

Passing the Baton 2 Timothy 4

2 Timothy 4: Introduction

- The Christian life can be compared to a race, but it's a special kind of race.
 - It's like a relay because we don't run alone.
 - It's like a marathon, because it requires endurance to make it to the end.
 - It's like an obstacle course, because there are a variety of difficulties along the way.
- Paul is at the end of his relay-marathon-obstacle course and he hands the baton off to Timothy in the chapter we are reading today.

2 Timothy 4: Outline

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|---------|
| I. | Fulfill Your Ministry | 4:1-5 |
| II. | Finish Your Race Well | 4:6-8 |
| III. | Overcome the Obstacles | 4:9-16 |
| IV. | Trust Fully in Jesus Christ | 4:17-22 |

I. Fulfill Your Ministry 4:1-5

- 4:1 **Jesus Christ ... will judge the living and the dead.**
- This was a common theme in the early church. See also Peter in:
 - **Acts 10:42-43**
 - **1 Peter 4:3-5**

- 4:2 **Preach the Word**
- If you have a ministry in which you teach others, do all of the following:
 - Stay faithful to the Scriptures.
 - Communicate the Gospel clearly.
 - Emphasize Jesus Christ.
- If you don't have such a ministry, then be supportive of those who do.

- 4:3 **they have itching ears**
- "Getting the ears (the hearing) tickled." – Robertson
- **They will heap up for themselves teachers.**
- Mass media has had a mixed effect on Christian discipleship.
- In Timothy's day teachers gathered disciples
- In our day "disciples" can gather – or "heap up" teachers to tickle their ears.

II. Finish Your Race Well 4:6-8

- Paul was certain that his death was near.
- History tells us that he died within a year of this writing.
- Paul's thirty years of faithful ministry ended with his execution.
- 4:6 Roman citizens were usually beheaded, so the image of a "**drink offering**" may be a hint at the pouring out of Paul's blood.

- 4:7 Paul likens the completion of his ministry to fighting a good fight or completing a race.
- He is emphasizing the focused effort that was needed to allow him to achieve his goal.
- What are the goals God has placed before you in your ministry?
- Make a decision now not to give up until you have achieved them.

- 4:8 The **crown** Paul speaks of is similar to:
 - the wreaths of honor for Olympic winners
 - awards given to loyal subjects for their services by ancient eastern kings.
- Paul is not putting himself above others here.
- The same crown is available to all who make that decision to put their hope in Jesus Christ.

III. Overcome the Obstacles 4:9-16

- 4:11 Luke is the same Luke that wrote both the Book of Acts and the Gospel of Luke.
- He was a doctor (Col. 4:14) and was probably taking care of Paul during his later life.
- Mark is the “**John Mark**” that wrote the Gospel of Mark.
- He and Paul had a parting of ways in the book of Acts, but that wasn’t the end of his work.

- In this section we see at least four obstacles to Paul’s perseverance.
- With God’s help he overcame them all.
 - Separation / Loneliness (4:9-12)
 - Lack of Physical Comfort (4:13)
 - Interpersonal Conflict (4:14-15)
 - Isolation / Abandonment (4:16)

IV. Trust Fully in Jesus Christ 4:17-22

- The Lord never abandoned Paul – and He will never abandon you either.
 - See **Hebrews 13:5-6**
 - See **Matthew 28:18-20**
- Let Paul’s example encourage you in this when you personally feel abandoned.

2 Timothy 4: Conclusions

- Paul encourages Timothy to “Preach the Word.” What if you are not a preacher?
 1. This applies to everyone who needs to communicate God’s truth to others: Parents, Sunday School teachers, etc.
 2. You can accept this as an encouragement to do personal evangelism. You don’t have to be an evangelist to “do the work of an evangelist” (4:5).
 3. In this day of ear-tickling teachers, more responsibility falls upon us as hearers of the Word to intentionally expose ourselves to healthy doctrine.
- Read **4:3-4** again. It is an indictment of the hearers even more than the false teachers in this case.

- Paul finished his race well. This did not happen by accident. He chose to endure.
- Make that decision to endure all things for Christ today.
- Fulfill your ministry and finish your race well.

- What obstacles do you face in your personal service to Christ?
 - Paul faced the following:
 - Separation / Loneliness (4:9-12)
 - Lack of Physical Comfort (4:13)
 - Interpersonal Conflict (4:14-15)
 - Isolation / Abandonment (4:16)
- Our trials are not much different from these.

- Overcome the obstacles.
- Expect adversity and decide that it will not deter you from your goal to follow Jesus.
- Follow the path of most faithfulness, rather than the path of least resistance as you run your own Christian race.

- Trust fully in Jesus Christ.
- Be strong in Him and remember that He will be with you to the very end.
- Paul preached the Word, overcame all the obstacles and finished his race well.
- He passed the baton to Timothy and the race continues to this day. We are in the midst of our race right now.
- Finally, read **Hebrews 12:1-3**