



Finish the Race

By Jeff Bedwell on July 1, 2024

TODAY'S READING: 2 Timothy 4

Paul has little time left as he writes this letter to Timothy. He gives to his protégé some final words of instruction, challenge, and encouragement.

This chapter begins with Paul's charge to Timothy: *“preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching”* (2 Timothy 4:2 ESV). This charge is not just for Timothy but for all of us who have been called to share the Gospel. We are called to proclaim the truth of God's Word, to confront sin, and to encourage others in their faith. This may not always be easy, but we are to do so with patience and in a way that fosters growth and understanding.

Paul continues by reminding us of the importance of the Word of God. *“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions”* (2 Timothy 4:3 ESV). We live in a time when people are looking for teachers who tell them what they want to hear rather than what is true. But as followers of Christ, we must stand firm on the Word of God and not be swayed by the changing tides of culture. We must be vigilant in studying the Scriptures and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit for discernment in all things.

As he continues, Paul shares with Timothy his own experiences and the afflictions he has faced for the sake of the Gospel. *“But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it”* (2 Timothy 4:17, ESV). Let us remember that even during trials and persecution, God is with us, strengthening us and using us to spread His message to the world. We must not lose heart but remember that our labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58).

As we look at the conclusion of Paul's letter, we see his firm belief in the ultimate victory of the Gospel. *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up 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 loved his appearing”* (2 Timothy 4:7-8, ESV). These words are not just for Paul but for all of us who have faithfully followed Christ. Let us hold on to the hope of our eternal reward and continue to run the race set before us, keeping the faith until the very end.

Finally, let us remember that our strength and endurance come from God alone. It is only through His grace and power that we are able to fulfill the call He has placed on our lives. Just as Paul had the Lord standing by him, we too can have confidence that God is with us, guiding and strengthening us for the journey ahead.

PRAYER: Lord, enable me by Your grace to run the race that You have uniquely marked out for me. Help me to live well and finish well to Your glory and honor.

TOMORROW'S READING: 2 Corinthians 8

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