

Sermon 9/23/2018 **The Lord Stood with Me II Timothy 4:6-8; 16-18**

Dear Faithful in the Lord:

A person's last words are often significant. A person's last words are often a window into the person's heart. These were the last words of...

- Martin Luther: "O my Heavenly Father, my eternal and everlasting God! You have revealed to me Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ! I have preached Him! I have confessed Him! I love Him and I worship Him as my dearest Savior and Redeemer!"
- John Hus – reformer who lived 100 years before Luther: "What I taught with my lips, I now seal with my blood." Hus was executed for his faith.
- John Calvin – a reformer in Luther's time: "It is enough that to Christ I live and die...He is gain in life and death."
- Napoleon: "I die before my time, and my body will be given back to the earth to become food for worms. Such is the fate of him who has been called the great Napoleon. What an abyss lies between my deep mystery and the eternal kingdom of Christ.!"

In II Timothy we have the last words of the Apostle Paul before he was taken home to heaven. With these last words Paul...

- Expressed no regrets as he came to his end
- Forgave those who made life difficult for him
- Mentioned more than 17 persons in this final letter which shows that he was thinking of others as his life neared to an end

Do the work of an evangelist

As Paul nears the end of his life he remembers the Lord's faithfulness to him and he encourages his co-worker Timothy to carry on the work of the

Gospel. Paul encourages Timothy to “Do the work of an evangelist.” As believers we will want to have a burden for the lost. As believers we want people to go to heaven and escape the judgment of hell.

- Hell is real.
- Hell is an everlasting place of torment.
- Knowing this we will want people to hear about Jesus and to believe in Jesus.
- Someone went to hear a famous preacher. He was asked how the sermon was. He replied: “There wasn’t enough Gospel in it to save a flea!”

We preach Christ crucified. We preach Law and Gospel so that people will see their sins, confess their sins and trust in Jesus for their salvation.

The Apostle Paul is charging young Timothy to keep on keeping on preaching the Gospel. Paul was about to be taken home to heaven and Timothy would take his place. As Paul encourages Timothy he looks at his life in three different ways.

1st – Paul looked at his present situation:

“I am...being poured out like a drink offering and the time has come for my departure.” V6

Paul realized his time on earth was short.

- He was on trial for his faith in Rome
- He knew he would soon die for this faith
- Yet, he did not fear his impending death

Paul says he is being “poured out like a drink offering.” In Paul’s day when the Jewish believers sacrificed their animal on the altar in the Jewish

temple they would pour out wine on the sacrifice as they finished their worship.

- He is saying that the Roman government is not going to kill him.
- He is saying: “I am going to give my life as a sacrifice to Jesus Christ.”
- Paul’s final act in his earthly service is to die for his Lord.
- Paul’s life would be “poured out” as a sacrifice to the Lord

Paul knew that the chain of events that had been set in motion when he was imprisoned would end with his being executed. His tone is calm. He had once written:

“If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord.”

Romans 14:8

Dying as a believer is a service to the Lord as much as living for the Lord. Living and dying are both opportunities to show what a wonderful Lord we have. Paul wrote in Philippians: “Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.”

Paul uses the word “departure” to speak of his impending death. This word means “to hoist anchor and set sail.” Paul looked on death as a “release” from this old world. He looked upon death as an opportunity to “set sail” into eternity.

“Departure” = to hoist anchor and set sail

One of my Seminary professors commenting on this passage wrote: “There is something appealing about thinking of death as being a leaving of the shores of this life to head for the safe harbor of eternal life.” Prof. Habeck

The Bible says that at the death of a believer: “The spirit returns to God who gave it.” Ecc 12:7

“How the thought of what it is enkindles the desire to break loose at once from all the entanglements of earth, to lay aside the body, to soar aloft and to enter speedily its waiting gates of pearl.”

Paul says: “We would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.” II Cor 5

Paul says that the “time” has come for my departure. Timothy may have wanted the Lord to keep Paul around a bit longer. We, too, may think that the Lord should keep our loved one around longer. But the Lord makes no mistakes in his calculations. The time he sets is the right time. We are thankful to be able to say: “Our times are in God’s hands.” Psalm 31:15

2nd – Paul looks back at his life. He says:

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” V7

Like an athlete Paul had fought the good fight as a boxer in the ring and as a runner who has finished the race. Paul always kept his goal in mind as he labored for the Lord. Through all the stress and hardship Paul never lost his focus on serving the Lord. Now he was about to cross the finish line and leave his toil and stress and hardship behind.

Through it all Paul remained faithful. Paul says he “kept the faith.” Paul had guarded the truth of the Gospel by preaching it correctly and he had guarded his personal faith against every temptation to give way to doubt or indifference. The word Paul uses here for “kept” means to

Cherish something as a precious treasure.

In the construction of the Greek in this verse two things stand out with Paul’s words:

- Paul is speaking of his death as a shout of triumph

- Paul keeps the focus on God's grace not his own strength to keep the faith

3rd – Paul looks ahead. He says:

“Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord...will award to me on that day – and...to all who have longed for his appearing.” V8

Having reviewed his life, Paul now looks ahead. He looks beyond his personal departure for heaven to the Day when Jesus returns. The Lord will provide for all believers the “crown of righteousness.”

In Paul's day the winner in the athletic contests would receive the wreath of leaves which of course would not last forever. What is this “crown” we receive from the Lord?

Not Guilty

We are not righteous in ourselves. Paul knew the record of his own sinfulness and sinning and so do we. Yet, Paul knew on the Last Day none of that record of sinning would stick to him or other believers. As a judge in a courtroom declares a someone to be “not guilty” so the Lord through the blood of Jesus has declared us “not guilty.” The Lord has given us His righteousness.

This will happen on “that Day” the Last Day, the Day we as believers are looking forward to when Jesus comes back. This will be the most important Day of our lives. The Lord is our righteous judge whom we do not fear for “The blood of Jesus...purifies us from all sin.” 1 Jn 1:7

We long for this “appearing of Jesus.” It takes watchfulness and self-discipline on our part to keep on loving and looking forward to Jesus “appearing.” At times we may feel that we are not worthy for this crown

of righteous that the Lord will give us because of our sins. Remember our hope for getting to heaven is based solely on what Jesus had done for us, not what we have done for Jesus. There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1

Is this Day of Jesus returning “That Day” for us? Or do we say, Lord, wait until after this or that happens in my life. The more we live with eternity in view, the more we shall love his appearing and look forward to receiving the crown of righteousness.

How are we going to make it to the Last Day? Paul says:

“The Lord stood at my side and gave me strength...” v17

When Paul was on trial for his faith in Rome, no one came forward in his defense but Paul forgave them. Paul’s fellow human beings left him in the lurch, but his Divine Helper stood by him and made him strong during the trial. Psalm 46:1 Paul was “delivered from the lion’s mouth.” This phrase often refers to mortal danger in the Bible. The Lord would protect Paul until his work for the Gospel on earth was done. The Lord will rescue us as He did Paul v18 He will deliver us from impending danger as He has done in the past, so will he do in the future.

The Lord will pull us out of the flood and bring us safely home to heaven. We have waiting for us the joy and comfort of heavenly glory all because the Lord has stood by us. We say with Paul “To the Lord be glory forever and ever. Amen.” V18