

2 Timothy 4:5-8 “Passing the baton”

I. Introduction

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III. Vs. 7-8 Finishing well

I. Introduction

Charles Spurgeon had a young pastor come to him and complain that he didn't have as big of a church as his talent warranted. Spurgeon asked, “*How many do you teach too?*” and the pastor replied, “*Oh about 100 per week.*” To this Spurgeon replied, “*That will be enough to give account for on the day of judgment.*”

II. Vs. 5-6 Four ways to be faithful

Vs. 5 **Paul had said people won't always want to hear the truth so our resolve will need to be bigger than our rejection!** Verse 5 summarizes what can be our experience as it says we may need to “endure afflictions” and Paul goes on to tell Timothy **four ways in which to be faithful** when people aren't applauding your words they're attacking your person.

1. **Steady**: “*Be watchful in all things...*” He uses the word “*watchful*” and by this he is speaking of consistency in our commitment. We need to be “READY” in making Jesus known and “STEADY” as well. We know who our foundation is, and He is our ROCK and enables to stand up against the storms, pressures and shaking of our lives.
2. **Sustain**: “*..endure afflictions..*” Throughout Paul's letters this has been a frequent admonishment as he had faced many difficulties and persecutions that would have caused many to quit. Interesting that Paul doesn't say to “*smooth things out*” he says instead “*endure afflictions*”.

3. **Social**: “..do the work of an evangelist...” Paul was awaiting his death along with the increased reality of persecution for making Jesus known, reveals that Christians would by nature be more inclined to withdraw from society to instead be more social with the society we are called to reach. **The “WORK” of an evangelists is verbal but requires us to be around people to make Him known in the first place.**
4. **Succeed**: “...fulfill your ministry.” Paul encourages Timothy to succeed which is to keep at it until either you are finished, or He is finished with you. There was not a sense of “retirement” with Paul only a sense of “recycling” as what we may have been called to do in this life has finished its course and now we have been moved by the Holy Spirit to do what He has called us to do elsewhere.

Vs. 6 Timothy will never be Paul and he isn't being asked too, instead he is being asked to run the race that Christ has given him to run. Paul boldly declares, “***I am already***”! What wonderful declaration this is when he is but a few weeks away from being put to death. Paul declares his life is, “..already being poured out as a **drink offering**...” The “*drink offering*” is a reference to the Day of Atonement where at the end of all the sacrifices a jug of wine was poured out upon the altar. Wine in the scripture is a symbol of joy and Paul clearly saw his 30 years in ministry as a sacrifice of pure joy. The word “*departure*” describes what a person does when they break camp by “*pulling up the tent pegs*”. In Greek the word would be used of a ship that loses its moorings and sets out to sea. What a wonderful way of viewing our departure as we have be tethered to this life, earth bound but at the time of our departure we will be let lose to sail and do what we have been designed to do worship.

III. Vs. 7-8 Finishing well

Vs. 7 Paul uses **three phrases that looks back upon his 30 years of service** and what had been accomplished:

1. ***“I have fought the good fight”***: He doesn't say he fought **“A”** good fight but **“THE”** good fight. The importance was not the FIGHT but that the fight was given Him by the Lord. There are a lot of folks that go down swinging, but many are taken the fight to windmills instead of what the Lord has called them too. In Ephesians chapter 6 Paul said that battle was not against flesh and blood, people. No it was in the spiritual arena! Satan is forever trying to get us to drop THE FIGHT for A FIGHT which will keep us from fighting what we should have been fighting all along.
2. ***“I have finished the race”***: In Philippians chapter 3 verse 14 Paul talked about this race when he said, *“he pressed towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ”*. The race is the Christian life lived moment by moment, step by step. Every moment of our Christian life is engaged in this race and the finish line is our death where we will be given the prize of eternal life in glorified body.
3. ***“I have kept the faith”***: Paul is speaking of the whole body of truth, the Word of God, what he called in 1 Corinthians 2:7 *“The hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages....”* Paul is on his final hours, looking back upon 30 years and the journey that God had placed him upon, with all the twists and turns. And he says to Timothy, *“I have kept the faith.”* When others did not and turned away Paul stayed with truth. When others tried to beat the truth out of him, they found and in exhaustible supply. When some had tried to distort or mistreat the truth, Paul was the standard bearer of truth.

Vs. 8 This verse deals with **four expectations Paul had upon his graduation**:

1. **Crown of righteousness**: There is a misunderstanding with our righteousness, it doesn't happen at the end of life, it happens the moment we trust Jesus as he declares us right. This "***crown***" was NOT Paul waiting for righteousness, ***it is the waiting for is the manifestation of authority and glory which accompanies our righteousness.*** In 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 17 Paul spoke of it this way "*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory..*" Peter said in 1 Peter 5:4 that those who have served faithfully will be given "*a crown of glory*". John said in 1 John 3:2 "*now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*"
2. **Which the Lord, the righteous Judge**: Paul expected that this crown would be given to him by the true King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He had stood before kings and judges and even Caesar Nero, all who examined him and found him guilty and sentenced to death. But Paul had the great expectation that he would appear before the only true judge Jesus who will pronounce him innocent and grant him eternal life! Very soon he would look into the eyes of the very person who had died for him, and he would take from those nail scarred hands the crown of righteousness!
3. **Will give me on that day**: Though this "DAY" is vague as to its location in time it is not vague as to its certainty. God has been moving all of creation to this "DAY" when all that is invisible, every mystery, and every uncertainty will be made known. It will when TIME will give way to ETERNITY as Revelation 10: 6 says in the King James Version "*that there should be time no longer*". We will no longer be stuck waiting for something to happen and everything that we experience we will be fully equipped to receive it.

4. ***Not to me only but to all who have loved His appearing***: Paul has the expectation that he won't be alone, as there will be multitudes sharing the same above three expectations. Some think that what Paul is saying is **ONLY** for those who are **awaiting his soon return** but if you look at the words "**HAVE LOVED**" they are in the **past tense** which means that Paul isn't referencing Jesus' 2nd coming but rather His 1st coming where Jesus "***abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel***", according to 2 Timothy 1:10. Do you love His appearing? Does your heart leap for joy at His conquering death? That this is speaking of you and me. All of God's people living together for all eternity, can't wait!