

Finishing the Race – Part 2

Introduction

- Paul is an elderly saint now (possibly in his late 50s or 60s).
- Paul has faithfully evangelized the lost, taught believers & made disciples for Christ.
- Paul is awaiting execution in a Roman prison & he is ready to go home to heaven – “departure” (4:6).
- Paul has fought or struggled faithfully in the Christian life & ministry (4:7a).
- The Christian struggle/fight involves suffering, hard labor, humiliation, self-control, prayer & grace (Phil. 1:29-30; Col. 1:29; 1Th. 2:2; 1Co. 9:25; Col. 4:12; 2Tim. 2:1).

I. Considering the Present (2Tim. 4:6)

Paul knew that he was about to die & he was ready for death.

II. Considering the Past (2Tim. 4:7)

A. Opposition in life & ministry

Paul accepted the Christian fight or struggle with joy & hope.

B. Endurance in life & ministry

*“the race” means the ministry – specific (Ac. 20:24; Heb. 12:1). “finish” (τελέω) means to complete an activity or process; bring it to an end. Paul is affirming that he brought his life & ministry to the end that God intended. **When God says the race is over, then the believer says “amen”.***

C. Faithfulness in life & ministry

“the faith” means that which is believed. “kept the faith” means that Paul never lost his trust in what he believed nor in whom he believed (2Tim. 1:12).

When Paul considered his past he fought, finished & kept the faith with **no regrets**. He found life & ministry to be fulfilling even without ease, wealth, perfect health, possessions, family, career, etc. He’s also without friends & support (2Tim. 4:16-18). He’s ending his life in prison ready to be executed with joy, satisfaction & hope. What about you today – life, ministry, past, etc.? Are you fulfilled, content, fighting/struggling, keeping the faith...?

III. Considering the Future (2Tim. 4:8)

A. The Day

*“that Day” is the next great event in the plan of redemption – the return of Christ (his appearing). **Believers in the OT & NT look forward to that Day – Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Zephaniah, Zachariah, Paul, Peter, John & Jesus (a day of vengeance, wrath, visitation, judgment & reward – Mt. 10:15; Rom. 2:16; 1Co. 3:13; 2Pe. 3:7, 12). Christ is the Lord & He is the righteous judge to give all the rewards to believers (2Co. 5:10).***

B. The Crown

*“the crown” means that a reward was in the future. “of righteousness” means that the reward is actually righteousness. And this righteousness is the reward for all true believers – “all who loved his appearing”. **Two kinds of people follow Christ – the ones who love Christ & His appearing and the ones who love the world (2Tim. 4:10; 1Jn. 2:15; Mt. 7:21-23).***

ILL: After a track event the runner has finished, done his best, represented the coach & team well, struggled thru the pain without giving up. The only thing remaining is the award ceremony...

APPL: The same is true for a faithful Christian at the end of life. The next great thing is the meeting with Christ & the eternal reward that He will give to you...