

A FAITHFUL LIFE: PRESENT, PAST AND FUTURE

A Beautiful Epitaph

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For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store 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 longed for His appearing.

2 Timothy 4:6-8

I. The Present: Courageous Sacrifice (4:6)

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near.

Sacrificial living: “Poured Out”

Departure—a courageous view of death

What evidences of courageous sacrifice do I see in my life? In people around me?

II. The Past: A Life without Regret (4:7)

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

The Good Fight

The Race

Keeping the Faith

What if I look back at how I’ve lived my life and regret what I see?

III. The Future: Longing for Jesus and His Reward

Now there is in store 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 longed for His appearing.

The Righteous Judge/The Crown of Righteousness

Longing for Jesus

Do I long to see Jesus?

For Further study:

1. At the end of his life, Paul describes himself as being “poured out like a drink offering” (for background on this, see Numbers 15:1-8), referring to his total commitment to surrender his life to Jesus. What motivates a person to do this? For Paul, here are some passages where he describes what motivated him to devote his life to following Jesus: **2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Philippians 2:3-11; Galatians 2:20; Romans 11:33-12:2; and I Corinthians 11:1** linked with **Mark 10:42-45**.
2. As he was nearing the end of his life, notice how Paul referred to death as a “departure”. This word had several uses in Paul’s day—of an animal being set free from its yoke, or of a prisoner set free from his chains, and of a sailboat set free from a dock to sail. Look at these passages to see where Paul got his courageous view of death and his hope in life beyond the grave: **Philippians 1:20-26; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; and I Corinthians 15:17, 19, 50-58**.
3. Paul used two references to sporting events in our passage today—the good “fight” (literally contest, used often of sporting events) and “the race”. Two other passages that illustrate our lives of following Jesus with the analogy of a race are found in **I Corinthians 9:24-27** and **Hebrews 12:1-2**. As you study these passages, how are you encouraged and how are you challenged to live your life as you pursue Jesus?
4. Paul said that he was looking forward to the crown of righteousness that he was going to receive during the future judgment. Salvation and eternal life with Jesus are amazing rewards we can receive! What are some other rewards or blessings that believers receive when they put their faith in Jesus? What types of rewards and blessings are still to come in heaven? Look up the following passages to help you (current blessings: **Ps. 103:1-14, Matthew 5:2-12**; future rewards: **John 14:1-3, Revelation 21:1-4**).

To Discuss...with friends, family members, community group...

- 1) Talk about an example from your life of someone who has been courageous in the midst of difficulties. What helped sustain that person through their battles?
- 2) What have you sacrificed to follow Jesus? How has Jesus blessed you as you have sacrificed for Him?
- 3) How can Jesus empower your life so that you could look back at the end of your life without regrets?
- 4) What does it mean practically for you to long for Jesus? How do you live this out in your day to day life?