

2 Timothy 4:6-22 – “A Life Well Lived”

Summary Statement

Paul reveals to Timothy that his life is coming to an end, yet Paul shows how he is at peace. He's confident he's lived faithfully and has completed what God has for him. This passage sets a great example for Timothy and the church of how to live a life that counts.

Outline:

1. A Life of Faithfulness – 4:6-8
2. A Life of Forgiveness – 4:9-16
3. A Life of Faith – 4:17-18
4. A Life of Friendships – 4:19-22

1. A Life of Faithfulness – 4:6-8

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

Paul knew his life was coming to an end. This is not a man giving up or getting down. This is a man who knew he's done what he's been called to do.

He sees his life being ***poured out as a drink offering***. That may sound a little odd to us today, but this was Old Testament imagery that pertained to the sacrifices. A drink offering was an offering poured over the altar upon another sacrifice. It brought about a sweet fragrance before the Lord.

- **Numbers 28:7–8**, *"And its drink offering shall be one-fourth of a hin for each lamb; in a holy place you shall pour out the drink to the Lord as an offering. ⁸ The other lamb you shall offer in the evening; as the morning grain offering and its drink offering, you shall offer it as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord."*
- Now for Paul to be poured out as a drink offering means that there had to be something to pour out. In other words, you need to be filled with something if you're going to pour something out. And Paul certainly lived a full life. He's been faithfully serving the Lord and his life has been a sweet aroma of fruitful ministry to the Lord.

Another interesting parallel here is that as this drink offering was poured out on the already burning sacrifice, it would just be vaporized.

- James would write in **James 4:14**, "...For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."
- Our lives are here but for a moment in the scope of eternity. Are you making the most of it?

Paul saw that his **departure is at hand**.

Now this word departure had a few possible references:

1. It can mean to loose a ship from its moorings. Paul was about to set sail for heaven's shores. It's a time where he can say goodbye to the struggles of this world.
2. This word can also refer to taking down a tent; to break camp. Interesting how Paul would refer to our earthly bodies as a tent. It's not meant to last. I'm not sure how many of you like camping. I don't mind camping as long as I know it's gonna end. I wouldn't want to think that this tent is going to be my permanent dwelling. I've been in tents and woken up in the morning after it rained and have had puddles inside the tent. It leaks, it smells, it's not durable – it's no wonder Paul uses this as a metaphor for our bodies. And what is very satisfying is to break camp, to roll up that tent (or just leave it there) and think, tonight, I'm gonna sleep well!!!
 - For Paul, that's what death was like. He was leaving this temporary tent, to inherit a mansion. That spoke of a new glorified body – a house not made with hands.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:1**, "*For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*"
3. This word also refers to loosing a prisoner. Paul was not receiving execution, but escape. For Paul, death was like being freed from this earthly prison.
4. Lastly, this word departure can mean to unyoke an ox. Paul had spent a great part of his life plowing hearts for God and serving the Lord. He is about to hear those words: "*Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord*" (Matthew 25:21). For Paul, death was like having that yoke lifted and entering into rest!

Death for a lot of people can be filled with anxiety, fear, regret. Paul lived in a way that when it was time to go, he was ready, willing and excited because he knew his past failures has been covered by Jesus, his present has been filled

with faithfulness, and his future is looking bright because of the faithfulness of Jesus!

Paul looks back on his life and describes it with three different expressions...

4:7 - *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

I have fought the good fight – Paul has been in a battle for truth. He had encouraged Timothy in his first letter to *fight the good fight of faith* (1 Tim 6:12). There is a fight worth fighting! We need to contend for the truth.

- The word for fight is the Greek word *agon*, where we get our word *agony*.
- In other words, this fight can sometimes be a real struggle. Remember, we're not just dealing with those creeping into the church looking to lead people astray with a false doctrine, but we're wrestling against '*principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*' (Ephesians 6:11–12).
- We need to be ready to do battle every day because whether you want to think so or not, the battle is being fought. And Paul has been a faithful combatant in it.

I have finished the race – Paul has been running hard to the finish line.

Philippians 3:13–14, "*Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*"

Paul's desire is that he would complete the course that was set before him.

- No one chooses their course; it's prepared for us. And no two courses are the same, yet we are called to run with equal determination to finish it.
- And as Paul's life is coming to an end with the finish line in front of him, he's not sad or bummed out. No one running a marathon sees the finish line in the distance and thinks, '*No – it's too soon! I'm not ready for this to end.*' No way! You're rejoicing that you've finished the race. And you get to then rest in your victory. We get to rest in Jesus' victory!

I have kept the faith – Though Paul has been through some real ups and downs, he has kept trusting in Jesus. He hasn't given up. The shipwrecks, beatings, imprisonments, abandonments has not caused Paul to waiver in his faith. He never once thought, '*Is all this torture really worth it? Maybe I'd be better*

off creating my own following and making a new religion. One without persecution.' Paul has stayed true to Jesus.

But this expression also has a secondary meaning. Paul has kept the truth, like a steward entrusted to protect his masters' goods.

- "He has guarded the treasure entrusted to him (cf. 1:12, 14; 1 Tim. 6:20); he preserved divine truth with the purity in which he has received it and he wields that truth to confront and eradicate apostasy in the church."¹

In each of these things, Paul is showing that he has finished strong. That's what matters. How you begin is important, but how you finish is of utmost importance.

- I love a good comeback story in sports. When you see a team just unable to put anything together and they are getting beat bad. It may look hopeless for them. But then in the last half or even in the dying minutes of the game, there is an opportunity to turn things around and to see a team comeback and win after all hope was seemingly lost, is so exciting to watch. Everything that happened at the beginning of the game is forgotten.
- What's important is how you finish. Don't let potential mess-ups of your past hold you back – God's grace can cover that. Rather look ahead. Keep fighting the good fight, finish the race, keep the faith – finish well, because it will all be worth it.

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.*

Paul was excited to see that finish line because it meant the distribution of his due reward for faithful service.

Paul sees a crown that is laid up for him that ***the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give*** [him] ***on that Day***.

The scene Paul brings to mind is the Isthmus games happening in Corinth. An athlete would stand before the judge and receive his reward for how he competed. The victors would get a laurel wreath, a crown to walk around with to show their success at the games. It would be great for a few days, but then it would begin to wilt, and smell, and you really wouldn't want this salad sitting on your head any longer.

¹ Swindoll, C. R. (2010). *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (p. 237). Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan

- But Paul was going to receive a crown of righteousness – one that would not perish.
- **1 Corinthians 9:25**, *“And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.”*

Paul was confident of this because he has a righteous Judge. They may not have been just in Rome, but God will be no respecter of persons and will judge accurately because He not only knows the action, He knows the heart.

And all this great reward is not just for the spiritual superstar like a Paul; it's for ***all who have loved His appearing***. What does that mean? It means you are looking forward to being with Jesus for eternity. Sadly, there are some Christians who are not so much looking forward to that day. Why? Because either they have things that they need to get right first, or else they are loving this world too much. That's a dangerous thing as we'll see next...

2.A Life of Forgiveness – 4:9-16

4:9-10 - *Be diligent to come to me quickly; ¹⁰ for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica— Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.*

As Paul's life was drawing to a close, he longed for his friends, especially to see Timothy again. He encourages him to come quickly as time is running out for Paul.

And then Paul brings up a very hurtful situation – a deserter; one who has forsaken him – Demas. Demas has been mentioned elsewhere in Scripture and he was a fellow laborer with Paul.

- **Colossians 4:14**, *"Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you."*
- **Philemon 23–24**, *"Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, ²⁴ as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers."*

But something happened along the way. Perhaps Demas wasn't willing to count the cost as Paul did. Perhaps Demas wasn't ready to go to prison as he witnessed Paul chained in this cell. And the enticements and allurements of this world began to set in and draw him away from his love for Jesus.

- To love this world is not to say he loved the planet; like he became some environmentalist. The world here speaks of the fallen world system that functions according to Satan's values. Demas placed greater value in those things than he did in serving Jesus. He chose comfort over conviction.
- **1 John 2:15–17**, *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."*
- **James 4:4**, *"Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."*

Paul stands as an example of finishing well. Demas serves as the example of not finishing well.

Crescens and Titus have also moved on, but they did so to continue the ministry and work of the Lord. This was not a negative reference.

4:11 - *Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.*

Luke was one person that had managed to stay with Paul, and what a God send he probably was. Luke was a physician. What a blessing to have someone like this by your side during your last days.

Get Mark.... Now this is interesting, because Paul and Barnabas had a big falling out over Mark. Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them on their second missionary trip, but Paul did not want to because Mark had previously left them. So they ended up parting company and Barnabas took Mark, while Paul took Silas. But Mark matured and Paul didn't hold a grudge.

- God is all about restoration. And as children of God, we should desire to see broken relationships restored. Walk in grace and forgiveness.
- Paul did that and he gained a friend. One who he is calling for personally because he is useful for him in the ministry.
- How good it is to remind ourselves that God is a God of second chances. We sure need them!

4:12-13 - *And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. ¹³ Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.*

Tychicus (Colossians 4:7) was sent to Ephesus to be Timothy's replacement and relieve him so he could come to Paul.

Paul was looking for a little extra warmth and covering, so he asks for his cloak. But then he asks for his books and parchments. This probably contained Scripture or previous writings of his. Whatever the case, Paul was staying active right up to the end.

4:14-16 - *Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. ¹⁵ You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words. ¹⁶ At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.*

Paul relates how Alexander did him much harm. He was mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:20. But notice how Paul doesn't put a bounty on his head. He doesn't tell Timothy to hunt him down. He just says, beware of him. Paul realizes that it's the Lord who will repay him.

- Isn't it nice to know that we don't have to live with a vengeful attitude. That only hurts us. Paul left it all to the Lord. We can do the same.

This is exactly what Paul did with those who left him at his first defense. He doesn't call down lightning upon them, but rather he responds as our great Savior did on the cross, *'Father forgive them'*.

3.A Life of Faith – 4:17-18

4:17-18 - *But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. ¹⁸ And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!*

Paul might have had many people abandon him, but he knew the Lord was with him through it all. When nobody is around you, do you look to the Lord or blame the Lord? Because in the absence of support, we can tend to think that God has abandoned us too. Never go there. Because the Lord wants to comfort and strengthen you in that time. He wants you to know that He is sufficient. We have all we need when we have the Lord.

I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. Was this a real lion? Some say he was put in the coliseum to be devoured by lions but was miraculously delivered. Others think this is a reference to Satan, and his work. Or possibly Nero. Either way, Paul was delivered and Paul knew that the Lord would deliver

from every evil work. Paul's beheading at the order of Nero was not evil winning out, this was the Lord bringing Paul home. This was God using a faithful life to be a witness and example to all of us through the ages. Evil did not win out. Paul's life was not taken because of evil work, it was all a part of God's plan

4. A Life of Friendships – 3:19-22

4:19-22 - *Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. ²⁰ Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick. ²¹ Do your utmost to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren. ²² The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.*

Seventeen people are referred to here showing Paul to be more than just a soul-winner but a friend-maker as well. He had a heart for the lost, but didn't just convert and continue on, he developed relationships and friendships.

And it all ends with grace! This is the starting point for us, and may it continue to be what our life consists of all the way to the end.

One day, every one of us will come to the end of our race. May we be able to say with Paul, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith' – and may we be confident that the One who was faithful to us in life will be faithful to us in death.

Points to Ponder:

1. You may not rejoice in the things of your past, but what matters is how you finish. God isn't done with you yet, so finish strong.
2. Though you may feel alone at times, you never are. Jesus promises to never leave you nor forsake you. Are you being strengthened in Him?
3. Jesus' grace abounds to us, are we exercising grace to others in our life? Paul began the letter with grace and he ends the letter with grace. May God's grace truly be evident in your life.