

II TIMOTHY 4

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Timothy chapter 4 as we continue our study through the Word of God, and we finish up Paul's last letter or epistle that he wrote before he was martyred for his faith by Caesar Nero.

As we will see tonight in our study, that II Timothy chapter 4 is born out of what Paul wrote in II Timothy 3:16-17. This is what Paul wrote, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

All of Scripture, the entire Bible, from Genesis through the book of Revelation is given to us, not as the words of man, but from the very lips of God, you might say.

And as you understand that, then you will also see that since God has given us His Word, then what He has told us will be for our benefit, it will help us to live out our lives as Christians in a way that would honor God.

You see, the Word of God tells us what is right – doctrine!

The Word of God tells us what is wrong – reproof!

The Word of God tells us how to get right when we have gone astray – correction!

And the Word of God tells us how to stay right – instruction in righteousness!

Let me also say this. Many people have all kinds of ideas of what equips us for service, for serving the Lord, but Paul tells Timothy and us, that it is not academic degrees that equip us for service, but the Word of God!

Of this Lenski writes:

The Scripture is thus absolutely incomparable; no other book, library, or anything else in the world is able to make a lost sinner wise for salvation; no other scripture, since it lacks inspiration of God, whatever profit it may otherwise afford, is profitable for these ends: teaching us the true saving facts – refuting the lies and the delusions that deny these facts – restoring the sinner or fallen Christian to an upright position – educating, training, disciplining one in genuine righteousness.

- Lenski

And yet today, we see all kinds of worldly philosophies, worldly ideas coming into the church, being taught from the pulpits, and it is not helping people or profiting them, but it is hurting them!

You see, it is out of what Paul said here, that God’s Word is inspired and profitable, that chapter 4 opens up upon.

Remember what Paul wrote in Hebrews 4:12-13, **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”**

If we allow the Word of God, opened up to us by the Spirit of God, to guide the man of God, we will do well.

And maybe that is why so many Christians are struggling in their walk. They are going to the world for their answers instead of the Word of God.

I don't know if you remember back some several years ago when Rick Warren put out his *Purpose Driven* book. And there were churches doing *Forty Days of Purpose*.

Let me ask you this. Where in the Bible does it say that God drives His people? It doesn't. And please understand I am not saying that all books are bad, we can learn from Godly men. God leads His people; He is the Good Shepherd and we follow Him. We are not cattle to be driven, we are sheep to be led!

But what if we changed that Forty Days of Purpose to reading the New Testament in Forty Days!

Don't you think we would glean more from the Bible than a book?

Of course we would, and that is the problem. We have moved so far away from God that we don't see the Bible as being more important than any other book or program.

Let me say this. It is only the Bible that is inspired and 100% truth.

Remember what Paul wrote in I Timothy 4:1-3 about the false teachers that had come into the church there in Ephesus. He wrote, and this is from The Amplified Bible, **“BUT THE [Holy] Spirit distinctly and expressly declares that in latter times some will turn away from the faith, giving attention to deluding and seducing spirits and doctrines that demons teach, Through the hypocrisy and pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared (cauterized), Who forbid people to marry and [teach them] to abstain from [certain kinds of] foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and have [an increasingly clear] knowledge of the truth.”**

Did you see that if the teachings that are being taught are not from the Word of God or they are making the Word of God say what they want it to say, these false teachers and their teachings are nothing more than doctrines of demons!

I don't think many see it that way, but those are the only two options, of God or the Devil.

Then, as we saw last time in II Timothy 3:1-7, **“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”**

We are living in the last days and I believe we are living in the last of the last days and the Lord's return is getting closer and closer. As people depart from the truths of God found in the Word of God they will become **“lovers of themselves”** and what is manifested in their lives is all about them. And Paul lists all these things and they are not pretty!

And so, in knowing that we are in the last days. In knowing that the Lord is coming back soon. In knowing that the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation is inspired by God, Paul is going to tell Timothy to – ***PREACH THE WORD!***

That is what we will be looking at tonight as Paul says his good-byes to Timothy and admonishes Timothy to finish the race strong.

With that as our background for this chapter, let's begin reading in verse 1 of II Timothy chapter 4 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

II TIMOTHY 4

VERSE 1

This word that Paul uses for “**charge**” is a very strong word.

In the Greek it is the word DIAMARTUROMAI, (dee-am-ar-too'-rom-ahee), and it carries with it the idea of giving a solemn testimony, something that Timothy is to heed.

Stott explains it like this, “The verb diamartyomai has legal connections and can mean ‘testify under oath’ in a court of law, or to ‘adjure’ a witness to do so.”

Paul hasn't stated what he is charging Timothy to do, but it is so important that he brings this before the members of the court – the Father and Jesus who will judge us at His appearing!

In other words, he wants Timothy to testify before God that he is going to fulfill the request that Paul is going to give to him in verse 2.

Remember, Paul is now on death row, he doesn't have long to live, and he wants Timothy to continue on in the work, a strong appeal for him to continue on in the cause for Christ.

What is this judgment that Paul is speaking of? I thought we were saved by grace and not by works? So what is this all about?

We need to remember that as Christians this judgment is not for punishment as it is with the unsaved who will be judged at the Great White Throne judgment and then cast into the Lake of Fire.

They are sent to the Lake of Fire for their rejection of Jesus and their works or the things that they have done in their life will determine the degree of punishment in the Lake of Fire they will receive for eternity!

But again, that is not what Paul is talking about, judgment for punishment. This is for rewards in the Kingdom Age for faithful service now!

Paul said in II Corinthians 5:9-10, **“Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”**

This judgment seat or Bema seat was the place where athletes would receive their laurel wreath for winning in a certain event.

We see this also in I Corinthians 3:12-15 as Paul tells us, **“Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”**

You see, the rewards are not for how big your ministry was but how faithful you were in the ministry, what was your motivation in the ministry.

You won’t lose your salvation for not being faithful in ministry, but you will lose your rewards and miss out on the blessings now!

And let me share one more thing because this is something that many Christians don’t even care about anymore!

That is the return of the Lord. Paul spoke of the Lord returning and again, the idea here is the Bema Seat of Christ, and this happens when we are Raptured up to be with Him!

But think about it. Paul has been in ministry for some thirty years or so and since the beginning he was speaking of the Lord's return.

Here we are, some thirty years down the road and Paul is still speaking about and is excited and talking about the return of the Lord!

Many Christians are not. *"Hey, I have heard that for so many years now, that the Lord is coming back, let's just move on!"*

Not Paul and may that not be us either! May we be **"looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."** Titus 2:13.

Now, let's see what Paul is admonishing or charging Timothy to do because it is related to the false teachers with their false teaching, it is related to being judged by God for not doing it. Listen to what he wrote.

VERSE 2

Remember that the weight of verse 1 rests upon this statement, this is what Paul is calling Timothy to do, charging him to do, to make a testimony before God that he will ***PREACH THE WORD!***

Why is that important?

Because the Word of God is inspired or breathed from the mouth of God and is profitable to the hearer and thus, it must be preached!

Now, what if people don't want to hear the Word of God being taught? What if the Word of God is not popular?

What did Paul charge Timothy to do – **"Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season."**

The Greek words that we have translated “**in season**” and “**out of season**” speak of opportune times and inopportune times!

In other words, you preach the Word of God no matter what because it is what they need, not always what they want!

I heard one pastor say that this verse means that the pastor needs to preach the Word when he feels like it and when he doesn't.

Let me say this, that is wrong. The pastor is always to be teaching the word of God, bringing the Word of God to the people. If you don't feel like it, then get out of the ministry because you will only hurt those that God has entrusted to you!

There was once a Church of England clergyman who was gloriously saved. When Jesus changed his life, he started preaching the gospel to his whole parish and they all got saved.

Then he started preaching in neighboring parishes, and the clergymen of those parishes were offended. They asked the bishop to make the man stop.

When the bishop confronted him, he said, “I hear you are always preaching, and you don't seem to be doing anything else.”

The changed man answered, “Well bishop, I only preach during two seasons of the year.”

The bishop said, “I'm glad to know that; what seasons are they?”

He replied, “In season and out of season!”

Amen to that!

I think we are living in the days that Hosea spoke of. Notice what the Lord said through the prophet Hosea in Hosea 4:6, “**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.**”

And in Isaiah 5:13 we are told, **“Therefore my people have gone into captivity, Because they have no knowledge; Their honorable men are famished, And their multitude dried up with thirst.”**

Do you realize that less than 3% of evangelical churches across America have a midweek Bible study!

God told Israel that His people were destroyed because they not only lacked the knowledge of God but the leaders, the priests rejected it, they did not teach it to the people.

That is exactly what we see happening today and look at the number of Christians that are in bondage to sin because of it!

I like the way that Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest put it. He wrote, “The preacher must present, not book reviews, not politics, not economics, not current topics of the day, not a philosophy of life denying the Bible and based upon unproven theories of science, but the Word. The preacher as a herald cannot choose his message. He is given a message to proclaim by his Sovereign. If he will not proclaim that, let him step down from his exalted position.” Exactly!

Make no mistake about it. The Word of God is to be taught, the whole counsel of God, from Genesis through Revelation, when you see fruit and when you don’t see fruit, when people want to hear it and when they don’t want to hear it, when it is popular and when it is not popular!

Remember when Paul was speaking to the Ephesian elders at Miletus on his way to Jerusalem. He exhorted them by telling them in Acts 20:26-28, **“Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”**

In other words, don't starve the people, don't hurt the people that God has entrusted to you, the ones He purchased with His own blood by not preaching to them, teaching them the Word of God!

I wish more pastors would listen to Paul's charge to Timothy and then act upon it in their own congregations, and, ***PREACH THE WORD!***

And the reality is, it is a charge to every pastor because God is going to judge us in what we did!

And, as the Word of God is taught it will comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, and that is a good thing, that is what it is supposed to do!

Paul tells Timothy that as God's Word is taught it will ***convince*** those who are in error to turn to Jesus, to correct their ways. It speaks of correcting misbehavior or false doctrine.

Also, as the Word of God is being taught it will ***rebuke*** those living in sin.

And as the Word of God is being taught, it will ***exhort*** and encourage believers in whatever they are going through!

And a pastor is to be ***longsuffering*** or he is to be patient. When you preach the Word of God allow the Spirit of God to work in their lives, don't be impatient!

And Paul concludes by speaking of ***teaching***.

Now you can agree with me or not, that is up to you. But I personally do not believe that it is possible to give careful instruction to people if a pastor is not teaching verse by verse through the Bible.

Their teaching ends up being superficial, and many times it is jokes, stories, or he takes them where he wants them to go.

When you teach verse by verse you have to go where God is going because it is all laid out for us by the Holy Spirit! People need healthy doctrine; they need the Word of God!

Thus, as God's Word is spoken it will minister to the hearts and lives of the people who hear it and act upon it as Isaiah 55:11 tells us, **“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”**

As we read on, Paul is going to warn Timothy of a day when people will not want to hear the Word of God, that is why he told Timothy to feed them this healthy diet so they won't get swept away by false doctrine. Give them what they need, not what they want!

Listen to what Paul said next.

VERSES 3-4

We see this happening frequently today as people are not looking for sound doctrine or healthy doctrine, but they are looking for things that will tickle their ears, make them feel good, say what they want to hear.

Clarke put it like this in regard to **“itching ears.”** He wrote, “Endless curiosity, an insatiable desire of variety; and they get their ears tickled with the language and accent of the person, abandoning the good and faithful preacher for the fine speaker.”

We see this in the Seeker Friendly churches where there are certain words you can't use as you teach because they will offend people, like the word ***“sin.”***

As negative as that word is and should be, if you don't tell people that they are sinners separated from God, then why in the world would they need a Savior, why would they need Jesus?

They would not!

And tragically, we see these feel-good gospels being proclaimed and people's ears may be tickled, but their lives are not transformed.

And please understand that teachers are ready and willing to spread these lies, they are just waiting for people to seek them out, and they are!

It is as Bible scholar Marvin R. Vincent wrote, "If people desire a calf worship, a ministerial calf-maker is readily found."

The Lord put it this way in Jeremiah 5:30-31, "**An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?**"

When you turn from the truth, you still believe in something and Paul says that these people who turn from the truths of God's Word believe in fairy tales.

Do you doubt that?

I hope not because it is true.

Let me give you two examples to show you what I mean.

First a religious fairy tale and then a non-religious fairy tale.

In regard to being religious, not a Christian, believing in a lie instead of the truth of God's Word, you tell me if this is a fairy tale or not.

"Our destiny, when we die, is to make it through a series of heavens and after-life's, until one day we become god over our own planet, like Elohim is god over earth, living on a planet named Kolob. When we are gods over our own planets, we spend the rest of eternity having celestial relations with a harem of goddess wives, producing spirit babies to populate the earth we are god over."

Do you know who said that? It was Joseph Smith and the Mormons; they have turned aside to ***FABLES!***

In regard to non-religious beliefs, you tell me if this is a fairy tale or not.

This is from the Los Angeles Times, and we are told,

In the beginning, there was light – but also quarks and electrons. The Big Bang spewed out energy that condensed into radiation and particles. The quarks joined into protons and careened wildly about in a hot, dense, glowing goop as opaque as a star.

Time (300,000 years or so) passed. Space expanded. Matter cooled. The electrons and protons, electrically irresistible to each other, merged into neutral hydrogen, and from this marriage, the first atoms were born. Space between atoms became as transparent as crystal – pretty much the way it looks today.

The rest, as they say, is history. Atoms merged to form dust clouds, which grew into stars and galaxies and clusters. Stars used up their nuclear fuel, collapsed and exploded in recurring cycles, fusing elements in the process.

Occasionally, a stable planet condensed around a second-generation star, where carbon-based life forms grew into, among other things, cosmologists, the better to contemplate it all.

- Los Angeles Times, The Big Bang and What Followed It

Talk about faith! Those who believe something can come from nothing by random chance happenings have turned aside to ***FABLES!***

But what about in the church today?

Tragically, we have moved away from foundational doctrines and thus, what we believe are a bunch of lies, fairy tales, that, in the end, will not save us but send us to everlasting darkness. We see this big push in the Emergent Church, and it is dangerous!

What are these doctrines that they no longer believe even though the Word of God clearly teaches them?

They deny that Jesus is God, that He has atoned for our sins by His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, His virgin birth, that we are born in sin, the Trinity, that the Bible is the Word of God, and-so-on. You get the idea.

And tragically there are scores of fables, fairy tales out there for people to pick and choose, from working your way to heaven to God only loves you when you are good to all roads lead to God and-so-on.

How do we know what is true?

The Word of God is the plume line for it tells us what is right, what is wrong, what to do when we have gone astray and how to stay in line with God's will.

The false prophets that promote these lies may make a lot of noise, but it is just a bunch of hot air, it is empty, and it won't save you, only Jesus can!

People are looking for doctrine that is easy, that is comfortable, and they seek teachers who will teach them these things.

What should we do?

Listen to what Paul told Timothy in the next verse.

VERSE 5

Notice the contrast here. These false teachers with their false teaching are leading people astray.

But you Timothy, don't go down that path, pay attention, stay awake and do what you have been called to do, **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”**

In doing that Timothy was going to face persecution, difficult times and so will we.

That can't stop us from bringing the Word of God to people.

And notice that Paul said to Timothy that he was to, **“fulfill your ministry.”**

I find that interesting. He didn't say God will judge you by how big your ministry is but by how faithful you were in fulfilling it!

A good example of faithfulness in service, fulfilling his ministry is seen in the life of the prophet Jeremiah.

For over forty years he spoke forth the Words of God to the Southern Kingdom of Judah and not one person heeded his warning, no one listened to him!

In the eyes of many he would be considered a failure but in God's eyes he was not because he was faithful in what he was called to do.

May we be faithful in what God has called us to do!

VERSES 6-8

Paul, in speaking of his departure, wasn't saying he was going to be freed from his Roman imprisonment, but that he was going to die.

Remember during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome he wrote this to the Philippians, **“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.”** Philippians 1:21-26.

He wasn't sure then, he thought he would be released. And Paul was released from prison for a period of time but now he has been re-arrested, and he knows his time is short, he knows he is going to be put to death for his faith in Christ this time!

And look at how Paul looked at what was happening to him. Paul saw his life ending like a drink offering to the Lord, (Numbers 15:1-10).

You see, first there was the burnt offering to the Lord, then the grain offering, and the last offering was the drink offering.

It is as Hiebert said, “His whole life has been presented to God as a living sacrifice; now his death, comparable to the pouring out of the wine as the last act of the sacrificial ceremony, will complete the sacrifice.”

And when Paul says, **“my departure is at hand”** the word **“departure,”** ANALUSIS (an-al'-oo-sis) in the Greek, carries with it a few different ideas. It truly paints for us a beautiful picture of what Paul saw was coming for him. And the reality is, there is coming a day for all of us where departure is at hand. Listen to what this word **“departure”** means.

This word speaks of the unloosing of a ship from its moors, as Paul is ready to set sail home to heaven.

This word speaks of the unyoking of a weary team of animals after a hard day's work, and Paul has finished the work that God has called him to do, he is going to enter that rest.

And this word speaks of the striking of a tent, taking it down so you can move on and Paul was going to leave this earthly tent for a mansion!

Make no mistake about it, Paul knew he was going to die, and he is passing the mantle of ministry to Timothy, his son in the faith.

And listen again to what Paul said in II Timothy 4:7, "**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**"

As Paul looks back, he sees himself as a boxer or wrestler who has fought Satan in order to spread the Gospel message. It was a good fight, a battle, but Paul did well.

He also sees his life like a long-distance race that he was in, he was a long-distance runner and he finished the race that God has placed before him, the ministry that God had given to him, and he is looking forward to the prize or the reward.

And lastly, as Paul looked back at his life, he said that "**I have kept the faith**" or that he was faithful in the ministry that God had given to him!

Jude admonished us by saying, "**Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**" Jude 3.

We are in a battle for the faith that has been entrusted to us, may we, like Paul, not give up but forge ahead and keep the faith!

And what Paul is doing here is he is using his life as an example to Timothy. He fought the good fight, he finished the race, he kept the faith and he is waiting to receive his rewards for faithful service when the Lord returns, which tells me he expected the Lord to come soon.

Are you fighting the good fight, finishing the race, keeping the faith, awaiting the Lord's return?

Paul is encouraging you to do so and receive the rewards that you will one day present at the feet of Jesus for He is the one who has enabled all of us to do these things!

VERSES 9-10

Again, Paul knew his time was short and he wants Timothy to come to him quickly.

It would take maybe a few months to travel from Ephesus to Rome, so time was of the essence.

We don't know if Timothy ever made it to Rome before Paul was martyred for his faith in Christ.

Now Demas, according to Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24 was a co-laborer with Paul, but now the things of this world got in his way and Demas distanced himself from Paul, he did not associate himself with Paul anymore. In fact, the world drew Demas away from the Lord!

Those other men that Paul speaks of were involved in ministry and couldn't come to Paul at this time. That too was hard, but Paul understood.

VERSES 11-13

Luke, who was a physician, accompanied Paul on most of his journeys and now he was with Paul in Rome attending to his physical needs.

Luke is one of those men who is always around, meeting the needs, not getting much attention, but is very faithful in ministry even when things are tough! It is hard to find men like that as Paul found out!

Then Paul speaks of Mark, who is also called John Mark. And if you remember in our study of Acts, Mark was the one who accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey and wrote the Gospel According to Mark.

For whatever reason, Mark left Paul, didn't finish the work and when Paul started his second missionary journey, Barnabas, the uncle of Mark, wanted Mark to go with them, and Paul refused.

So they split-up, not on very good terms. Barnabas and Mark going to Cyprus and Paul and Silas went through Syria and Cilicia.

Now things have been healed and Mark is a part of the ministry with Paul, he wants to see this young man before he is martyred for his faith!

Tychicus could have brought this letter to Timothy, we aren't sure.

In Titus 3:12 we are told of this man, **“When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.”**

It seems that this man was a fill-in pastor, giving Titus and Timothy some time off to rest and be refreshed, we don't know, but that is what it seems like.

I also like this about Paul. He knows he is going to die and yet he still wants to read the Scriptures, maybe write some more letters. Read more books.

He was a man who utilized his time to the fullest for God. What an example to us!

Also, keep in mind that he was in a dungeon and winter was coming and he wanted his coat to keep warm, Rome was not going to provide him with those things!

VERSES 14-15

Who is this Alexander that did Paul much harm?

It is hard to be dogmatic about this because that was a common name.

It could very well be the man that Paul spoke of in I Timothy 1:19-20, **“having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.”**

And Paul tells us that Alexander did him much harm and the idea here is that this man had ***“informed many things against me.”***

It sounds like he was an informant for the Roman government against Paul.

Barclay put it like this, “Informers were one of the great curses of Rome at this time. And it may well be that Alexander was a renegade Christian, who went to the magistrates with false information against Paul, seeking to ruin him in the most dishonorable way.”

Make no mistake about it, this man was trouble!

He claimed to be a Christian and he turned out to be an informant who not only turned Paul in but brought the accusations against him.

Thus, Paul is warning Timothy not to trust him no matter how nice he may seem, he is dangerous and for Timothy, that was important for it seems like this man lived in Ephesus.

Now I don't believe he was saved because he is going to be repaid according to his works, judgment was coming upon this man, as it is for unbelievers.

In Revelation 20:11-15 we are told of this coming judgment known as the Great White Throne judgment.

We are told, **“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”**

That is for unbelievers, the degree of punishment in the Lake of Fire. They are cast there for their unbelief in Jesus and their punishment is according to their deeds!

This is not for believers!

VERSE 16

I believe Paul is speaking of his first hearing, a preliminary hearing in Rome, not his first Roman imprisonment.

And all those who said they were his friends were absent, they distanced themselves from Paul because of fear or whatever! And let’s face it, at this time Nero was a nut job, medically speaking. I believe he rejected Jesus after he heard Paul share Christ with him during Paul’s first imprisonment.

He then let Paul go and now, he is persecuting Christians, putting them to death, burned down Rome and thus, you can understand why Christians were afraid to be associated with Paul!

Think about that. You poured your life into these people. You built them up in the faith. And then there was no one at the trial who would stick up for you.

That must have made Paul angry! It must have made Paul mad!

No, for Paul said, “**. . . May it not be charged against them.**” II Timothy 4:16.

How could Paul say that?

Because the Lord was with him and all the forgiveness that the Lord had given to Paul, he was now giving to others.

What a great lesson for us to learn!

VERSES 17-18

Yes, it was hard to be alone and yet Paul realized he was never really alone, the Lord was with him.

That is a great perspective to have.

Now wait a minute. How can Paul say, “**And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever.**

Amen!” II Timothy 4:18.

Again, how can Paul say that when he knew his life was coming to an end?

Listen to this perspective and then I will expound on this.

William MacDonald put it like this, “When the apostle said the Lord would deliver him from every evil work, he did not imply that he would be indefinitely delivered from execution. He knew that the time of his death was drawing near (v. 6). What then did he mean? Doubtless he meant that the Lord would save him from doing anything that would be a blot on the closing days of his testimony. The Lord would deliver him from recanting, from denying His name, from cowardice, or from any form of moral breakdown.”

You see, he saw how the Lord delivered him from dangerous situations before and even in death the Lord would deliver him.

You see, with that perspective, you can’t lose!

And as Paul is in heaven, it is the Lord who receives the glory for it is Jesus who enabled Paul to be received up into heaven by His sacrificial work on the cross of Calvary, paying in full his debt (Paul’s) and ours, casting all our sins as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more!

But it is easy to lose focus. Think about how we strive and work for so many material things in this life. We have a mentality that says, *“He who dies with the most toys wins!”*

And yet, Paul had absolutely nothing, not even a coat to keep him warm, no worldly possessions and yet, he would not trade his relationship with the Lord for anything this world has to offer because it is temporary and what the Lord has for him and us, is eternal.

It is as David said in Psalm 17:15, **“As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.”**

And John gave us this perspective in I John 2:15-17, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”**

That is a proper perspective to have!

VERSES 19-21

Prisca or Priscilla and her husband Aquila are the couple that Paul met in Corinth on his second missionary journey.

This couple had fled Rome when Claudius expelled all Jews.

As Paul went to Ephesus this couple came with him and remained in Ephesus for a time after Paul left.

And in Romans 16:3-4 Paul tells us that they were back in Rome and Paul says that they risked their life for him in a very difficult situation, we are not told what that was all about. This truly is a godly couple!

Onesiphorus was the friend of Paul who brought Paul refreshment while he was in prison, he was not ashamed or afraid of what happened to Paul but risked his own life to minister to this man. And he sought Paul out very zealously. What a friend this man was to Paul.

One author and pastor had this to say about this man. “Onesiphorus stands as a tremendous example; when all others had forsaken Paul, he loved Paul and ministered to him. Whom would God have you be an Onesiphorus to? Whom would God have you diligently seek out, not be ashamed of, and refresh? Is there not one ‘fringe’ person you know that others have forgotten about, who has no status or reward to give you back, that you can reach out and love in the name of Jesus? Is there not one person on the outside whom you can draw into your circle of friends, and refresh them in the name of the Lord?”

Think about this. Paul is on death row and yet he is still thinking of others, he is others-centered, not self-centered.

And for those who believe God heals all physically, Paul left Trophimus in Miletus because he was sick, not a lack of faith, he was physically sick!

These last few names are Latin names and thus, they are probably from Italy.

I wonder where the Church of Rome was at when Paul first appeared before the court?

They let fear get in the way of friendship, the fear of man was a snare to them and when Paul needed them the most, they were not there!

Paul wants Timothy to come before winter and according to verse 13, he was to bring Paul’s coat, probably because it was going to get cold in that dungeon as winter approached!

VERSE 22

Here they are, the last words that were penned by Paul, this great man of God and what is the focus?

It is upon Jesus and God’s Grace that He has bestowed upon us.

You see, we are saved by Grace through faith in Christ, we are sustained by Grace and we will be received up into glory by the Grace of God.

What a great way to end a letter, a ministry and a life!

From history we are told that Paul was beheaded a short time after he wrote this letter to Timothy outside Rome's Ostian Gate at a place called Three Fountains.

Yes, his physical life on this earth was over but the fragrance of Jesus he left behind is still around with us!

Paul put it this way in II Corinthians 2:14-17 regarding what we are to leave behind, **“Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.”**

What kind of fragrance are you leaving behind?

As I close this evening, Paul was passing on the mantle of ministry to Timothy, his passion for the Lord.

The question is, ***“Do we have that same passion for the Lord and are we willing to pass it on?”***

Paul was and may we learn those lessons so we too may shine for Jesus in a world that is in darkness! Timothy took up the mantle and served the Lord as Paul had admonished him to.

May the fragrance of Jesus flow from our lives and touch the lives of others.

Let me close this evening as Paul closed out his letter to Timothy and his life, “**The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.**”