16 at his first defense he was left on his own.
  - Paul knew the pain of desertion and betrayal.
  - Demas abandons Paul and leaves for Thessalonica.
  - "In love with this present world..." He loved his life too much, he was a coward.
  - This betrayal was deeply painful for Paul.
  - Paul mentions Crescens and Titus had also left for other ministry grounds so they were no longer with the apostle.
  - And Tychicus, he is sending to Ephesus to relieve Timothy when he leaves for Rome.
  - He mentions that only Luke, his faithful friend, is left with him.
  - The apostle is lonely. He longs for company from his brothers, he longs for the refreshment of friendship as he is waiting to meet his end.
  - He wants his beloved son in the faith to come to him soon.
  - 1:4 I long to see you that I may be filled with joy.
- 
- He requests that Timothy also bring Mark along with him to see Paul.
  - You may recall that Paul and Barnabas had a huge falling out concerning Mark. (Acts 13)
  - At some point, Paul and Mark reconcile, their relationship is healed. So much so that Paul says that Mark is useful to him for ministry.

- We all need the blessing of human friendships, especially that of our brothers and sisters in the Lord, who can encourage us in the faith and lift up our arms when we are weak.
- In a few months, Paul would be reunited with some of his friends, Timothy and Mark, would join Luke.
- Early church fathers record that all three were present for Paul's departure from this world.
- What a comfort that would have been for Paul.

## **HE REQUESTS CLOTHING AND BOOKS**

- He asks Timothy to stop by Carpus' house in Troas and pick up items that Paul had left there.
- The cloak, a warm coat since Paul is in a dark, damp, and cold dungeon this would be beneficial.
- In v21 he encourages Timothy to do arrive before winter.
- He asks that he bring the books and parchments.
- These were practical needs that would have brought some comfort to the apostle.

## **HE EXPRESSES THE NEARNESS OF GOD'S PRESENCE**

- Paul warns Timothy to avoid Alexander the coppersmith. This was a dangerous individual who opposed Paul.
- He also mentions the events surrounding his first defense and how everyone left him.
- He writes, "The Lord stood by me and strengthened me."
- Paul was so keenly aware of the Lord's presence and was strengthened by the Lord.
- It's why he could exhort Timothy in 2:1 to be "strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus."
- Paul knows the Lord is with him through every trial and hardship he faced.
- "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom."
- What great confidence Paul had in God's rescue, providence and care.
- What a great reminder for us and a great reassurance of the providence of God in our own trials and hardships.
- He will strengthen us and he will enable us just as he did with Paul.
- That reminder causes Paul to break out in this spontaneous doxology "To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."
- As Paul issues some final greetings to some of the beloved saints in Ephesus and expresses the greetings of some of the brothers to Timothy, he reminds Timothy of the Lord's abiding presence.
- "The Lord be with your Spirit. Grace be with you."
- His enabling grace is everything Timothy will need to finish his life well.
- And his grace is everything you need, to finish your life well.

## **APPLICATION AND REFLECTION**

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?