
Sermon Notes

October 31, 2021

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Finishing Well 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Perspective

- ❖ Our perspective influences how we interpret and accept our life circumstances
- ❖ Paul's perspective
 - despite desertion, marginalization, deprivation, and defamation, Paul is still "looking up"
 - Paul's hope in the gospel sustains him in the present and gives him the ability to persevere and triumph as he anticipates the future
 - gives us guidance and direction both on how we are to live and how we are to prepare to die

The Present

- ❖ ***Being poured out as a drink offering*** arouses pictures of a portion of the Old Testament sacrificial system
 - pouring wine at the base of the altar as a sacrifice was being burnt reminded people that blood needed to be spilt in order for atonement of sin to be made
 - Paul uses this picture to depict his life of sacrifice and service to the Lord

- Paul's life is ***a living sacrifice*** (Rom 12:1) that brings glory to God
- God will continue to glorify Himself through the manner in which Paul will die

- ❖ Rather than seeing himself as a victim, Paul sees himself as an offering that God will use for His purposes and glory
 - Paul knows his death by execution is no longer a hypothetical situation as it was when he wrote the Philippians 5 years earlier (Phil 2:17)
 - a possibility has become a probability
- ❖ ***The time of my departure has come***
 - ***departure*** = loosing
 - oxen from their tethers, ships from their moorings, soldiers pulling up their tent stakes
 - a glorious new era in which Paul will be set free from all the sin that holds him back in this life
 - not a disappointing finish... a GRAND finale!
 - no matter how fruitful a life may be, to depart and be with Christ is always far better (Phil 1:23-24)

The Past

- ❖ Paul looks back over what God has accomplished in and through him in the past with satisfaction and completeness
 - the soldier and the athlete (again!)

- Paul reminds us that the Christian life is a battle
 - throughout his ministry, Paul is constantly under attack (false teachers, false brethren, political leaders, spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places, peril, danger and deprivation)
 - Paul is able to look back and say: *I have fought the good fight* (finished and complete)
 - *I have finished the race*
 - ♦ coming to the end of the course God set in front of him (Acts 9:16)
 - ♦ NOT: “I have won the race”
 - ♦ all of us are one day closer to life’s finish line than we were the day before (Heb 12:1)
 - ♦ a lifelong longing to finish well (Acts 20:24)

❖ *I have kept the faith*

- Paul has safeguarded Biblical truth and faithfully passed the baton of the gospel on to those who will come after him in the faith
- Paul has kept the gospel message pure, preached it faithfully, lived it, been shaped by it and had his mind renewed by it

The Future

- ❖ Paul looks forward to the future with excitement and great expectation
 - *the crown of righteousness*

- righteousness is something no one of can achieve on our own
- we receive righteousness as a gift from God
- although the righteousness of Christ is credited to our account in THIS life, the ultimate, permanent state of righteousness for which we long is not conferred upon us until *that day* when God glorifies all who are in Christ (cf. Galatians 5:5)

❖ True Christians

- love Jesus and long for His appearing
- know they are made for heaven and that this world is not their home
- work out their salvation with fear and trembling as they wait for Christ’s return
- have a present, past, future perspective like Paul’s

- ❖ Jim Elliot: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

Personal Application

1. Do you love Christ and long for His appearing? How does this show itself to be the case in the course of daily life?
2. Are you working out your salvation with fear and trembling? How does your new life in Christ shine through in your thoughts, words, and deeds?
3. The end awaits us all. For some it will be sooner than we think... it could be today! When that moment comes for you, will you be able to look back without regret and say with Paul: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith?