



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V23 N47 November 21, 2021

FINISH STRONG

“What Do You Want on Your Tombstone?”

2 Timothy 4:1-8

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Faithfulness

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.”

Proverbs 3:3-4



How do you want to be remembered?

Saul, later called Paul, was converted and called to ministry in A.D. 35 (Ac 9:3-6, 15); he wrote 2 Timothy, his last epistle, in the fall of A.D. 67, just prior to his death in the following spring. During his 32 years as the Apostle to the Gentiles, he conducted three missionary journeys and traveled to Rome, planting churches and doing ministry all across Cyprus, Pamphylia, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, Italy, and perhaps even Spain. During these years, he suffered much (Ac 9:16). Writing to the Corinthians, he boasts, comparing himself to his adversaries: “Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I know I sound like a madman, but I have served him far more! I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm. Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches” (Ac 11:22-28 NLT).

Having poured out his life like a drink offering over more than three decades of service and facing imminent death, Paul writes in “one of the most sublime and moving passages, which with respect to grandeur of thought and stateliness of rhythm is probably unsurpassed anywhere in

Paul’s epistles” (William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, 313): “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2Ti 4:7). His words, a consummate expression of faithfulness, have become the “epitaph of the faithful,” echoing throughout subsequent generations.

The epitaph contains two athletic metaphors—the “good fight” that likely refers to a boxing or wrestling match, and the “race” that likely refers to a foot race. The adjective “good” in the first refers to the nature of the fight—it was a worthy or worthwhile struggle—rather than how well Paul fought it. According to one commentator, “Paul’s testimony that he had contended in the good contest is not a note of personal pride (not K.J.V., ‘have fought a good fight’), but is a joyful note that he had spent his labors in the good contest, which is the realm of Christian faith (1 Tim. 6:12)” (Homer A. Kent, Jr., *The Pastoral Epistles*, 297). Put differently, Paul is not claiming that he has done his best, but that he has been engaged in the noblest, grandest fight of them all. The word “finished” in the second connotes not only that he has run the full distance but also that he has followed the course laid out by his Lord (Ac 20:24). In the third element of the epitaph, “the faith” may refer to *Paul’s personal faith*—i.e., he has remained faithful personally to his calling (see Hendriksen, 316; Mounce, 580)—or to the *body of Christian doctrine* (see Kent, 297)—i.e., he has remained a good steward of the truth. Both are true.

Paul’s statement regarding himself, raises the question, “Can we say the same thing about ourselves?” Are we fighting the good fight, or have we, like Roberto Durán in his “Super Fight” against Sugar Ray Leonard II, cried, “No Más”? Are we running the marathon that is the Christian life, or are we entangled by sin (Heb 12:1) or disqualified from the race for not following the rules (1Co 9:24, 26-27)? Are we keeping the faith or being led astray by false teaching (2Ti 4:3-4)?

1 EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

2 Timothy 4:1-8

1 *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:* 2 *Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.* 3 *For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.* 4 *They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.* 5 *But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*

6 *For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near.* 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.*

READ in another translation

1 *I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom:* 2 *Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching.*

3 *For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear.* 4 *They will reject the truth and chase after myths.*

5 *But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you.*

6 *As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near.* 7 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.* 8 *And now the prize awaits me – the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing. (NLT)*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline “In the presence of” in v. 1.
- Bracket “judge the living and the dead” in v. 1.
- Circle “his appearing” and “his kingdom” in v. 1.
- Highlight v. 2.
- Box “For” indicating *reason* in v. 3.
- Box “Instead” indicating *contrast* in v. 3.
- Circle “itching ears” in v. 3.
- Circle “myths” in v. 4.
- Box “But” indicating *contrast* in v. 5.
- Circle “evangelist” in v. 5.
- Circle “good fight” in v. 7.
- Bracket “crown of righteousness” in v. 8.
- Circle “that day” in v. 8.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about _____.”



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Paul charges Timothy “in the *presence* of God and of Christ Jesus.” So what?
2. *Who* are “the living and the dead,” *by whom* will they be judged, and *when*?
3. Paul charges Timothy “in view of (i.e., by) *his appearing* and *his kingdom*.” So what?
4. List the *five* commands contained in Paul’s charge.
5. Explain *why* Paul gives Timothy this charge.
6. Explain the *contrast* in verse 5.
7. Paul’s charge to Timothy applies to *clergy* today, but does it apply to *laity*? Explain.
8. *Paraphrase* verse 7 in your own words.
9. *What* is “the crown of righteousness,” *who* gets it, and *when*?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about your thoughts on or response to Paul’s reflections on his Christian life.

Commentary On The Text

Paul's letters each have an *opening*, a *body*, and a *closing*. In the case of 2 Timothy, the opening is found in 1:1-5, containing a greeting and thanksgiving; the body is found in 1:6-4:8, containing Paul's theological and practical points; and the closing is found in 4:9-22, containing personal remarks and requests, and final greetings. As Paul draws his letter to a close, he delivers a final charge to Timothy in verses 1-5, and knowing the curtain is rapidly closing on his life, he reflects on his three decades of ministry in verses 6-8—assessing his present situation in verse 6, appraising his past labors in verse 7, and anticipating his future reward in v. 8.

Paul lays the groundwork for his solemn *general* charge to Timothy in verse 1. As one writer notes, "It would be difficult to see how Paul could have made his **charge** to Timothy anymore weighty (cf. 1 Tim. 5:21; 6:13). He adjured Timothy, not only **in the name of God and of Christ**, but in the light of the coming judgment, Christ's return (*epiphaneian*, **appearing**; cf. 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:13), and the establishment of **His** millennial **kingdom**" (A. Duane Litfin, "2 Timothy," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 757).

The content of his charge consists of five commands that follow in verse 2. "*Preach the word*," rendered "Proclaim the message" (NRSV), "Herald and preach the Word!" (AMPC) in other translations, is its central thrust. This Timothy is to *be prepared*, that is, stand by to do "in season and out of season," namely, whether the time is opportune or not—which likely points to whether his listeners, rather than Timothy himself, find the time opportune or not. In other words, Timothy is to stand by his duty to preach whether the opportunity seems ripe or not. Keep this in mind: "To 'preach' does not imply that an ordained minister is to stand behind a stately pulpit and expound Scripture. It called Timothy to a public heralding of the gospel message whether done in a mass meeting or person-to-person" (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC, 243). All those who share the gospel with others "preach" in this sense. Those in error he is to *correct* (cf. 2:25), those in sin he is to *rebuke* (1Ti 5:20; 2Ti 3:16; Tit 1:13; 2:15), those doing well he is to *encourage*. And all of these commands are to be obeyed "with great patience and careful instruction"—great patience denoting *attitude* and careful instruction denoting *means*.

Verses 3-4 contain the *reason* why Paul is delivering the charge. The reason is introduced by the word "For" and is expressed in a *contrast* indicated by the word "Instead." In time, people will "not tolerate sound teaching" (NET). "Instead" they will gather teachers around them willing to tell them what their "itching ears" want to hear, because, in the words of one commentator, "They have a desire to dabble with novelty. They covet new, fashionable ideas and long for the excitement of having their ears teased by the satisfying but harmless mumbling of pseudo-scholarship. Such speakers toy with the minds of the hearers but leave the intellect uninformed, the conscience unchallenged, and the will set in a direction away from God" (Lea and Griffin, 244).

After describing people who turn away from the truth and turn to myths in verse 4, using *contrast*, Paul gives Timothy a *personal* charge consisting of four specific commands introduced by "But you." Timothy must remain cool-headed in the face of difficulties. He must be ready to endure hardship (cf. 2:3) as the pressure mounts. He must do the work of an evangelist, proclaiming the gospel at every opportunity. And finally, he must "discharge all the duties of [his] ministry."

The big question with regard to this passage pertains to its application. It seems reasonable to conclude that the *general* charge the apostle gives Timothy applies *directly* to others in gospel ministries like Timothy's. But it also seems reasonable to conclude that it applies *indirectly* to believers whatever the given nature of their personal obedience to the commission given them to make disciples (Mt 28:18-20). The *personal* charge given Timothy has limited significance to believers today.

Paul's reflections on his more than three decades of service to the Lord amount to nothing less than a challenge to Timothy, and to clergy and laity alike today to fight their good fight, finish their course, and keep their faith as did Paul, knowing that "the crown of righteousness" will be theirs, given to them by Jesus, the righteous Judge, when he returns. (See page 1.)

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *In the presence of* “This last charge which Paul lays upon Timothy is a most solemn obligation (*diamarturomai*). The witnesses who are called upon to observe this testimony give it particular solemnity and awe. God the Father (*tou theou*), who sent the Son to redeem sinners, is incomparably interested in the proclamation of the Gospel. So also is Christ Jesus (*Christou Iēsou*), who not only died for sinners, but is the Judge of all” (Homer A. Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 291).

v. 1 *judge the living* . . . See Jn 5:22, 27; Ac 10:39-42; 17:31. “The ‘living’ are those who will be alive at the time of Christ’s return, and the ‘dead’ are those who will experience a resurrection to a personal meeting with the Lord (1 Thess 4:16-18) . . . The judgment of unbelievers will involve a determination of eternal destiny (see Rev 20:11-15). The judgment of believers will not determine eternal destiny but will concern itself with an evaluation of works for the purpose of recognition or reward (see 1 Cor 3:1-15; 2 Cor 5:9-10)” (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC, 241, 42). The resurrection of the righteous unfolds sequentially (1Co 15:22-23). There will be a resurrection in association with the rapture (1Th 4:16-18) and also in connection with the glorious appearing of Christ (Rev 20:4). The resurrection of the unrighteous occurs at the end of the millennium, the 1000-year reign of Christ on the earth (Rev 20:5; 7, 11-15).

v. 1 *appearing . . . kingdom* Cf. “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who is about to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and by his kingdom” (Mounce, italics added); “by his appearing and his kingdom” (NET). The two terms are used as oaths. “To swear by Christ’s appearing and by his kingdom is to use the fact of these two future events as a basis for solemnity” (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 571).

v. 2 *Preach the word* . . . “The contents of the charge are contained in verses 2-5. It opens with five commands. The first (‘preach the Word’) echoes the repeated instructions to Timothy and Titus regarding the teaching and preaching of God’s truth. As in 2:9, 15 this truth is referred to as ‘the Word.’ Next, ‘be prepared’ contains the idea of standing by, taking a position of readiness (Jer. 46:14); such preparedness should be a permanent part of Timothy’s life. The third, fourth, and fifth imperatives (‘correct, rebuke and encourage’) reflect the necessity of a strong ministry in view of false teaching at Ephesus (cf. 3:16)” (Walter L. Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 287). “To ‘preach’ does not imply that an ordained minister is to stand behind a stately pulpit and expound Scripture. It called Timothy to a public heralding of the gospel message whether done in a mass meeting or

person-to-person” (Lea and Griffin, 243).

v. 3 *itching ears* “The imagery is that their itching ears are tickled by the false teachers who teach whatever is sensational or novel but in the end what conforms to their evil lusts, specifically the myths of the Ephesian heresy, which people can always study but never gain in knowledge (3:7)” (Mounce, 575).

v. 4 *myths* See 1Ti 1:4, 7; 4:7; Tit 1:14. “The term ‘myths’ is a reference to all those religious errors that can flood the mind of the listeners because they desire to turn away from the truth” (Lea and Griffin, 244-45). Regarding the harm they cause, the same author says, “The damage of these ‘myths’ came from their empty content (not worth telling), their attractiveness (snaring the attention of the listeners), and their general uselessness” (67).

v. 5 *evangelist* “In this charge to Timothy, the absence of an article before ‘evangelist’ indicates the type or quality of work is being stressed, rather than some official position” (Kent, 295). “This was a function of Timothy’s work as a pastor and not a special office” (Lea and Griffin, 245). All Christians are to be evangelists who proclaim the gospel at every opportunity (see Mt 28:18-20).

v. 7 *good fight* “The expression I have competed well (Grk ‘I have competed the good competition’) uses words that may refer to a race or to a boxing or wrestling match: ‘run the good race’ or ‘fight the good fight.’ The similar phrase in 1 Tim 1:18 uses a military picture and is more literally ‘war the good warfare’” (*The NET Bible*, 11sn on 2Ti 4:7). “It is not that he has fought well but that the fight of Christian ministry is inherently good and is worth the battle” (Mounce, 579).

v. 8 *crown of righteousness* “He could be referring to (1) a crown given as a reward for a righteous life, (2) a crown consisting of righteousness or (3) a crown given righteously (justly) by the righteous Judge” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on 2Ti 4:8). Verse 7 makes the first possibility most likely.

v. 8 *that day* “Paul expected to receive his reward on that day (a reference to Christ’s return, not Paul’s death), side by side with the rest of the faithful who have longed for His appearing (cf. Phil. 3:20-21; Titus 2:13)” (A. Duane Litfin, “2 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 758).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Knowing the Lord is a righteous judge, faithfully proclaim God's message whether the time is favorable or not, for one day people will refuse to listen.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Parenting requires everything from you. Literally, everything; all day, every day. When the little darlings were preschoolers, parenting was constant vigilance to make sure they were safe and not shoving screwdrivers into light switches or any other hazardous happenings. As they got a little older it was all about teaching them to respect authority, yours in particular. I remember one of my children being in time out seven times in one day. By bedtime, we were all exhausted and not sure we liked each other very much. As kids move into teen years, it's still constant but more of the catch-and-release, wind-them-up-and-let-them-go worry of the heart. Parenting is a moment-by-moment "die to self" sacrifice and we might not see the results of our efforts for decades. Don't lose heart! Though the tasks feel never-ending, we truly only have one job – to guide our children to know the Lord, love Him deeply, and reflect His glory. At the end of his life, Paul proclaims he has fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith (2 Tim 4:7). The sacrifice was worth it, and his hope of heaven was so close. Are you feeling discouraged about where you are in parenting? Do you feel like you have nothing more to give and your kids just aren't getting it? Is the battle ongoing? Give it to God. Prayerfully lay it at his feet in humble submission. Hang onto hope and trust the One True Guide to faithfully lead you. In our weakness He is strong! We are praying for you today!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 2 Timothy 4:1-8.

1. What did Paul tell Timothy to do?
2. What three things does this involve?
3. Who will people surround themselves with and why?

What Do You Think?

How can you "preach the word" in your daily life?

What Do You Do?

Follow Paul's guide to encourage others. Write a thank you letter to someone (i.e. teacher, postman, trashman) and be sure to include a verse that will encourage them.

CORE COMPETENCY: Faithfulness

I am loyal to God and others, so they know they can count on me.

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Peter 3:15

"But in our hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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