

Paul's Final Charge to Timothy

Text: 2 Timothy 4:5-8

Introduction:

1. The Epistle now reaches its climax in Paul's final recorded charge to Timothy, his son in the faith (Vs. 1-8). This chapter contains the last words the Spirit of God lead Paul to write and are therefore of great importance and significance.
2. Paul has already delivered 3 charges to Timothy his son in the faith (1. Tim. 1:18; 1 Tim. 5:21; 1 Tim. 6:13). Paul now delivers his final charge before passing through the gates of death into eternity.
3. This charge can be divided into three sections.

I. The Injunction to Preach (Vs. 1-4)

Refer previous sermon for details.

A. The Mindset for preaching (Vs. 1)

B. The Mandate for preaching (Vs. 2a)

C. The Method for preaching (Vs. 2b)

D. The Motivation for preaching (Vs. 3-4)

II. The Instruction for Ministry (Vs. 5)

Timothy's life was to be lived in contrast to the apostates described in Vs. 3-4. There are four duties he is to maintain in pastoral ministry.

A. Vigilance (Vs. 5a)

1. 'watch' = word literally means to be sober, an abstainer from wine. Concerning one's attitude it referred to being alert and circumspect.
2. Much of a shepherd's duty involves watching the sheep (e.g. being alert to possible threats)
3. Hebrews 13:17 *"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: **for they watch for your souls**, as they that must give account, that they may do it with you, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."*
4. Careful monitoring and oversight of the sheep has nothing to do with dictatorship, being overbearing or micro managing. It has everything to do with being a faithful shepherd of God's sheep.

B. Endurance (Vs. 5b)

1. "endure afflictions" = suffer hardship, evil, ill treatment, that which is bad.
2. Paul has already exhorted Timothy to endure the "afflictions of the Gospel" (1:8) and to "endure hardness" (2:3). Both of these come from the same Greek word.
3. Timothy is to patiently bear the many trials of the Gospel ministry, he is to faithfully weather the storms.

4. Illustrations: The buffetings of Satan (1 Cor. 16:9; 1 Thess. 2:18); The reproach of the tongue (e.g. slander, misrepresentation); hostility of the world; emotional and physical strains; family pressures etc...

C. Evangelism (Vs. 5c)

1. 'evangelist' = a proclaimer of good news. Root word is 'Gospel'. An Evangelist's primary role is to preach the Gospel (Note example of Philip the Evangelist in Acts 8:5). Timothy is not to **be** and evangelist as this is a separate calling (Eph. 4:11) but is to do the **work** of an Evangelist.
2. This means a pastor needs to be a soul-winner. Amidst all his other duties and responsibilities, he needs to have a heart that's warm for souls. He is to be a personal soul-winner as well as being a Gospel preacher.
3. Illustration: NBC Institute soul-winning requirement

D. Diligence (Vs. 5d)

1. "make full proof" = to fully perform, carry it out to its end, to fulfil. He is to complete all its demands and requirements.
2. "thy ministry" = Christian work in general, covering every mode of service.
3. There is no place for laziness and sloppiness in the ministry. It is the highest vocation on earth! "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." (1 Tim. 5:17)

III. The Inspiration for Ministry (Vs. 6-8)

The Apostle now gives a word of testimony to inspire Timothy to faithfulness in ministry. There is a tremendous victory note in these words.

A. His Present (Vs. 6)

1. "ready to be offered" = 'offered' means to be poured out as a libation or drink offering. Paul viewed his impending martyrdom as an act of sacred service to God. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:21)
2. 'departure' = to loosen, release. Word used of the slackening of tent ropes when breaking camp or of a ship hoisting anchor and setting sail.
3. "The ring of triumph and noble self-assurance is intended to rouse Timothy, as the dying cry of a general inspires his flagging followers to new courage and daring." (Pope)

B. His Past (Vs. 7)

Paul sums up his life using 3 figures:

1. A Greek wrestler – "I have fought a good fight"

- a. Figure not drawn from the battle field but from the Greek games. It is a picture of an athlete struggling and contending for the prize. Paul had wrestled and fought all his life for the Gospel, contending with the sin and Satan.
 - b. 'good' = reveals the character of this contest. This is no fleshly warfare, no carnal contest but a Spirit-filled, God-honouring fight for the truth. This is a fight that all Christians are commanded to be a part of (Jude 1:3).
2. A Greek runner – “I have finished my course”
- a. Figure is that of a foot race. Paul had run his race well, fulfilling the mandate of Hebrews 12:1-2
 - b. “my course” = Paul had completed the specific track God had ordained for him to run. We are all to run according to the rules (2:5) but God’s specific will is different for each one of us. We need to find out what that is and seek to fulfil it faithfully.
 - c. Illustration: Christ testified in John 17:4 “...I have finished the work the work which thou gavest me to do.”
3. A Roman soldier – “I have kept the faith”
- 1. Picture is of a Roman soldier standing guard.
 - 2. 'kept' = to keep by guarding
 - 3. “the faith” = the sacred deposit of truth entrusted to Paul. Paul had faithfully guarded the truth from the attacks of false teachers. Now Timothy was to continue that guardianship of the truth (Note 1:13-14)

C. His Future (Vs. 8)

1. The gift (reward) (8a)
- a. “crown of righteousness” = the ‘crown’ was a the victor’s crown, a laurel wreath made of oak leaves or ivy and given to a winner in the games.
 - b. Paul was anticipating rewards for faithful service.
 - c. There are 5 crowns mentioned in the N.T.
 - i. The incorruptible crown for living a disciplined, faithful Christian life (1 Cor. 9:25)
 - ii. The crown of rejoicing for successful soul-winning (1 Thess. 2:19-20)
 - iii. The crown of righteousness for loving Christ’s appearing (2 Tim. 4:7-8)
 - iv. The crown of life for enduring temptation (James 1:12)
 - v. The crown of glory for faithful pastors (1 Peter 5:1-4)
2. The Giver (8b)
- a. “the Lord” = the real value of the gift is due to the One giving it. How infinitely more precious than the gift itself will be the joy of standing in His presence and hearing His voice saying, “well

done thou good and faithful servant.” As expressed in the words of this hymn:

“The bride eyes not her garment, But her dear bridegroom’s face. I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of grace. Not at the crown He giveth, But on His pierced hand: The
Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel’s land.”

- b. “the righteous judge” = figure of athletic games continued. Christ is the perfect judge (umpire) who will be perfectly fair and just in the rewards that He gives on that day. He stands at the finish line waiting for us, his rewards in hand.
3. The Guarantee (8c)
- a. “not to me only” = this reward is not exclusively for the Apostle but is available to all believers – “to all those also”
 - b. “love his appearing” = the qualification for this crown is to love his ‘appearing’.

Conclusion:

1. Are we involved in the contest for the truth?
2. Are we running our race for God’s glory?
3. Do we love Christ’s appearing? Are we living for eternal rewards or temporal gains?