

Parting Thoughts

Timothy was Paul's "son" in the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:17). This was undoubtedly because it was Paul who converted Timothy to the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:1-4). In 2 Timothy, Paul's last letter, the young man is given many instructions about how to do the work of an evangelist. These instructions must have meant much to Timothy because it would not be long that Paul would leave Timothy and go to heaven. In the first half of this final chapter, Paul prepares Timothy on what lies ahead and speaks of his own end.

In the beginning of the chapter, Timothy was encouraged to preach the word of God faithfully (vss. 1-2). The reason given is that people would want to turn away from the truth. The truth is what will get us to heaven, and if we turn from it, we are lost. People may not like what we tell them, but if we do it from love with a desire to turn them from evil, the Lord will be pleased. Therefore, we are to tell people what they need to hear when they need to hear it. Anything less would be a dereliction of duty in God's cause. We never do anyone a favor by failing to tell them the "*words of eternal life*" which will save their souls.

The next two verses explain why such preaching and teaching were necessary. The circumstances were such that people would turn away from God. This had been abundantly proven in the Old Testament and we still observe it today. If people do not want the truth, they will seek out those who will preach to them what they want to hear. Vs. 5 records several admonitions: to watch in all things, to endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, and to fully prove his ministry. Timothy need to be faithful at the current time because more difficult times were coming. We would be wise to heed his warnings even to this day.

Paul ends this section by discussing the end of his own life (vss. 6-8). He knew that his time on this earth was short. But he steadfastly declared his faithfulness to the gospel. He likened it to a good fight and finishing a course or athletic contest. In short, he had kept his faith instead of following the world. Because of his steadfastness, Paul would be rewarded in the future. He called his reward a "*crown of righteousness.*" That would signify victory, a victory that Paul found in Christ Jesus. The Lord is a righteous judge and although we may not always be able to judge righteously, the Lord will. Paul ends this verse but assuring Timothy that not only Paul will be judged, but all who are faithful also will be equally rewarded.

Will you be faithful to the end? Unless the Lord compels you to living for Him through the Bible, your hope will be lost. Sanctify yourself for the sake of God's righteousness and live in a worthy manner for Him from this day forward (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

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