

PAUL'S VICTORIOUS LIFE

(2 Tim 4:6-8)

[In this beautiful final paragraph Paul gave a summary of his life as a Christian.

In Paul's words, we find him looking in (3) directions.]

A. **If you could** write down your final words to someone you love, what would you say?

B. **When Paul** took up pen & parchment to write the letter of 2nd Timothy, he knew life was about to end.

1. And yet he obviously faced death with the same confidence with which he faced life, once he became a follower of Jesus Christ.

C. **In this epistle**, Paul was passing along some final instructions to Timothy, Paul's "true son in the faith".

1. A young preacher who realized that he would have to carry on Paul's work – (what an ominous task that must have appeared to be.)

I. HE LOOKED AROUND (6)

A. **Paul realized** that his time on earth was drawing to an end.

1. He had been through his 1st hearing in the Roman court, & he could see there was no hope for his release, & yet he did not tremble at the prospect of death.
2. But rather he used his situation to remind Timothy of his duties, & that he too would be rewarded in the end if he remained faithful.
3. Peter had the same purpose in mind when he wrote the epistle of 2nd Peter (1:14).

B. Paul used two words to describe his faith & confidence in the Lord despite the peril he was in.

1. The first word is a Greek word that took 4 or 5 English words to translate.

6 For I am **already being poured out** [kjv – am ready to be offered] as a drink offering...

- a. Spendomai means to pour out as a libation, i.e. (figuratively) to devote (one's life or blood, as a sacrifice) ("spend"):
- b. The OT animal sacrifices were accompanied by grain & drink offerings.
- c. The pouring out of the wine on the altar was a symbol of complete devotion to God.
- d. Paul is implying that Caesar would not take Paul's life, his life was given as a sacrifice to the Lord.

e. In effect, Paul lived as Jesus lived.

Phil 2:7-8 – but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, & coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself & **became obedient to the point of death**, even the death of the cross.

John 10:17-18 – Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 **No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself**. I have power to lay it down, & I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

2. The second word Paul used to describe his faith & confidence in the Lord, despite his being on death row, can be seen in the word "departure".

6 For...the time of my **departure** is at hand.

- a. The Greek word analousis means a loosing up or off.
- b. The word was used in several ways in Paul's time.

- “To hoist an anchor & set sail” – Paul looked upon death as a sea voyage into eternity.
- “To take down a tent”

2 Cor 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.

- “The loosing of a prisoner” – Paul was not primarily facing an execution, he was facing a release from his prison, a loosing from his bonds.

Phil 1:21-24 – *For to me*, to live is Christ, & *to die is gain*. 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard-pressed between the two, *having a desire to depart & be with Christ, which is far better*. 24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.

- “The unyoking of an ox” – Paul had been in hard service for many years, but His master was about to unyoke him & allow him to rest from his labors.

[Will we be able to view the day of our death in this way? The second direction Paul was looking at the time of his death...]

II. HE LOOKED BACK (7)

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

- A. Paul summed up his service to the Lord by using three images.

1. He fought the good fight –

- a. Paul was not referring to his ability or his determination to do the will of Christ.
- b. Paul was saying that the fight he was in – the war in which Jesus had enlisted him – was a good one; this was a fight worth being in.

1 Tim 6:12 – *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life*, to which you were also called & have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

- c. Paul had been given the right equipment, & he put on that spiritual armor & picked up that shield of faith & that sword of the Spirit, & he knew how to use these things (**Eph 6:11**).

The 2nd image Paul used to sum up his life of service:

2. He finished the course or race –

- a. The life of faith, unlike an athletic event, is not over until death.

Acts 20:24 – But none of these things move me [**threat of imprisonment**]; nor do I count my life dear to myself, **so that I may finish my race with joy**, & the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Heb 12:1 – Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, & the sin which so easily ensnares us, & **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us**, [**till death**].

2 Tim 2:5

The 3rd image Paul used to sum up his life of service:

3. He kept the faith –

- a. People misuse the phrase “keep the faith” when they use it to simply encourage someone to move forward with their plans & not be discouraged.
- b. What the Holy Spirit means by this phrase is that Paul had been an excellent steward of God’s word.
- c. Paul faithfully discharged his duty as a servant to Jesus Christ.
- d. And as Paul was leaving the scene, Timothy was admonished to be a faithful steward of God’s word.

2 Tim 1:13-14 – **Hold fast the pattern of sound words** which you have heard from me, in faith & love which are in Christ Jesus. 14 **That good thing which was committed to you, keep** by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

Luke 12:42-44 – And the Lord said, “**Who then is that faithful & wise steward**, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 44 Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.

Luke 12:35-36 – (The Faithful Servant & the Evil Servant) – **Let your waist be girded & your lamps burning**; 36 & you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes & knocks they may open to him immediately.

[Paul was able to look back on a life of few regrets!

He was not always well-loved; he was rarely comfortable & doing fun things, but he fought hard & ran with endurance to the end of his race.

Will we be able to look back on a life like this?

The third direction Paul was looking at the time of his death...]

III. HE LOOKED AHEAD (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, & not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

A. A Greek & Roman athlete who won his contest was rewarded by the crowd who watched him perform.

1. And he was usually given a laurel wreath or a garland of oak leaves to put on his brow.

B. Paul was looking forward to something much more valuable: “a crown of righteousness”.

1. The Greek word for “crown” is *stephanos*, which means the crown or reward of a winner.

2. This crown of righteous will not fade away like those garlands & wreaths (1 Pet 5:4); the crown of righteousness is imperishable (1 Cor 9:24-27).

C. Paul was looking forward to receiving his “crown of righteousness” from “the Lord the Righteous Judge.”

1. He had faced many corrupt & biased judges, but his final judge was “the Righteous” One.

2. Paul was soon to be summoned into His Holy & Majestic Presence – and he did not fear it; he welcomed it! HOW?

1 John 4:17-19 – *Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment*; because as He is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. 19 We love Him because He first loved us.

[Are we looking forward to the same reward Paul was seeking?]

CLOSING

- A. **This** “crown of righteousness” is not a reward to Paul alone.

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, & not to me only but also *to all who have loved His appearing* (Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19).

- B. To “love His appearing” is to prepare for & to anticipate the return of our Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven.

1. Paul viewed the Lord’s return as the reason for all that he did his life.

2. But to do that we must be able to:
 - a. Look around -- “walk circumspectly redeeming the time for the days are evil”.
 - b. Look back – on a life of diligent stewardship to the Lord.
 - c. Look ahead – to the reward from Him for righteous living.