



FINISH THE RACE

BIG IDEA: God's strength empowers us to be faithful to the finish!

DATE: Wednesday, November 19 and Sunday, November 23, 2025

SCRIPTURE: 2 Timothy 4:1-8; 17-18

OPENING QUESTION

Some notable people have left us with famous last words. Can you guess who said what?

- *"Pardon me sir, I did not do it on purpose."*
- *"I have offended God and mankind because my work did not reach the quality it should have."*
- *"One last drink, please."*
- *"I'm bored with it all."*
- *"Oh wow. Oh wow, oh wow."*
- *"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."*

In this final section of Paul's letter, we find his last words to his beloved son in the faith, Timothy, and to the church. As he completes the letter, Paul knows his execution is only days or weeks away. For thirty years he has labored and he is now looking forward to the crown that awaits him.

SETTING THE STAGE

Paul had previously emphasized to Timothy the importance of preserving the doctrine he had learned. Now Paul says, in effect, "It's not enough to just hold the truth. You must herald the truth as well." It's not enough for us to just *believe* what we believe. We must also be willing to *declare* what we believe. Paul's words remind us that we never know how close we are to our last day on earth. So, we must live each day being ready to give an account of our lives. If we have received a calling, we need to get on with it. It may be difficult and painful at times, but we can know that it will all be worth it when we see Jesus and receive our "crown of righteousness" (verse 8).

STUDY THE BIBLE

2 Timothy 4:1-8; 17-18 (NLT)

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: ²Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching. ³For 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. ⁴They 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. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood with me and gave me strength so that I might preach the Good News in its entirety for all the Gentiles to hear. And he rescued me from certain death. ¹⁸ Yes, and the Lord will deliver me from every evil attack and will bring me safely into his heavenly Kingdom. All glory to God forever and ever! Amen.

DISCUSSION

PREACH THE WORD: 2 Timothy 4:1-5

When Paul told Timothy to “preach the word”, the New Testament had not yet been completely written or assembled into the canon of Scripture that we recognize today. So, what might be he referring to in his instruction to preach “the word”?

What does Paul say people will do when they don't want to hear the truth of the gospel? In contrast, how should Timothy – and all believers – respond to the gospel?

How do you see verse 3 played out today – that people will “look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear?”

PAUL'S FAREWELL: 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Paul's statement that he is “being poured out as a drink offering” is a reference to his impending death. What knowledge comforted him as he faced this fact?

Paul describes himself as a runner at the end of a race. It is all but over, and what remains is the rewarding of the prize. What did he see at the finish line?

Have you ever run a race? What helped you keep going? What helps you keep “running the spiritual race” when life gets hard? How can you help others keep running their race?

THE LORD IS FAITHFUL: 2 Timothy 4:17-18

Paul experienced multiple occasions where the Lord spoke to him and gave him specific instructions. What blessing did Paul enjoy throughout his ministry ...even to the very end?

Based on Paul's countless past experiences, what is he confident the Lord will do for him?

RESPONSE

Now that we have finished our series on 1 and 2 Timothy, how have you been challenged to live your life worthy of the gospel? Remember, we are to follow godly leaders, be content in our circumstances and lead a life worthy of imitation. We are all called to follow Paul's example and fight the good fight, keep the faith and finish the race.