

2 Timothy 4

Verse by Verse

Passing the Baton

Introduction

Fulfill
4:1-5

Finish
4:6-8

Overcome
4:9-15

Trust
4:16-22

Conclusions

St. Paul, imprisoned, ends the letter to the Ephesians, and hands it over to Tychicus. Wood engraving, 1886, Gustave Dore (Wikimedia Commons)



Introduction

Last Week's Key Verses

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

The Race We
Are In

What's in
2 Timothy 4?

Key Verses

Previously in 2 Timothy

- In **Chapter 3** we saw that the last days - the days we are in right now - would be difficult.
- This would be caused mainly by evil people successfully passing themselves off as godly.
- We also saw that a key way to stay faithful to Jesus while growing in discernment would be by trusting in God's inspired word.

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The Race We Are In

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

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What's in 2 Timothy 4?

- We will divide **Chapter 4** up into four section, based on four different assignments that we will receive.
- These will come from both Paul's direct instructions to Timothy and from Paul's example.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Fulfill Your Ministry | 4:1-5 |
| 2. Finish Your Race Well | 4:6-8 |
| 3. Overcome the Obstacles | 4:9-16 |
| 4. Trust Fully in Jesus Christ | 4:17-22 |

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Key Verses

Key Verses in the Letter: 2 Timothy 4:6-8

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

2 Timothy 4:1-2

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

Key Verses in the Letter:

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Fulfill Your Ministry 4:1-5

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- This is Timothy's most important responsibility.
- Timothy's task is serious, with eternal consequences, and not to be taken lightly.
- As in the last chapter, a big part of the evil of future times is found in the type of people we find there and what they do.

Jesus as
Judge

Preach the
Word

Itching Ears

Jesus as Judge

- Jesus will one day judge the world.
- This is a repeated theme in Scripture.
- It is one that often found its way into the preaching of the gospel in the early church.

Acts
10:42-43

Acts
17:30-31

1 Peter
4:3-5

Acts 10:42-43

Here we have Peter in the first instance of intentional proclaiming of the gospel to a non-Jewish crowd.

42 And he [Jesus] commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.

43 To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

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Acts 10:42-43

Here is Paul preaching on Mars Hill in Athens to scholars and philosophers.

30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,
31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

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And finally, Peter in his first letter.

3 For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. 4 With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; 5 but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

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Preach the Word

- What does it mean to **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.
- This last point is vital due to the next point that Paul makes to Timothy,



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- **4:3** For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but **having itching ears** they will **accumulate for themselves teachers** to suit their own passions
- *"Getting the ears (the hearing) tickled."* – Robertson
- **accumulate [heap up, gather] 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 suit their own passions.**
- As a result they will train themselves to believe falsehood.

From Chuck
Smith

As for You



Chuck Smith (1927-2013),
founding pastor of the
Calvary Chapel Movement

Paul prophesied of a coming day when audiences would insist on only hearing teaching that is easy to listen to - teaching that only tells them what they want to hear ... The idea is that people want to be scratched where they itch, as they dictate what the messages should be ...

God help us if the content of the message of the church is dictated by the "felt needs" and "itching ears" of those who attend. If that happens no one will ever be truly changed, and change is what we really need.

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- These are Paul's ways to counteract the itching-ears model of (non) discipleship;
- **Always be sober-minded** - Timothy needs to be self-controlled and clear-headed. The most basic sense of this word means not to be intoxicated.
- **Endure suffering** - Paul was living this out as he wrote this letter. Anyone in Timothy's place should expect the same.
- **Do the work of an evangelist** - Perhaps Timothy was a genuine evangelist. In any case, it implies that anyone who preaches the word must be sure to make the gospel clear.
- **Fulfill your ministry** - This entails all of the above, but first of all it requires Timothy to "Preach the word."

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Finish Your Race Well 4:6-8

- **These are our key verses for the whole book.**
- Paul has finished his leg of the race and is handing the baton off to Timothy.
- He sees his life as a drink offering.
- His work is an athletic endeavor.
- His reward is going to be a crown, similar to those won by athletes in those days.
- The Lord Jesus will give him his prize, and will do the same for any of us who stay faithful to the end.

A Drink
Offering

From Chuck
Smith

Paul's
Crown

A Drink Offering

- 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, if they were put to death, were usually beheaded.
- This was to allow them to avoid the suffering of, say, the cross or death in a public spectacle with wild animals.
- So the image of a “**drink offering**” may be a hint at the pouring out of Paul's blood.



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We all have our own race to run, as God has given us certain gifts and callings ... May we, like Paul, finish our race strong, looking at Jesus for our inspiration. When we do, there will be a crown of righteousness waiting for us in heaven.

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- 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.

A football team can perform poorly during the first quarter—or even during the first half of the game. But what's most important is how they finish. Don't, then, look backward on the mess in your past. The grace of God can cover it. Instead, look forward. There's still time. Fight the good fight, finish the race, and keep the faith. Your reward is waiting.



Tony Evans, Bible Teacher
and Commentator

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Overcome the Obstacles 4:9-15

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

Luke

Mark

Luke

- **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.



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- **Mark** is the “**John Mark**” that wrote the **Gospel of Mark**.
- He and Paul had a parting of ways in **Acts 15**, but that wasn't the end of his work.
- In that passage we learn that **Paul** teamed up with **Silas** while **Barnabas** brought Mark with him.
- He was Mark's older cousin and no doubt mentored him during their travels.
- **Peter**, who evidently knew Mark from childhood, refers to him as “**Mark, my son**” (1 Peter 5:13)



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Trust Fully in Jesus Christ 4:16-22

- The Lord never abandoned Paul - even when others did - and He will never abandon you either.
- Let Paul's example encourage you in this when you personally feel abandoned by others.
- **4:17 The lion's mouth** It is unclear whether this Paul means this literally or figuratively.
- **4:19-20** One lesson here is that Paul was committed to lifelong friendships in ministry.
- **4:21** The names Paul mentions were probably part of the church in Rome, where Paul was at this time.

Matthew
28:16-20

Hebrews
13:5-6

Matthew 28:16-20

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[b] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. **And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**



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5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” 6 So we can confidently say,

“The Lord is my helper;
I will not fear;
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Key Verses

From Tony
Evans

Hebrews
12:1-3

A Final
Prayer

What should believers expect to be the standard of authority at their local churches? Feelings? Intellect? Tradition? Paul says there is only one standard by which a church is to properly function: God's Word. The Bible—and only the Bible—is the final authority for Christian individuals, families, churches, and even the broader culture. “The word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword. . . . It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4:12). Nothing else can do what Scripture does.



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Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

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A Final Prayer

Dear Father in heaven

- We thank you for the time you have given us here on earth, though we also see that our time is limited.
- Help us to make the most of our lives even as Paul did, by remaining faithful to the end.
- Knowing that you have given each one of us certain talents and responsibilities, help us to use them for your glory.
- And help us to multiply ourselves just as Paul did, and be always ready to welcome the next Timothy onto the team.
- There may come a day when we will hand them the baton.
- In Christ,
- Amen

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