



# “WHAT WOULD YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL OBITUARY SAY?”

**2 Timothy 4:6-8**

**Theme:** *Live intentionally in order to end life with a testimony of grace.*

**Introduction:** If you were preparing for death and had to write something to be forever engraved on your tombstone – the last message or summary of your life, what would you write? There are some notable examples of people who have done so:

- Rodney Dangerfield (comedian): *“There goes the neighborhood.”*
- Winston Churchill (former British Prime Minister): *“I am ready to meet my Maker. Whether my Maker is prepared for the great ordeal of meeting me is another matter.”*
- B.P. Roberts: *“I told you I was sick.”*
- Ludolph van Ceulen (mathematician): His tombstone includes the first 35 digits of Pi.
- Joan Hackett (actress): *“Go away - I’m asleep.”*
- John Keats (poet): *“Here lies one whose name was writ in water.”*
- Johnny Carson (TV host): *“I’ll be right back.”*

The Apostle Paul was facing execution at the hands of the Romans – knowing that it was imminent. As he pours out his heart to his protégé, Timothy, he looks back over his life and provides an eloquent summary. It is a testimony of a man who can see a consistent purpose – a past that supports his current pursuit, and a future that has been the constant confidence. That is, his life had always been lived in light of his expectation that he would one day see Christ Jesus and be rewarded by him. His life was lived from that day backward, informing and directing him so that he would have no shame when he stood before the Lord.

In our text today, we see that we must *“Live intentionally in order to end life with a testimony of grace.”* We have three notable things to consider as Paul reviews his life: 1) **The Priority of his life**, 2) **The Pursuit in his life**, and 3) **The Prize for his life**. Let’s begin with ...

## I. THE PRIORITY – 4:6

### A. The Past Sacrifices

1. We can sense Paul’s urgency that Timothy and other faithful men who will follow him serve Christ with the same devotion that Paul has displayed throughout his ministry life.
2. He explains why he is urging Timothy to fulfill his ministry and preach the Word – *“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering ...”*
3. *“A drink offering”* [σπένδω] – describes the final offering in the Old Testament sacrificial system following the burnt offering and the grain

offering.

- a) *The burnt offering was a sacrifice offered to God as an act of atonement for sin or as a gesture of gratitude for the forgiveness of sin.*
- b) *The grain offering was a sacrifice of grain to worship God for His faithful provision of one's needs.*
- c) *The drink offering was a sacrifice of wine poured out on the altar as a demonstration of commitment to the Lord and often finalized the other two sacrifices to enhance the aroma of the burnt offering or grain offering.*

4. One commentator stated: "Paul saw his coming death as his final offering to God in a life that had already been full of sacrifices to Him."<sup>1</sup> – cp. **Philippians 2:17**.
5. As such, Paul here is saying that his life had been sacrificially lived in such a way as to express worship to the Lord for His forgiveness of Paul's sin, faithful provision of his needs, and now Paul desires that his death would be one that will make all of what he has done smell sweet to the Lord.

## **B. The Present Sacrifice**

1. Paul's awareness of his impending death is evident: *"... and the time of my departure has come."*
2. Paul acknowledges that he was in the final era of his life – expecting to live perhaps until winter – cp. v. 21.
3. Paul's great desire was to depart and be with the Lord – cp. **Philippians 1:21-24**.
4. Paul lived daily as if it were his last – cp. **1 Corinthians 15:31; Romans 8:36**.
5. Paul knew that he would die for Christ – it didn't stop him from faithfully serving the Lord – cp. **Acts 9:15-16; Acts 14:22; 1 Thessalonians 3:2-4**.
6. His life displays how we ought to view our lives – having been redeemed and not belonging to ourselves; we should each see ourselves as dispensable if the Lord determined that He would bring Himself glory through us.
7. If we lived life this way, we would offer multiple sacrifices to the Lord, such as:
  - a) *A fearlessness of man*
  - b) *A fervency in service*
  - c) *A fruitfulness in works*
  - d) *A fight against the flesh*
  - e) *A faithfulness in prayer*
  - f) *A fidelity to Scripture*

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<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible ...

*g) A fire for evangelism*

8. Given the truth of the immanence of Christ's coming for His church, every day could be our last!

## II. THE PURSUIT – 4:7

### A. The Pursuit in Conflicts

1. As Paul looks back over his life, he can review his experiences and draw satisfying conclusions.
2. It is not as if he had lived a perfect life – he acknowledged his was an aspirational approach – cp. **Philippians 3:12-14**.
3. Yet, he was characterized by faithfulness – *“I have fought the good fight”*
  - a) *This is an example of what he had called Timothy to aspire to do – cp. **2 Timothy 2:3-4**.*
  - b) *This means that he refused to be entangled in the affairs of everyday life—he fought the temptation to allow temporal priorities to distract him from seeking the glory of Christ in his life.*
  - c) *Instead, he fought to maintain allegiance to Christ and His will so that he might please Him.*
4. Additionally, he has resisted the schemes of the Devil who sought to compromise Paul by luring him away from the truth, defeat him, and take him captive.
5. Finally, Paul fought the impulses of his flesh – seeking to annihilate, abolish, and defeat the flesh at every encounter – **Galatians 5:24**; **Romans 13:14**.

### B. The Pursuit in Competition

1. Additionally, he was characterized by his obedience – competing according to the rules established by the judge – *“I have finished the course”* – cp. **2 Timothy 2:5**.
2. Paul declares here that he has avoided disqualification by exercising self-control – cp. **1 Corinthians 9:25-27**.
3. He declares that he had done what God had called him to do when God called him, how God called him, and where God called him – *“the course”* [δρόμος] – cp. **Acts 20:24**.
4. Paul had clearly avoided the sins that would have disqualified him by focusing on Christ Himself – cp. **Hebrews 12:1**.

### C. The Pursuit in Conservation

1. Finally, Paul states, *“I have kept the faith,”* referring to Paul guarding or preserving the truth and the body of doctrine given through the Holy Spirit.
2. Given the other two references took us back to what Paul told Timothy in chapter 2, it may be that this is a reference to the way a farmer tends

crops by watering, weeding, and warding off pests and thieves – cp. **2 Timothy 2:6**.

3. Paul has repeatedly exhorted Timothy to do this– cp. **2 Timothy 1:14**.

4. How is it one can “keep the faith?”

a) *Devotion to Christ*

b) *Diligence in Preserving the Unity of the Spirit – deliberately seeking fellowship through humility and patience – **Ephesians 4:3**.*

c) *Determination to resist sin – **1 Timothy 5:22**.*

d) *Defense of Scripture from false teaching or interpretation.*

### III. **THE PRIZE – 4:8**

#### A. **The Consummation of Righteousness**

1. The result or consummation of our faith is that glorious day when we see Christ – either by our death or by His coming.

2. Paul reveals what motivated him throughout his ministry, through the sufferings and trials, and through the rejection and persecution— *“in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness...”*

3. This could refer to two things:

a) *The crown that belongs to the righteous*

b) *The crown that is itself righteousness*

4. In a sense, it is both – it is exclusive to those who have been made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ, but it is also the fulfillment of the sanctifying process whereby we become perfected and completely Christlike – cp. **1 John 3:2-3**.

5. For Paul, *“in the future”* is not too distant—he expected to see Christ at any time, a perspective each of us is commanded to have as we eagerly await Him.

6. The fact that it is described as *“laid up”* [ἀπόκειμαι] – refers to something that is in the safe-keeping of God – reserved in Heaven – cp. **1 Peter 1:4-5**.

7. The very One from whom we receive our righteousness, which qualifies us to enter Heaven and be rewarded with complete righteousness, is Himself described as *“the righteous Judge”* who *“will award me on that day”* - cp. **Romans 8:33-37**.

#### B. **The Camaraderie in Righteousness**

1. Paul encourages us all by declaring this is not an exclusive award but something that will exist for every believer.

2. He declares: *“... and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”*

3. This longing to see Jesus exists in every person who has come to know Him and appreciate Him for the salvation from sin He has provided – we

eagerly desire to see Him, be with Him, be conformed to Him, and glorify Him in heavenly worship – cp. [Philippians 3:20](#).

### **So What?**

1. In what ways can my life be described as being a sacrifice to the Lord?
2. Am I deliberately and successfully fighting against what is contrary to Christ in my life?
3. Where am I most vulnerable in the effort to “keep the faith?”
4. Am I living in light of the future rewards promised to me by my Lord?

***Live intentionally in order to end life with a testimony of grace.***