

Second Timothy 4:6 – 22

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~ Our Spiritual Safari has been studying the death-bed testimony and self-epitaph written by the apostle Paul to his spiritual son Timothy. We are considering one of the most profoundly rich sections of Scripture in the entire Word of God in chapters three and four of this epistle. If you have not read our last two reports, I suggest you go back and do so now. But first, read this chapter in your Bible, after praying for wisdom, judgment and discernment. Then read this report. Paul is reflecting upon his earthly life; and this was written immediately before his execution in a Roman Mamertine prison at the hands of the madman Nero. Actually, I believe Paul was in a cell immediately adjacent to the dungeon where the Roman government would soon place his head on the chopping block and –

At the time in which we are studying, I am sure Paul could hear unspeakably sickening screams of torture coming from his fellow inmates all day and all night. The execution chamber would have been a horror scene of profound suffering, and God only knows what really went on there; the smell would have been putrefying. Just thinking about the apostle Paul being tied up, thrown down on a chopping block by some brutal and burly Roman soldier, and probably kicked and beaten severely, is shameful. Mere contemplation on any level is repulsive, revolting, and repugnant. Then, that huge ax-blade comes down, and Paul’s head rolls off on one side, blood flies everywhere; and his body rolls off the other side onto a mound of more dead bodies. No more epistles will be written by this man. It’s just disgusting; the mental pictures are beyond indignation for any genuine child of God.

However, if that’s all we visualize then we don’t see much. See, that chopping block became an altar the moment Paul was placed on it. Paul’s life was poured out as a drink offering, as we learned about in Leviticus. Remember, there were no specific instructions for offering a drink offering; but it is mentioned in almost every book of the Old Testament. Wine was poured out over the burnt offering and – *WHOOSH!* – it just went up in

steam on that red hot brazen altar of judgment, disappearing in an instant of vapor. There is nothing in that offering for us – but it contains everything for the Lord Jesus Christ. I see so many Christians today trying to get their names memorialized in a building, or in marble or stone on some marquis, and I think to myself: Paul wasn't interested in that. Man may have made a cathedral to Paul, but I'm just going to go ahead and speak for the apostle here: Paul is ashamed of it — and doesn't endorse it in any fashion or form. Jesus is to be exalted — not Paul — not you — not me. Exalting Christ is all Paul cared about.

There is also a prospective view of Paul looking forward to eternal life. Our earthly life and our eternal life are separated by a fine line we call death. While there are no details or specifics provided, Paul sums up his earthly life in three distinctly different ways: **(1)** having fought the good fight **(2)** having finished his course and **(3)** having kept the faith. Our present life is a constant spiritual battle between the old nature and our new nature; which means there is a victory to be won. The good soldier will be an adamant defender of truth and righteousness. That's what it means to be a good soldier. Not only is life a battle, but this life is a race; but not a proverbial rat race. No, we are spiritual athletes in a spiritual Olympics. It takes great patience to run a marathon race like this life is. Well, Paul won! Further, God has entrusted us with life. We are a steward of this life, friends. We will give an account for what we have done, how we have acted, and how we have handled the Word of God. Most of you know I am not an apologetic; but I do stand for the great doctrines and truth of Holy Writ. I only want it to ever be said of me, “...Andrew kept the faith....”

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

~ Are you prepared to make that statement? The word “*departure*” in verse six is *NOT* the word used for the rapture of the church as Paul uses the term in first and second Thessalonians. The departure of the church from this earth and Paul going out through the doorway of death are altogether different. The genuine church that is in existence when Christ completes the rapture does not cross through physical death. Here, “*departure*” is the Greek word “*analuseos*” – which consists of two words;

one meaning to “*untie*” or “*to make loose*” — and the other is a nautical term for a ship tied-up in a harbor, being made ready for a voyage at sea. So, it literally means “*to untie a ship that is moored in a harbor.*” Paul’s vessel is now ready to embark on its next missionary journey.

Paul presents a completely opposite picture of death than the modern church’s abject misconception. Many Bible teachers espouse that we come *into* a harbor when we die. The modern Christian cliché is that we have been sailing on a rough sea in this voyage called life, but death brings us into a peaceful port; where our we will dock eternally, and be ever-moored. Paul is saying he has been tied-up in restraint down here, but now he is ready to be untied, released, to take-off and set sail. We haven’t been anywhere yet, friends. This little old earth – and especially these fleshly bodies – are constraints to our souls. Paul says don’t look at his execution and let the blood and gore make you sick or angry; he says he is now going on a missionary voyage that will make his first three look like he was just teaching a children’s Sunday school class. When we go to be with Christ – and *if* we rule and reign with Him for having suffered with Him – I believe we will be as Gabriel was to Daniel, or John and Michael to Jesus....

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

~ The “*crown of righteousness*” in Heaven will be a reward likened unto the Medal of Honor or Distinguished Service Cross in the United States Military. Everyone who loves His appearing will get a reward on some level; but, friends, not all Christians today love His appearing. John says some shall be ashamed when He appears. That means some in Heaven won’t have a reward – just as not every service member receives those highest honors in the military. Just as there are some in hell who shall receive few stripes, and some in hell who shall receive many stripes, so shall some in Heaven receive better rewards. Paul has already said, “*...every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a*

corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” — first Corinthians chapter nine verse twenty-five. Paul also said, “*...therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*” Philippians chapter four verse one.

Further, saith Paul, “*...what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy*” – first Thessalonians chapter two verse nineteen. Then, James said, “*...blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him*” – James chapter one verse twelve. Jesus, in Revelation chapter three, saith, “*...behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown....*”

While many people believe that one can lose their salvation, the Bible makes it clear that life is eternal; but what we can lose is our *reward* in Heaven. There is a reward resulting from those people we had part in leading to the Lord – or at least to a proper, correct and complete understanding of the Word of God. I think Paul has quite a few crowns, personally. I think there is also a crown for living a righteous life. I believe there are crowns for acts of obedience, acts of faith, acts of trust, acts of self-denial, acts of learning the Bible – and *MANY* other rewards. Loving His appearing is altogether different from holding the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, too. There are going to be some extremely disappointed saints that get scant reward in Heaven – if any.

Further, you may be a rock-ribbed, fundamental, premillennialist, pre-tribulation, rapture-believing, eternally secured, and blessedly assured believer who hates mammon, hates filthy lucre, and protests and exposes false teachers every day of your life – but I have some bad news for you – there is no reward for those things. The question is: do you love Christ’s appearing? That’s the difference; and it is a very big difference, too, by the way. Many people hold to the apostle’s doctrine - but they do not love His appearing. Loving His appearing means we love Jesus, live a life of fellowship with the Father in prayer, and have a close relationship with Christ – as Paul did. I’m sure Paul told the Lord every day that he loved Him. Remember, Paul had hated Jesus, and had persecuted Christian’s brutally at

one time. When is the last time *YOU* told Jesus you love Him? Without that love for the Lord, there will be no crown. I want *ALL* of the crowns that are available to me, personally....

9 Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:

~ So, our Spiritual Safari through the entire Word of God ends this leg on a not-so-triumphant note. This is where Paul faces reality. If you have ever been to the funeral for a loved one, you'll know things get eerily real, and the facts of life confront us as the end of the funeral service draws near. Paul wanted Timothy to come see him because Paul was lonely in prison. Many of Paul's friends couldn't take the trauma of seeing what was happening. I'm sure some of them, like Titus, had valid reasons for leaving. Tychicus, for example, had a church to tend to; he couldn't just hang around the visiting room of a prison endlessly.

As we reluctantly close this epistle, Mark and Barnabus had split with Paul during the missionary journeys; but Paul was apparently sorry now for having said the things he did about Mark. Paul was a real human-being with feelings and emotions, friends; that's why he asked Timothy to bring his cloak – because he was cold in the prison cell. Paul wanted the books and parchments because he wanted to write. Well, only Dr. Luke remained to the end. So, with that, we must end commentary on the two Pastoral Epistles that Paul wrote to Timothy. I'll meet you in our next report in the fantastic prophecy of Ezekiel....

10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

13 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:

15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

19 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

~ The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time ~

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