

2 Timothy 4:5-8 Finishing Well

In the yr. 2003 **Ohio State Buckeyes** were playing the **Miami Hurricanes** for the national Championship in College Football. Miami was heavily favored and they were on a 34 game winning streak – **2 seasons** Just before his team left the locker - The Buckeye's' coach **Jim Tressel, gathered his team for one final talk.**

After going over the game plan, he asked his team one simple question, **“How do you want to be remembered?”**

It must have worked because when the game was over, the Buckeyes had pulled off one of the great upsets in college football.

That is a good question for us to ponder today: “How do you want to be remembered?”

A) It's easy to live a long life, at least in America. Look at the statistics:

Out of every 100,000 persons, over 88,000 reach 50 years of age, more than 70,000 people make it to 70, and almost 17,000 get to 85 or more.

B) So Staying around a long time, however, should not be our primary goal.

1) Making a lasting impact should be a top priority

C) What do you hope people will say about you after you are gone?

Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theo. Sem. did an exhaustive study of the men/women of the Bible

A) He concluded that there are approximately 100 detailed biographies in the Bible.

B) He notes that approximately two-thirds of those men and women ended poorly.

1) Either they turned to immorality or they drifted away from the faith or they ended their life in a backslidden condition.

C) The Apostle Paul was not among them. He finished well.

2 Timothy is Paul's final letter – writing from a Roman Prison cell – underground – waiting his impending death.

A) Most personal and intimate letter as he writes to his young son in the faith / Son in ministry Timothy

B) Writes to pass the torch of ministry To encourage Timothy – to stay the course

1) Hang in there -

C) We left off with v.5 Where Paul gives Timothy one final exhortation: 4 exhortations summoning up what He has been saying for **4 1/2 Chapters**

5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

A) **Be Watchful** – be on the alert for false teachers – don't be taken off guard.

B) **Endure Affliction:** Stand strong against the growing persecution – remembering that all who desire to live Godly lives will suffer persecution.

C) **Do the work of an evangelist:** Never stop sharing Christ – – Some people are gifted as evangelist – Greg Laurie –

D) But all Pastors are to do the work of an Evangelist – be about sharing the gospel.

E) **Fulfill your ministry:** do not quit until the end, keep on until you have done all that the Lord has sent you to do.

It is at that point that Paul gives us some insight into how he finished well.

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Finishing well doesn't happen by accident: Deliberate focus and attitude

In this one paragraph Paul shares 3 important things

- 1. His present outlook concerning his impending death**
- 2. His past approach to life.**
- 3. His future hope that kept him going all those years.**

1. His present outlook concerning his impending death

V.6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

A) When Paul says he is being poured out like a drink offering, he is referring to an OT ritual that accompanied certain sacrifices.

B) The Law mandated that when a worshiper brought an offering, part of it was consumed upon the altar and part was given to the priest for his own use.

C) When the offering was consumed by fire, the worshiper would sometimes pour a “drink offering” of wine upon the burning sacrifice.

1) All the wine was to be poured out. None was to be given to the priest.

D) As the wine hit the burning coals, it evaporated and a sweet smell rose from the altar.

1) Keep in mind that wine was a symbol of joy in the OT

The drink offering was a symbolic way of saying, “I gladly give all that I have to the Lord.

A) My life is given as a symbol of my wholehearted commitment to God. {Nothing is held back

Paul was on death Row – He knew the time of his death was approaching.

A) Now, the Roman method for execution of their enemies was Crucifixion –

B) Which was a slow painful way to die

C) But for a Roman citizen they were a little Kinder **Death was by beheading –**

1) Quick and relatively painless

D) Paul being a Roman citizen was to be beheaded

Now by speaking of his death as a “drink offering,” he was saying to Timothy,

A) “When you hear of my death, don’t think that Nero has executed me against my will.

B) I gladly lay down my life for my Lord.

1) My own blood will be like the wine of the drink offering, gladly given to the One who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

The word “departure” in verse 6 has three word pictures behind it.

A) It refers to a ship hoisting the anchor, raising the sails, leaving the harbor, and setting sail for a distant port.

B) Paul was saying *“The time of my losing has come.”*

C) 2nd To “depart” means to break camp. It refers to an army that has made camp near a battlefield-

1) Now they are leaving the battlefield, and heading for home.

D) 3rd It also pictures a man who is being relieved from carrying a staggering burden.

So Paul viewed his departure with great hope – Poured out and set free!

A) Released – Life, pain & burdens

B) New bodies – Trade this tent for a Mansion

C) That is the Hope of every one of us who is a believer in Jesus Christ.

D) That was his Present outlook Impending...

2. His past approach to life. Verse 7

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

Alfred Nobel opened his newspaper one morning in 1888 & was shocked to read his own obituary.

A) The fact was that Nobel’s brother had died, and a careless reporter had put the wrong man in the story.

B) The incident left Nobel deeply disturbed

C) Through the erroneous obituary he saw himself as the world saw him--a wealthy Swedish industrialist whose most enduring legacy was the invention of dynamite.

NOT HOW HE WANTED TO BE REMEMBERED

That is when He came up with the idea for the Nobel Prize – rewards for people whose work has benefited humanity.

The Nobel Prizes were first awarded in 1901, and today they are still considered the most esteemed prizes in the world.

The soul-searching that Alfred Nobel underwent as he reviewed his life is the **same kind of self-examination Christians need to make regularly.**

Paul urged the Corinthians, “Examine yourselves” (2 Cor. 13:5).

A) Paul looking back - uses three phrases which sum up his life's accomplishments.

First, He lived a disciplined life. “I fought the good fight.”

This speaks to the continual struggle that he faced.

A) Think of the words Paul used to describe his own life: trouble, distress, tribulation, trials, hardships

B) He despaired even of life itself.

1) Paul didn't live an easy life.

C) Paul saw life as One continual battle: He never stopped fighting for Jesus until the day he died.

Notice he says, "I have fought the good fight."

A) It is very important to see he did not say, "I have fought *a* good fight,"

B) If he had said that It would be boasting his view of how well he had done: "I've fought a good fight.

1) I've pitched in there and done the right thing."

C) But that is not what he says. He says, "I have fought *the* good fight," i.e., the significant fight, the great battle which life had presented to him.

Listen, there are lots of battles that we can get into – lots of things to fight over.

Paul contended with his flesh: - We all do – haven't won every round – I've fallen –

Righteous man falls 7 times – gets up – God is faithful to forgive.

Paul contended for the faith – Stood for the truth

At the height of WWII, Protestant theologian **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** was imprisoned for taking a stand against Hitler. Yet he continued to urge fellow believers to resist Nazi tyranny.

A group of Christians, believing that Hitler was the Antichrist, asked Bonhoeffer, “Why do you expose yourself to all this danger? Jesus will return any day, and all your work and suffering will be for nothing.” Bonhoeffer replied, “If Jesus returns tomorrow, then tomorrow I'll rest from my labor. But today I have work to do. I must continue the struggle until it's finished.”

Paul contended for souls {Passionate about people

A) Read Acts – Same Scenario – Synagogue rejected

Gentiles – accepted – revival – Beaten, jailed

B) Love for the Lost that kept him going – He contended for souls of those who are lost.

Second, He lived a directional life. “I have finished the race.”

A) Paul often viewed the Christian life as a Race!

B) Phil 3 he is the runner who is not looking back over his shoulder at the past – what is behind him

1) Looking forward to what lies ahead – pressing on to get closer to Christ

C) 1 Corinthians 9- He talks about running with an aim, a purpose – Running not just to run, but to win.

D) Hebrews 12 – (I believe Paul wrote) Running, laying aside the weights and the sin.

1) Running with his eyes on Jesus

I have often said that the Christian life is a Marathon race – not a Sprint –

A) Always continual – Always running – never stop
Many ways that is true.

B) I have sensed though that the Christian life could also be compared to a series of races – some short – some long – run –

Race of Parenthood / Race of Marriage / Singleness

Race of Friendships

Race of Profession

Race of Ministry

C) We run hard – pause and get refreshed – prepare to run again.

1) Never stop running – Race with many different legs

D) All different seasons – Different conditions

This week I read about a professor at a Christian college, who along with his son, went on a 1,000-mile backpacking trip from British Columbia to southern California.

Together father and son hiked through the mountains of Washington, Oregon and California. For many days they were alone on the trail, often camping above the 10,000-foot level.

They faced every sort of **discouragement**—lack of food and water, danger from wild animals, danger from robbers, days of rain and mud, incredible **physical exhaustion**, the very real possibility of physical injury, **loneliness, blisters, mosquitoes, and the extremes of heat and cold.**

Before leaving on the trip, the professor discovered that over 90% of those who set out to hike more than 500 miles never make it.

Fifty percent never get started and 40% quit after they start.

Only 10% ever finish a long-distance hike. After studying the 10% who succeeded, he came to certain conclusions.

Some of it involved strenuous training and meticulous logistical preparation. But there was something else involved.

He discovered that those who succeeded versus those who failed understood that the biggest block was mental.

They knew that their real enemy lay within, not without. Those who succeeded made two important decisions:

First, they decided they would finish the trip no matter what happened, and second, they expected bad things to happen and decided they would not be surprised or dismayed.

Great approach to the Christian life {Expect trials hardships – difficulty

Determine: “By the grace of God – I will finish”

This was Paul’s approach to the Christian life.

A) No matter what happened to him, he just kept moving forward by the grace of God.

B) One foot in front of the other, one step at a time, one day at a time.

He wasn’t deterred by opposition because he knew it was coming eventually.

C) Our problem is that we’re surprised by trouble.

1) We think the Christian life ought to be easy.

D) It’s not easy, and it’s not supposed to be easy.

1) Today is the day of struggle, combat, warfare. Every day we march to battle in the name of the Lord.

E) But He is with us every step along the way – Advantage over the Hiker {His own strength

1) Holy Spirit empowers us / When we fall Jesus picks us up

Paul was able to say: I have finished the race!

Third, He lived a doctrinal life. “I have kept the faith.” This simply means he refused to compromise the truth.

A) When other people fell away, Paul preached the Word.

B) When the world was against him, Paul paid no attention.

C) When it would have been easy to trim his message to save his own life, Paul proclaimed the whole counsel of God.

1) He did not back down, he did not compromise, and he would not preach what people wanted to hear.

D) Some up these three things we could say of Paul

He never stopped fighting!

He never stopped running!

He never stopped believing!

Verse 8 Paul gives us the Reason:

3. His future hope that kept him going all those years.

“Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

Here we see Paul’s faith shining so brightly that the darkness of the Roman prison cell seems to disappear.

By faith he sees beyond his own beheading.

A) The pain of that moment is now past and the suffering of this life is left far behind.

B) By faith he sees a day when he will receive his reward from the Lord.

C) What will that reward be like?

It will be a guaranteed reward. It is “laid up” or “stored” in heaven for Paul.

It will be a glorious reward. It is the crown of righteousness.

This is often misunderstood. Some people have taken this to mean that Paul is not going to be made righteous until he appears before the Lord in Heaven.

A) Romans – Declared – righteous – Position in God’s eyes

B) Heaven: All that we are Positionally we become Practically - Crown of righteousness
1) No more flesh

C) No more struggle!

It will be a personal reward. Paul will receive his reward from the Lord himself.

Note how specific he is about this. It is the Lord, the righteous Judge, who will reward him.

That last phrase is an intended contrast with Paul's expectation of his forthcoming appearance before Nero, the unrighteous judge.

A) Nero would examine righteous Paul and find him guilty

B) But that judgment before the Emperor will shortly be reversed by the Lord himself,

1) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Universe will weigh in on Paul’s case—and his judgment will be final.

C) Others look at you to condemn – Jesus will REWARD !

It will be a guaranteed reward

It will be a glorious reward.

It will be a personal reward

It will be a shared reward.

It is not just for Paul but also for everyone who loves the Lord and longs for His appearing.

A) Every rape/ murder/ Case of Child abuse. Come quickly

B) Every Political leader / religious leader – Moral failure {Come quickly

C) Every believer: Lord I just want to be closer to you come quickly –

See the best of all is yet to come. Bury me with my fork – the best is yet to come.

The Indians have a wonderful saying: "When you were born, you cried, and the world rejoiced. Live your life in such a manner that when you die, the world cries, and you rejoice."

So the word of Lord is this: Keep on fighting. Keep on running. Keep on believing.

By the grace of God, let’s finish strong for Jesus. Amen!

Closing: We all have a hereafter –

All going to stand before Jesus – Reward

Unbeliever: To be judged

God loves you – You can be free