

## The Good Fight

2 Timothy 4:6-8

April 25, 2021

**Opening ILL:** Dom, I just want 15 more years! A dear friend and elder in my previous church said this when he found out that he was dying. [tell the whole story]. I reminded him that Hezekiah asked God for 15 more years and it led to unparalleled disaster (2 Kings 20). The goal is not to live longer, but to live stronger.

**ILL:** “I don’t wanna live forever. I just wanna live while I’m alive” Bon Jovi

### I. Introduction—*Deconstruction, Deconversion, Disobedience and Death.*

#### A. What is the danger?

1. It’s different than it used to be.
  - a. Failing faith is now being celebrated. In years past, unbelievers still turned their noses at people who deserted their faith. Not so much now.
  - b. We live in an age in which deconversion can be broadcasted in social media.
2. The danger is that as professing believers fall away, it may rock our faith.
  - a. What do we do when someone we respected de-converts?
  - b. What do we do when someone we respected shamefully falls?
  - c. What do we do when someone we have been leaning on dies?
3. The danger is that, through our own spiritual negligence, we may unnecessarily increase our own fear of death, and do great violence to our souls.
  - a. We may live a long time, only to find that somewhere along the way our faith has faded, and instead of passing out of this world with a confident shout, instead, we do so with a uneasy whimper.

#### B. What is the goal?

1. The goal is not to live longer. The goal is to live stronger.
2. The goal is to not only finish out our lives, but to finish out our lives as believers!
3. The goal is to make it to the end, no matter how long or short the time may be, with a solid, sincere faith.

#### C. How do we get there?

1. That’s what we will think about this morning.
  - a. All of this will require that we go through good times and bad times. It is all part of the plan (reference James 1).
  - b. All of this is dependent upon God’s will.
    - i. **James 4:13-15** Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." <sup>14</sup>Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. <sup>15</sup>Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

## II. Striving in the Present

### A. Notice what Paul says:

1. I am already being poured out (v. 6)
  - a. Notice that Paul is referring to his death as a “drink offering.”
    - i. Paul uses the term, “drink offering” in contrast to a burnt offering.

**Quote:** It is noteworthy that the apostle does not refer to his impending martyr-death as a burnt offering or any other main sacrifice, but as a drink offering of a little wine and oil, which was added as a small supplement to the main sacrifice (see Num. 15:1–10). It is in this way that Paul links the shedding of his blood for the sake of Christ with the supreme sacrifice of his Lord. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> W. Ross Rainey, [“Loving Christ’s Appearing An Exposition of 2 Timothy 4:6-10,”](#) *Emmaus Journal* 8, no. 1 (1999): 104.

2. My departure has come (v. 6b)
  - a. Apparently, the word translated as “departure” (ἀνάλυσις the verbal form means “to untie”) here was commonly used to refer to lifting an anchor or removing the ropes that tethered a ship to the dock. You would remove these ropes, pull up the anchor and the ship would drift out to sea. What a beautiful picture! You see? Paul saw this life as a tether...a restraint. He saw death as the sweet relief of freedom.

**B. What do you mean by “striving” in the present?**

1. After all, Paul just said that he was about to die!
2. What I am referring to is the struggle to maintain his faith.
  - a. Notice that he knows full well that his end is close. He sees his death as an act of worship!

**III. Surviving in the Past—2 Timothy 4:7**

**Point:** I would argue that the 3 statements made in v. 7 are basically saying the same thing. What Paul is saying here is that his faith is strong at the end of his life because he fought (and endured) every battle of faith to the best of his ability. He is saying that, by the grace of Christ, in the good times and the bad times, he found a way to keep going...and not only that...but to keep going in belief!

**A. I have fought the good fight (7a).**

1. What do we learn from this?
  - a. That the Christian life is a fight.
    - i. Specifically, an internal fight, not an external one.
    - ii. Some people just like to fight the world and its ideologies, and there is a place for that, but this fight of faith is a fight for our own souls.

**B. I have finished the race (7b).**

1. What does this tell us?
  - a. That the Christian life requires diligence.

**ILL:** A marathon runner simply wants to finish the race. If they start too fast, they wear out. If they go too slow, they will run out of time. They must pace themselves and just...keep...running...!

**C. I have kept the faith (7c).**

1. What does this tell us?
  - a. That victory is defined by keeping the faith.
  - b. If you can get to the end of your life and still believe...still have faith...still trust in Jesus...Then you win!

**IV. Thriving in the future—2 Timothy 4:8**

A. There is a reward waiting for me (v. 8a).

1. What is this “crown of righteousness?”
  - a. It is either “the crown that is righteousness” or “the crown that comes with righteousness”.
  - b. There are arguments on each side.
  - c. Frankly, either interpretation is possible and can be useful.

B. This reward is from Jesus Himself (v. 8b).

C. This reward is for everyone who waits for Him (v. 8c).

1. Not only wait for Him, but loves His appearing!

**V. Conclusions**

**A. A faith unattended will be found to be un-flourishing (and unsatisfying).**

1. Is it any surprise that the so-called Christianity of some just doesn't help them that much?
2. My advice would be to use the times of peace to bolster your soul for the times of trial.

**B. Beware the thieves of your joy!**

1. Remember that the joy of the Lord is your strength! (Nehemiah 8:10)

2. The enemy of souls will often attack your joy in order to weaken your walk.

**Quote:** The main reason why men dote upon the world, and damn their souls to get the world, is because they are not acquainted with a greater glory. Ah that you would make it your business to mind more of the great things of eternity that will give you joy in life and peace in death. Minding the crown of righteousness, we will receive in the day of Christ's appearing will lift up your souls above the beauty of this bewitching world. *Thomas Brooks*

### **C. When you fall down, look up!**

1. Remember, your greatest source of discouragement may be yourself. Don't let you get you down. Look to Jesus.

**Quote:** "It is true, we ought to be humbled for our defects, and troubled for every failing in obedience; but we should not be discouraged, though multitudes of weaknesses be upon us, and many infirmities compass us about, in every duty we put our hand to: though we have no righteousness of our own; yet of God, Christ is made unto us righteousness; and that righteousness of his is infinitely better than our own; instead of our own, we have his. O blessed be God for Christ's perfect righteousness!" John Flavel

**Quote:** Oh, to throw yourself into the bosom of the Saviour and lie there taken up with his mind and his love, yielding all things to his supremacy, beholding your king in him! When you have been in that state you have had an antepast [archaic: FORETASTE specifically : a first course to whet the appetite] of heaven.<sup>2</sup>

### **D. Focus on the future!**

1. You are called to wait...to eagerly expect Him.
2. You are called to put all your energies in to finishing well.
  - a. **1 Peter 1:13** Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

**Concluding point:** Sometimes we think that the only way to succeed in this life is to live long and have much. We think that if we live to 110 years old, we win. The thing is that death still wins...that is, unless we live however long we live in such a way that our faith abides...our trust remains. Oh, to die a Christian is better than to live any other way. May we make up our mind now, that even if we don't live long, we will live strong.

To the Praise of His glory,  
Amen

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<sup>2</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "[A Last Look-Out](#)," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1871), 257.