

- **\*Read II Timothy 4:1-8\*** In what we believe to be his farewell address to his young protege, the Apostle Paul instructs for Timothy to follow in his footsteps as a strong preacher of God's Word. Everything Paul had done up to this point in his life as an Apostle was done so that the Kingdom of God would be strengthened. His greatest desire was for Timothy to carry on this strong legacy of Kingdom work. Even at a time when his mind could've easily been pulled to his current circumstances, Paul was still focused on the Kingdom and its well being.
- Paul was able to do this because of the way he lived his life. Everything he did was about serving and honoring God. Every action, thought, and word was about being the best disciple and Apostle that God desired for him to be. He simply looked at the world in a different way. He lived his life with different standards. He lived his life with a different focus, and this created Paul's unique outlook on life. This evening, I would like for us to consider Paul's outlook on life at this moment as he concluded this letter to his beloved Timothy. My hope is that we will be able to do those things that will help us to be able to look at our lives in much the same way that Paul did as he felt the end drawing near.

### **I. Paul looked around and was ready. (v.6)**

- A. Paul recognized that his time on earth was coming to an end. He was ready to move on from this life.
  - 1. At the point of this writing, it is understood that Paul is imprisoned in Rome under the the persecution of Christians by the emperor Nero. His first imprisonment was not all that serious when compared to where he found himself now. The first he was simply under house arrest and was confident in his release, but that hope of release seems to have evaporated at the time of this writing.
  - 2. For this reason, Paul writes the words he does. He recognized that this was more than likely the end of his earthly journey. He knew that this cold cell and its chains would be the last earthly home for him. Thus, he says that he is ready to be poured out as a drink offering. Under the LoM, the drink offering was the last thing to be given during the sacrifices. This was, in Paul's mind, his action in the name of Christ.
  - 3. Even beyond the imprisonment was the fact that Paul was all by himself. He had been abandoned by many of those who had been with him during his ministry. His earthy vessel was about to expire, yet instead of hanging his head in fear, he acknowledged the circumstances and was ready to move on.
- B. How wonderful it would be to be able to have this same outlook on life as Paul.
  - 1. Much like we talked about this morning, this life is full of difficulties, and Paul's life was no exception. Paul's current circumstances were not the only time of trial in his life. His laundry list of difficulties could be found in **II Corinthians 11:23-28**. We read about his thorn in the flesh in **II Corinthians 12:6-8**. We know about his difficulties with unfaithful brethren in many different places. The man lived a hard life.
  - 2. Yet, Paul continually persevered. He was constantly focused on doing good work for the Kingdom, but he was also always ready to go to be with the Lord. This isn't the first time we see Paul mentioned his readiness to be with the Lord. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul states plainly that he was ready and desiring to go be with Jesus, but he was also content to stay and continue on in his work for the Kingdom. **(Phil. 3:21-26)**
  - 3. Regardless of where we find ourselves in this life, may it be said that we too are ready. We are ready to continue to be useful in God's Kingdom, and we are ready to go on to be with Jesus. This was Paul's outlook, and may it be ours, as well.

### **II. Paul looked back and was satisfied. (v.7)**

- A. Paul looked back at the way he had lived his life in Christ, and he was satisfied with his effort and work for the Lord.
  - 1. Sure there were things in Paul's past that he regretted. He regretted his involvement in the persecution of the church. He hated the hurt that he had caused to so many brethren. He thought of himself as the greatest of sinners. **(I Tim. 1:15)** He even went so far as to say that his life as a Jew was worthless to him. **(Phil. 1:4-8)** However, he also considered his life in Christ.
  - 2. He tells Timothy that he was content with the way he had fought this fight. No doubt the Apostle who wrote **Ephesians 6** was well aware of the battle he was engaged in. He had put on the full armor of God and had fought strongly against Satan and his evil powers.

3. But not only that, he also was satisfied with the way that he had run his race of life. Again, this is the same many who wrote **I Corinthians 7**. He knew that this life was a race and that in order to win the prize he had to run and finish well. Paul was able to look back on his life in Christ and know that he had lived it well to God's glory.
- B. We, too, can live in such a way that we look back at our lives in Christ and be satisfied with what we have done for Him and His Kingdom.
  1. The formula to do so isn't mysterious or hard to understand. In fact, we can do exactly as Paul did in order to look back at life and be satisfied. Sure, there are probably things in our past that we are not satisfied with. Maybe right now you're not satisfied with you life in Christ. If that is you, or even it that is not where you are, consider the two texts we just mentioned and use them to guide your life in Christ.
  2. First, must come a realization that this life as a Christian is not a passive one. Instead, we must be active in our faith to be able to have a life worth looking back on with some sense of satisfaction.
  3. We must be active soldiers of Christ in this battle against Satan. **(Eph. 6:10-17)** We must be aware of his will to destroy us, and we take up spiritual arms to defend God and His Kingdom and to bring souls onto the winning side of God. A life of service in the army of God is a life worthy of satisfaction.
  4. Then we must also be sure that we are running his race of life in such a way that we will win. **(I Corinthians 9:24-27)** We must be sure to run with self control. There will be many things on the wayside that can cause distractions for us in this race, but our focus must be strong on reaching that imperishable prize. Paul looked back at everything in his life and realized that he had done well, and because of this he was ready to move on. May we take these things to heart and always be ready to move on to the next life, as well.

### **III. Paul looked ahead and was hopeful. (v8)**

- A. Paul looked around, looked behind, and then as he looked ahead he knew that the best was yet to come.
  1. Paul knew that this life full of difficulties and trials wasn't going to be the end for him. He knew that what he had done here had set him up to receive the crown of righteousness that had been promised to him.
  2. He looked forward to that day when the righteous Judge would appear and judge the living and the dead. Most people would dread such a day because of their lives, but Paul looked forward to this day with hope because of the life that He had lived in Christ.
  3. He knew that the reward of the crown of righteousness would far surpass the temporary sufferings that had been laid upon him in this life. He looked forward to the glorious appearing of Jesus.
- B. Paul makes mention that he is not the only one that can look ahead to the good of Jesus's appearing.
  1. Paul wasn't the only person who could look forward to Jesus with anticipation, but he says that day will be a good day for all of those who love and look forward to his appearing.
  2. That day will be a wonderful day when hope will be realized. The perseverance of so many individuals will be seen as having been worth it. The victory of the faithful will be realized as death is overcome by the power of God. **(I Cor. 15:50-58)** What an amazing day that will be! Paul looked ahead in hope, and we can look with hope if we will follow his example of faith and obedience.

Certainly, the Apostle Paul was a man with a plan and a focus that we would all do well to imitate. His outlook on life was shaped by his faith life lived in Jesus Christ. We would all do well to live this life as he did so that when this life is drawing to an end for us, we are able to look around, behind, and ahead with the same mindset and attitude that he did. May God help us to live each and every day in preparation for that glorious appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, and may we all have the victory that is had through faith and obedience.