

Finishing Well

2TI 4:6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

2TI 4:9 Do your best to come to me quickly, ¹⁰ for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. ¹² I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. ¹³ When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

2TI 4:14 Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. ¹⁵ You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.

2TI 4:16 At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

2TI 4:19 Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. ²⁰ Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. ²¹ Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers.

2TI 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

1. It's not how you start- its how you finish.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Paul seems to have a spectators interest in athletics. The second major sport of the day- Killing christians by this time had become the main spectator sport. (cf. especially [1Ti 6:12](#)). If so, then we can paraphrase the verse like this: "I have competed well in the athletic contest [of life], I have finished the race, I have kept the rules"--not no balled, I've done the distance and so have not been disqualified from winning.

If you have heard as many sermons as I have on this verse or one of the other athlete passages from Paul, you will be sick of hearing that life is compared to a marathon not a sprint, Christian life in particular. After all how many people have run a real marathon here. Other than me.

For 15 years I trained for long distance running cycling and swimming events. I understand what He is talking about. But look at me now. I couldn't finish a fun run. I finished some tough races – but not now

Here is the cool thing about being a christian. It takes effort, we all understand that but there are points on the way that we struggle and God carries us through those times. So it is more like we are doing a team event than an individual marathon. The rest of the time Christ allows us to run on our own two legs, but he still runs with us.

Easter has just gone, we know the story, Jesus died and rose again, why – so we could be on the winning team. All that pain and anguish by Jesus is really the training that gets us over the line. Ever thought of it that way, Jesus did the training, you know the no gain without pain stuff, He did the training that we couldn't do.

A number of years ago, I used to train for the bike leg of triathlons with a guy called Scott. We met at a cycle club event and we got to know each other then went for a few rides and realised we did much the same type of training. So when He started to train for the big championship triathlons we decided to train together and included swimming and running as well. We became training partners. Early in the season that was fine. But as things hotted up – there was just no way I could stay with the guy in the swimming pool – he was a fish, and even more so running. I could not do the training at his intensity. Eventually, I just trained on the bike with him, we were about even on that so and I let him train with others for the rest. What has this got to do with it. Well it is not like that with our christian life. If we can't do the training- He has done it for us. Now this does not apply to running training- but to our relationship with God – it is called grace. Well talk more about this in a about a few months time.

And here is the amazing thing, we get rewarded for what Jesus has done.

Grace is defined simple as God's Riches at Christ's expense. A nice little acrostic for us to remember, it has been bandied around for years but it is pretty right. We get rewarded as it says in this passage;

there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

God's grace is amazing, that's why the song was written.

2. Delegated responsibility.

2TI 4:9 Do your best to come to me quickly, ¹⁰ for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. ¹² I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. ¹³ When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

Interesting passage this. We see Paul giving some instructions. It displays that even the great apostle Paul can feel isolated, disappointed and alone.

Look at verse 10:

¹⁰ for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.

Demas has done the bolt, has deserted Paul in his time of need, why because he loved the world. He loved instant pleasure more than the long term gain that was mentioned in the verses before. He will miss out. That is the reality of it. Turn your back on God and you miss the blessings He makes available eternally. Paul seems disappointed that this has happened. During the apostle's first Roman imprisonment, he twice mentioned Demas as one of his fellow workers ([Col 4:14](#); [Phm 24](#)). Hey, he is allowed to be disappointed, So are we. If things don't go the way they should, be disappointed, but not bitter. No where in the bible does it say we can't express disappointment, it does say that the disappointment shouldn't turn to anger and does say that the disappointment should not turn us to sin. But disappointment is OK.

So is here expression of isolation, or loneliness. Paul misses his mates

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To a point that he mentions it. One of the hardest things about moving up here to Bathurst was leaving my mates behind. The good thing for me has been making a whole heap of new mates. But Paul is feeling isolated. So much so he wants Mark sent to him.

"Mark" had had a checkered career.

We first meet him in [Ac 12:12](#)

. When Peter was miraculously delivered from prison, he went to Mark's home. Barnabas and Paul took him to Antioch ([Ac 12:25](#))

and then took him with them as their assistant on the first missionary journey ([13:5](#)). But the young Mark left and returned to Jerusalem, it was all too much for him. ([13:13](#)).

Because of this, Paul refused to take him along on the second journey, probably thought he'd do the bolt again. ([15:36-40](#)).

Later Mark matured and was with Paul in his first Roman imprisonment ([Col 4:10](#)).

Now the aging apostle gives his young associate his highest accolade: "Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry." The guy that He refused to take on a missionary venture is now useful, So Paul got over the hurt caused, and wants Him around.

3. **Opposition again.**

It is nearly as if Paul is driving home the fact that people will disagree with Timothy. It has been a real theme right throughout the book hasn't be ready for opposition and persecution. Look here;

2TI 4:14 Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. ¹⁵ You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.

This is a double sided warning. 1st – He Alexander will try and hurt not only Tim but the message he shares about Jesus.

2ndly – It is as if Paul is saying – your in the big league now, He hurt me and he thinks you're a threat so he'll try hurt you – be ready.

We are all in the big league, On Parkinson awhile ago (must have been awhile ago) I heard Sir Michael Caine say life is not a rehearsal for later, this is the real show. We are in the middle of life a satan will try and oppose our message. I spoke about it the last year that satan will use people to try and take our focus of what we are to do. Our job is to proclaim as mentioned last week. Satan will try and stop us doing that. He will use legalities like what the politicians are doing in parliament, he will use terrorism, he will use ridicule, anyway he can to stop the proclamation about Jesus – let us be realistic. If we do a good job here Satan will try and distract our focus.

4. **But hey, God's with me!!!!**

2TI 4:16 At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Even isolated and alone, Paul has the strength of knowing the Lord is with him. What assurance and confidence. Why did the Lord support Him??? So the message could be proclaimed. Interesting – same word translated as preached in the first few verses of this chapter is now translated proclaim. Remember last week, preach = proclaim. Paul had the

knack of referring everything he did as being for the proclaiming of the message of Jesus. It was a life thing for him- It is the role model he set for Timothy and the role model for us. How did he say it in Corinthians “In everything you do, do for the glory of God.” Everything in life is about the message of Jesus. Our relationship to Him affects everything we do. That is why Paul has such confidence. He acknowledges that Jesus has affected every aspect of his life, so must we.

5. The letter finishes off with a bunch of greetings.

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It appears to be a reminder of who is working for God’s kingdom with them, we are not alone in this, sought of like credits at the end of the movie. It’s the personal bits, saying hi from one to the other.

Then – the benediction – The Lord be with your spirit. A personal benediction to Timothy. And that’s where we leave Tim.