

December 3, 2017

“Finish the Race and Keep the Faith”

Focal Passage: 2 Timothy 4:6-22 (NASB)

Cross References: Numbers 15:1-29; Proverbs 24:17; Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-28; Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37-39; Romans 12:19-21; Philippians 2:17-18; Colossians 4:10

Lesson Idea: We need to fight the good fight, finish the course, and keep the faith.

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Nov 26 Romans 8-10	Nov 27 Romans 11-13
Nov 28 Romans 14-16	Nov 29 1 Cor 1-4
Nov 30 1 Cor 5-8	Dec 1 1 Cor 9-11
Dec 2 1 Cor 12-14	Dec 3 1 Cor 15-16

Background:

As Paul closes out his second letter to Timothy, he realized that his time on earth was growing short. He shared his sense of fulfillment in finishing the work that the Lord had assigned to him. He trusted that God could rescue him again; but even if he didn't, he knew that the Lord would bring him safely into His heavenly kingdom.

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 course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future 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.

Personal Concerns

9 Make every effort to come to me soon; 10 for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service. 12 But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13 When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. 15 Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching.

16 At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. 17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to 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, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus. 21 Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren.

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

DISCUSSION:

- v 6. What is a “drink offering” and why would Paul say that he was being poured out like that? (see Numbers 15:1-29; Philippians 2:17-18) How did he know that the time of his departure had come?
- V 7. What does it mean to...
 - Fight the good fight:
 - Finish the course:
 - Keep the faith:(see Hebrews 12:1-2)
- V 8. What is the *crown of righteousness*? Who receives it and why? Why does Paul call the Lord “the righteous Judge?” What does it mean to “love His appearing?”
- V 9-12. Why did Paul want Timothy to come to him? What does he say about Mark, and why is that significant? (Mark was also called John Mark. See his history with Paul in Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37-39; Colossians 4:10, and compare it with this passage written at the end of Paul's life.) How does it encourage you to allow God to redeem the rest of your life?
- V 13. Why did Paul desire his books and parchments? If you were facing the end of your life, would your desire be for reading God's Word?

- V 14. How did Paul feel about Alexander? What did Paul know God will do? How should we view those who oppose us and wrong us? (see Proverbs 24:17; Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-28; Romans 12:19-21)
- V 15. Why do we need to be on guard against those who oppose the Lord's teaching? How do we stay on guard? (see 2 Timothy 3:15-17)
- V 16. How does Paul's attitude towards those who deserted him resemble that of Jesus? (see Luke 23:14)
- V 17. What did the Lord do for Paul in the midst of his trials, and why? How does building your life around the Gospel help strengthen your confidence in the Lord? How strong is your confidence in the Lord?
- V 18. What was Paul convinced God would do for him in the future, and why?
- V 19-22. What do Paul's closing greetings tell us about his ministry and relationship with the church?

APPLICATION:

- ✓ At the end of your life, what will your final words be?
- ✓ How are you fighting the good fight today?
- ✓ How are you keeping the faith?

Lesson by Stan Fike

NOTES from David Guzik, 2 Timothy 4:

V 6. The idea of a drink offering is first presented in Genesis 35:14, where Jacob poured out a drink offering before the Lord as a sacrifice. In the Mosaic Law, drink offerings could be a part of sacrifice to the Lord (Exodus 29:40-41 and Leviticus 23:13).

V 7. **The time of my departure is at hand...** Paul's exhortation to Timothy is therefore even more meaningful because he knew he was passing from the scene and Timothy must carry the torch. God's workmen pass on, but God's work continues.

I have finished the race: Throughout his ministry Paul used the picture of the race and the Christian being an athlete running that race (Philippians 3:12-14, Acts

20:24, 1 Corinthians 9:24, Hebrews 12:1). Now he knew his race was just about finished.

V 8. There are two main words for crown in the New Testament. One refers to a royal crown and the other to the victor's crown (the *stephanos*). Here Paul referred to the victor's crown – the crown that was essentially a trophy, recognizing that one had competed according to the rules and had won the victory.

In that day winners in the world of sports received a crown of olive or ivy leaves that soon withered and died. But the crown for God's people lasts forever (1 Corinthians 9:25, 1 Peter 5:4).

We are promised the *crown of life* if we will endure temptation (James 1:12).

Some people wonder if we will walk around heaven with crowns on, and everyone will notice who has the bigger and better crowns. But in Revelation 4:10, the elders surrounding the throne of God take their crowns and cast them before Jesus – giving any trophy they have received right back to Jesus. . .

Some feel that Paul was too focused on rewards and that it isn't proper for Christians to think much about the reward they will receive in heaven. Yet God has no problem motivating us with heavenly reward. It will be worth it. We must hang in there now. We will be rewarded.

V 10. Demas was mentioned in Paul's earlier letters as a fellow worker but later he went astray (Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24). His previous faithfulness made it all more painful for Paul.

V 17-18. **And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion:** God had delivered Paul before so he had no doubt about God's power or goodness. Paul just didn't know if this time his fate would end with be delivered out of the mouth of the lion or being preserved for His heavenly kingdom.

To Him be glory forever and ever: This reflects an unreasonable optimism and joy. Paul faced his last moments of this life and he was, but many accounts, penniless, friendless, possessionless, cold, without adequate clothing, and destined for a soon death. Yet, especially knowing the heavenly reward waiting for him, he would not trade his place with anyone.

V 20. **Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick:** Paul was a man used by God to perform remarkable miracles of healing (such as in Acts 14:8-10 and 19:11-20), yet he left Trophimus sick. This shows that even the Apostle Paul did not have miraculous healing powers to use at his own will. He could only give a gift of healing if God it was God's will and timing.