

2 Tim 4:17-22

Good morning and thank you so much for joining us! We know you have many places to choose from to worship, and we're grateful you're here this morning. Would you please turn in your Bibles to 2 Tim 4?

Well, we've finally made it! Our 4th and final week just in chapter 4, we're gonna pick up our study in v 17 and finish the chapter. Next week we have Pastor John Thomas, and then we'll begin our study in the OT book of Ecclesiastes on Sundays in September.

We began our study of 2 Timothy back in May, and I titled this study Victorious. Even though Paul is a man who is about to die, what we've been studying in 2 Timothy is the ultimate blueprint for how to deal with adversity. Anyone here going thru adversity?

I can't think of a better title for the final message. The title of this morning's message is VICTORIOUS  
Let's pray

We've spent the last several weeks in chapter 4, so let's read verses 1-16 without interruption or commentary as we conclude the chapter in v17

1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at<sup>[fn]</sup> His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure

sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

9 Be diligent to come to me quickly; 10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. 12 And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13 Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. 15 You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. **Pause here. We studied in depth last week,**

and just read in v 16 how Paul was abandoned. He was left all alone, no one came to defend him while he was on trial.

But in spite of the abandonment Paul experienced in v16, notice the glorious truth of v17. **17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me,** The Lord was there!

It was when Paul was most alone that he had the awesome awareness of the Lord's presence.

Have you ever experienced that? Over and over again, I've found that when I've felt most alone, the Lord has become the most real.

**SHOW PIC** You've probably noticed that when there are people around us, we have a tendency to rely on those people. **CLOSE PIC** But when we're hurting alone, we find ourselves walking with the Lord in ways we wouldn't have otherwise.

Could it be, it's by God's design that we find ourselves alone sometimes? So we get a deeper sense of Him in our lives?

No matter what you're going through this morning, I pray you know that you are not alone. **Psalm 34:18 The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.**

Now that word strengthened in v17 in the greek is the word endunamai, meaning that God "infused" Paul with strength.

See, even though death was around the corner, Paul was confident that God's purposes would once again be fulfilled through him.

Here's the great news for us. God always gives us the strength to do what He has instructed us to go do. You've heard it said, 'where God guides, God provides.' **Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"**

But here's the challenge. Oftentimes we don't know God's given us the strength until we step out in faith and actually begin doing the task He's called us to do.

...**17 Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.** So there's some speculation as to what Paul means here. Some have seen this as a reference to Nero throwing Christians to the lions in the Coliseum.

Some think that Paul may be alluding to Satan. **1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.**

Either way, Paul knew the Lord had delivered Him

**18 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!** Although he had been rescued from certain death many times in his life, at this point Paul knew that the end was near. He was prepared to die, confident in both God's power and sovereignty.

See God will once again deliver Paul, but this time, Paul's rescue wouldn't be a physical deliverance, rather a spiritual one. Paul knew the reality of heaven.

And this is a comfort to us because we know that God will bring each believer safely through death to heaven. Aren't you grateful for that?

I'm 47 years old, and although I do feel pretty young, I recognize I'm closer to the finish line of life than I am the starting line. One day I'm gonna go to the store for the final time. I'll talk to my kids for the final time. I'll see my bride for the final time on this side of eternity. Some day I'll take my final breath, and then I'm gonna see the Lord face to face.

I'm so glad I know how the story ends. There's a lot of details between now and then I don't know, but I know the ending.

Starting in v19 we're gonna go through several different names that Paul mentions.

### **19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.**

In Acts 18 when Paul spent time in the city of Corinth, we learn he made tents with Priscilla and Aquila. They were a Christian couple who used the freedom and the money provided by their tentmaking skills to carry out a ministry of hospitality and teaching in various places. They had lived in Rome and Corinth. This time they were in Ephesus, undoubtedly helping Timothy with his work.

Onesiphorus had visited and encouraged Paul in jail during this final imprisonment (chapter 1:16-18).

**20 Erastus stayed in Corinth**, Erastus was from Ephesus originally, but was dispatched by Paul to go to other areas to help those churches.

**...20 but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.**

We see Trophimus in Acts 20 and 21, he was from Ephesus as well. But please notice Paul didn't say to Trophimus "Why are you sick? Where's your faith?"

We see in the NT that some were healed when Paul prayed for them; some weren't. Trophimus was one who wasn't.

Committing our life to Christ doesn't make us immune to diseases, or discouragement, or of course, death. Paul and his closest friends all experienced the realities of serving God in frail human frames under difficult circumstances. Hope, health, and security in this life are always temporary, until we reach heaven.

**21 Do your utmost to come before winter.** Pause here. I'm sure Paul wanted to see Timothy as soon as possible, but it needed to be before winter **SHOW PIC** because sailing on the Adriatic Sea was shut down for several weeks during winter because of extreme danger. **CLOSE PIC**

**...21 Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.** We don't know anything about these 4 men.

Now before we get to the last verse please notice that even though Paul had been essentially abandoned in v17, notice the fullness of his forgiveness. He doesn't say well that Eubulus and Linus, get 'em. He had fully forgiven all these names mentioned here in these verses.

22 The Lord Jesus Christ<sup>[fn]</sup> be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen

These are the final recorded words of a man who simply loved Jesus and had received God's grace. That simplicity, and all the power that went with it, marked Paul's entire ministry.

Now because every one of us here knows what it's like to struggle through adversity, we're going to spend the remaining time we have together this morning doing a high level recap of what we've been studying these past few months. Because the truths of God's word can be like a warm blanket to a shivering heart, so go back to chapter 1 please.

Remember as Paul writes this he knows death is imminent. He's reflecting back to those earlier days and he said verse 6

Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you

Verse 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. How many times have we quietly spoken these words to ourselves when we're frightened?

Verse 8 he says Don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me his prisoner.

BTW v8 is the first of the five references to Paul being a prisoner in this letter.

**SHOW PIC** Now we like it when we receive invitations right?  
**CLOSE PIC**

But look at V 12 Join me in suffering for the Gospel according to the Power of God. We'd like to skip that invitation wouldn't we?

V 13 Don't be careless with the truth that's been invested in your life, Timothy.

Verse 14, Guard the treasure.

This seems to set Paul off into a series of exhortations, and I can count 5 of them in the 2nd chapter.

The first one is in verse 1. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus Timothy. Preach grace, live grace. Be strong in grace.

Verse 2 is the 2nd exhortation. Be faithful to deposit the truth in others.

**SHOW PIC** It's like a relay race. Paul took the baton and gave it to Timothy. Timothy takes the baton and hands it off to others. Paul's saying Timothy, don't drop the baton. Don't stop the relay.  
**CLOSE PIC**

Be faithful to make the deposit.



The third exhortation is to be brave like a soldier. That's in chapter 2 verses 3 and 4.

3 You therefore must endure<sup>[fn]</sup> hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

Be brave like a soldier.

Then Paul turns to the picture of an athlete, and he says be disciplined like an athlete is disciplined. It takes discipline and motivation to be an athlete. And be patient like a farmer. Do that for the gospel.

Verse 15 is the 4th exhortation. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Paul says Timothy you must be a hard worker, but in that hard work for the gospel, be a gentle servant. That's verses 24 to 25. 24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

Talk about a checklist for living faithfully. That'll do it. **SHOW SLIDE**

- 1) Be strong in grace.
- 2) Be faithful to deposit.
- 3) Be brave like a soldier, disciplined like an athlete.

- 4) Diligent like a Workman and
- 5) Gentle like a servant

## CLOSE SLIDE

The warnings in this letter appear in the first part of chapter 3. **1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come**

And the apostle is warning Timothy that there will be an erosion, a departing from the truth. There will be hypocrisy and duplicity and lies and deception.

It was the future to Paul, but it's present to us.

Look at verse 10-11. **10 But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.** Reminding us of God's faithfulness when our circumstances are most bleak.

Now verse 13, evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse. Timothy, be alert.

Now when he gets to verse 14, there is a strong contrast. But you!

Listen to me now, Timothy, you must continue.

Look odds are most of you won't be at this fellowship all your days. My goal is not to try and make people come to this church.

Rather my goal is to make sure you are feeding yourself on the word of God.

What you feed yourself is far more important than what you hear from me. You'll soon forget what I share, but you won't forget what you study and the HS shows you directly.

**SHOW PIC** Think about it. One of the signs of maturity as we grow up is that we learn to fix our own meals. We learn to feed ourselves. We're not dependent on someone to make the meals for us. **CLOSE PIC**

With that exhortation in mind v16-17

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

All scripture is God breathed. All scripture is profitable. All scripture will cause us to be adequate and equipped for every good work.

You can almost hear Paul's voice. Believe it now, Timothy. Believe it when I'm gone. Believe it when you're dying. Pass it on to the next generation because the word of God feeds the soul.

And with that, he comes to his closing, and he begins in a way that grabs your attention.

4 1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at<sup>[fn]</sup> His appearing and His kingdom:

Would that get your attention? I think so. Timothy, I solemnly charge you.

This isn't a series of helpful options that you can pick and choose. These are charges that come from my pen, my heart to your soul. Listen to me, Timothy.

What is it he's to listen to? What is it Timothy's to do?

v2-Proclaim the truth. Don't try to reinvent the theological wheel. Don't attempt to be so creative and cute that folks miss the truth.

Preach the truth Timothy. Preach it for the rest of your years, preach the Word.

Be ready, be steady, stay at it in season or out of season.

Don't be lazy Timothy. Don't stand up and start with an apology that you didn't quite have enough time that week to prepare.

If I am not prepared to preach when Sunday morning comes, it is my fault. It's my responsibility to be ready in season or out of season. Hot or cold, Headache or feeling great, discouraged or rejoicing. Great nights sleep or no sleep, it doesn't matter.

My responsibility is to proclaim the truth, and to do it in a way that sticks and stabs you awake and won't let you sleep through your sin. And to teach in a way that holds you accountable to God, not to me, but to God.

Because it's God's truth that reproves and rebukes and exhorts. I am to do it with great patience and instruction.

v 3 again looks to the future, it tells us the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.

V 4 they are wanting to have their ears tickled. They accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires. And will in fact turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

Have we come to that time? **SHOW PIC** We're at a place in history when churches are known more for becoming entertainment centers than faithfully teaching God's word **CLOSE PIC**

People are being told what they want to hear with the idea that's the only way you can get church growth to happen. So they water down God's word to make it palatable so that people will like what they hear.

I can't find a place in the scriptures where I'm to tell you what you like to hear. Rather I'm to tell you what you need to hear and what I need to hear.

And I'll tell you these words have been smacking me around all week long before I step up here.

The problem in our society is a little pathological ailment called itching ears. And as a result church leaders work very creatively to keep people coming back to their church.

Please listen carefully. You're coming back to church is your responsibility before God. My job is to tell you the truth of God's word, love you as an under shepherd the best I can, and let God handle the results.

V4 turning away from the truth. The time has come. He was exactly right.

V5 but you Timothy be sober, endure hardship, do the work, fulfill your ministry.

And with that, Paul becomes very personal. It's a touching closing. V6-7 **6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**

His thoughts are on the future. **8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.**

V9 make every effort to come soon. Verse 21, come before winter. Verse 22. The Lord Jesus Christ<sup>[fn]</sup> be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

Now picture the scene in your mind's eye. Paul releases a satisfied sigh. He folds up the letter, and pushes it through the bars to give it to Luke. And Luke ultimately takes this letter to Ephesus, where Timothy will unroll the scroll and listen closely to the voice he has learned to love.

Not long after this, alone and without fear, Paul would hear the footsteps of Roman guards, the squeak of the lock opening, as a group of guards pulled him up from the dark cold Mamertine prison.

**SHOW PIC** They marched him through the heavy gate and beyond the Stonewall that surrounded Rome. Past the Pyramid of Cestius, which still stands on to the Ostian Way toward the sea.

**CLOSE PIC**

Crowds journeying to Rome would know by the procession that an execution would soon unfold. The citizens would pass it with a shrug. An execution happened yesterday, another will happen tomorrow.

The aged, abused prisoner named Paul would shuffle along, stiffened from years of hardship. Ragged, smelly, and filthy from the dungeon, this prisoner was not ashamed or degraded. No, Paul was en route to a triumph. The crowning day of his reward was at hand.

I'm sure echoing in the halls of his heart were the words he spoke to the church at Philippi

**Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**

No axe across the back of Paul's neck would rob him of his triumphant destiny. In fact, it would initiate it.

They marched Paul to the third milestone on the Austrian way, to a little Pinewood in a glade, the place of the tombs. **SHOW PIC** Known now as the Trefontaine, where there stands an Abbey in Paul's honor. He is believed to have been placed overnight in a tiny cell near the place of his execution. **CLOSE PIC**

At first light, the next dawn, the soldiers took Paul to a stump. The executioner stood ready, axe in his hand. The men stripped Paul naked to add to his degradation. Kneeling upright they tied Paul to a low pillar which exposed his neck.

Then, without a hint of hesitation, the cold faced executioner frowned as the blade gleamed in the morning sun and fell swiftly, hitting the stump with a dull thud. And the head of Paul rolled down in dust.

In that brutal moment, the soul of the great man of God was immediately set free as his spirit soared into heaven. Absent from the body, Paul was at last at home with the Lord.

To the non believer, it would seem a life wasted. A tragedy. But to those of us who know Christ, we know, Paul was victorious.



Brothers and sisters, you just finished studying the blueprint to overcome adversity. The blueprint to living a victorious life, no matter what our circumstances may be.