

No Regrets

2 Timothy 4:6-8

July 28, 2019 PM

HDBC

What would you say if you knew what you were about to say would be the last words you would utter in this life? Very few of us will be offered the chance to make a final statement, write a final letter or compose a final post just before we slip out of this life and into the next. Paul realized that his time was short and took the opportunity to write letters to a couple of young ministers, Timothy and Titus. These offer instruction, encouragement and warning.

However, they also allow us a glimpse into Paul's heart. This is particularly true of 2 Timothy. In it Paul also shared some personal thoughts about his own life. It was an opportunity for him to reflect upon his **present** situation, his **past** experiences, and his **future** life.

We can find no regrets in this chapter. I'm sure there were regrets in his life. Paul would certainly change some things in his past, if he could. So, how can he write this last letter with seemingly no regrets? He had confessed those failures and learned to live in the freedom that comes with forgiveness.

He mentions no less than 17 persons who were significant in his life. I think this is an indication that he had worked hard on the relationships in his life, as well. He had mended some fences and deepened relationships. He looks back at his life with a sense of satisfaction and completion. Verses 6-8 summarize Paul's self-reflection in a compacted form. In these verses he reflects upon his . . .

Present situation . . .

Past experiences . . .

Future life.

What will you say when you get to the end of your life?

Tallyrand, French diplomat during early 19th century.

Behold eighty-three passed away! What cares! What agitation! What anxieties! What sad complications! And all without other results, except great fatigue of mind and body, and a profound sentiment of discouragement with regard to the future, and disgust with regard to the past.

Ghandi - 15 years before his death

I must tell you in all humility that Hinduism, as I know it, entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being and I find solace in the Hindu writings that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount.

Ghandi - Just before his death

My days are numbered. I am not likely to live very long; perhaps a year or a little more. For the first time in fifty years I find myself in the slough of despond. All about me is darkness; I am praying for light.

Paul, the Apostle – Read 2 Timothy 4:6-8

He attacked life vigorously. At the end of his life he was able to look back with satisfaction and know that it had been worth the effort. **Note three things . . .**

1. Present Condition (6)

Last letter written by Paul. Roman prison. Death coming.

A. His Death is Present

Being poured out - Picture of a liquid that is already in the process of leaving the cup as it is poured out. Process has already begun. As if Paul were already being walked out of that dark dungeon into the light of the executioners arena.

All appeals have been exhausted. Nothing will stop the process now. Nothing can retrieve the liquid once it is poured out upon the ground. His execution would be by beheading. As cruel as that seems, it would be a great blessing when compared with crucifixion. Quick!

B. His Death is Purposeful

As a drink offering - Offering of wine that was poured out on the altar along with the burnt offering. Reminder of the blood of the sacrifice.

Totally expended. None was preserved or saved. Same would be with Paul. Total sacrifice of his life.

C. His Death is Planned

The Time of My Departure has Come

Departure - by faith Paul gave a marvelous appraisal of the grim prospects of his death. Word means the "unloosing." Paul uses this word to throw a flood-light on death.

A Prisoner's Word: to release; Paul was facing release; not execution from God's perspective.

A Farmer's Word: the unyoking of an ox, when its day's work was done.

A Soldier's Word: breaking up of camp by soldiers. Taking down tent.

A Sailor's Word: unmooring; the departure of a ship by lifting anchor.

This has the ring of God's approval on it. It was time, in the minds of the government, but also I think he was referring to God's approval. Paul would not die a moment before it was approved by God.

No saint ever need fear a premature death. One's death may seem premature in the eyes of some, but there is no premature death in the eyes of God. His protective hand.

2. Past Review (7)

Paul now offers a brief summary of his life. Tremendous testimony of a dying saint. In doing so he describes the Christian life in three illustrious terms. Points out some important ways that we are to live for Jesus.

A. *Fought the Good Fight*

Paul was involved. He refused to sit on the sidelines. He was an active participant in kingdom work. What about you? Are you engaged in the battle, or are you sitting on the sidelines?

1) *The Fight*

Christian life depicted as warfare. Paul was well aware of spiritual warfare. He was constantly engaged in it. Ephesians 6:10-18.

Another image may have been in Paul's mind as he wrote these words. **The picture of the Greek Athletic games.** Word for *fight* also used of the wrestlers. **Grueling event!** Contestants were locked arm in arm each trying to get the advantage over the opponent in order to pin him to the floor. Key was to stay focused during the entire match. A momentary lapse in concentration would be costly. **Fight literally means to agonize, to struggle, exert effort.**

What is Paul's point? His walk with Christ involved a daily struggle with the enemy. Daily wrestling match against the devil.

2) *The Good Fight*

What could he have meant by that phrase? Two possibilities:

First, it means the fight in which Paul engaged was a **worthy fight**. The construction of the Greek indicates that this was a noble fight. It was a fight worth his effort and attention.

There is a second thought. When Paul got into the fight, **he fought well**. He gave it his all. Further commentary earlier in this letter.

2 Timothy 2:3-4 Who is the one who is a good soldier? One willing to suffer hardship and refuse to become entangled in the everyday affairs of life.

B. *Finished the Course*

Another look at athletic arena. Pictures his walk with the Lord as a **long-distance race**. Marathon. Course that is set out before us. A plan that God has for your life. **Refusal to quit**. This is why I never tried out for cross country track. Not my thing. In fact that's why I never tried out for the track team, period.

How easy it would have been for Paul to quit. He experienced abuse, mistreatment, rejection, long nights, hard days, etc. But he was no quitter. In fact he seemed to have a real disdain for quitters.

John Mark and the first missionary journey. Mark quit and Paul would not consider bringing him on the next trip.

C. *Kept the Faith*

1) The Faith

What was it that Paul kept? His own faith in Christ? Surely he did. But that is not what he has in mind here. The faith. Refers to the body of revealed truth. The Word of God. Christianity. The faith which was once and for all handed down to us.

2) Kept

To keep something by guarding it. To safe-guard.

He Defended It

Refused to allow it to be twisted, changed, watered down.

He Lived It

He kept it in his own life. He demonstrated it.

Are you fighting the good fight?

Are you finishing the course?

Are you keeping the faith?

3. Future Gaze (8)

Paul then turns His eyes heavenward. Future gaze. **Once more the words spring from thoughts of sports.** Athlete has won a race and now waits to receive his wreath.

Notice that Paul says it is the judge who will place the crown on the head of the victor. Paul could look forward to standing before the Lord Jesus because He had done his best. No reason to shrink back, for Paul.

I can think of only two reasons to be anxious about standing before Jesus.

1. Stand before Him with sins not forgiven.

How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

2. Stand before Him, having not done our best.

Horrible thought.

Goal is to be able to have etched into the stone standing above your grave with the words: No Regrets! Not because you never failed, but because you reacted to your failures with confession, repentance and restoration.