

2 Timothy 4

1. Because Christ Jesus is coming again in power and glory to judge the world and considering that every eye will one day see Him in His glory when He takes over, I'm leaving you this directive... All of our actions should be in light of this - God will judge our actions. His kingdom will be physically manifest when He returns and He will rule and reign over all. Jn 5:22-27

2. Timothy is told to preach God's Word. Don't fear Rome or any man but the man Christ Jesus who is coming to reign. If we stay in the boundaries of the Word we will be the athletes playing by the rules. Those of us called to preach are to always be ready to preach whether we expect to or not, whether we feel like it or not, whether the assembly is responsive or not. We use the word to correct, rebuke, encourage but note how we apply it, with great patience and careful instruction. It is easy to give up and think they will not get the point, or to not be careful and say things in a way that is easily misinterpreted. Great patience and careful instruction are the adverbs the preacher should always have in mind when God lays a message on his heart.

3. That time had already come but it is increasing. That is one reason for the multitude of denominations, pet doctrines or doctrines that allow us to ignore and excuse the parts of the word we don't like. I notice people listen for teachers that agree with them so they can back up their stand by quoting a man. How much better to quote the word!

4. Popular myths today are: tolerance, one-man leadership, corporate structured churches, get rich before you dedicate yourself to God. It is a choice to turn our ears from truth. We will hear it. Will we receive it or only what we want to hear? The Greek for fable or myths (muthos) includes sayings. We have a growing number of sayings in the church today. Some are a positive declaration of the truth of the word. Some are the creation of man. They are clever and catchy and get us to where man intends to take us. They are also not supported by Scripture and keep us from seeking the will of the Lord.

5. Keep your head = use sound judgement, calm and collected in spirit. Hardship is part of all lives but especially the servant of God. Endure it as life is short and it will bring you a great reward. I see many Christians who when hardship comes decide they do not want to pay the price of being a Christian and turn to the world. They give up on the tough job of enduring as they give in to the pleasures of life. Apparently Tim was called to be an evangelist. He must have needed encouragement to follow through on his calling and a push to carry it out. Do you have someone that pushes you to use your gifts?

6. This was his last letter and I think he knew it. He saw our lives as servants of God like that of the Suffering Servant Son whose life was poured out upon the

altar to God, like a drink offering of Leviticus. The first in Scripture of a drink offering was Jacob pouring oil on the rock at Bethel Gen 35:14. The daily offering of the Tabernacle had a wine drink offering poured out with it. Wine and oil symbolize joy and blessing. Our life should be daily a sacrifice on the altar but should include the wine drink offering(joy and blessing), knowing all that as good comes from God and is given back to God. I don't think Paul is complaining here but on the contrary is saying he has had joy of which he has been consistent to pour it on the altar. Time to go home.

7. What an expression to say at the end of life. I long to get to the place where one day by God's grace I may be able to say the same. I don't know if it was truer of anyone than of Paul. He listened and obeyed with such a zeal and anointing that it lit the world with the Gospel. We are in a good fight, running a race, with this possession called 'faith' to cling tenaciously to. It is a good thing to ask ourselves if we are engaged in these activities. Am I fighting the ...? The fight, the race, keeping the faith are things that are all out. They require our whole attention. Is that how we look at our life as a Christian? In 1Tim 1:18 he told Timothy to fight the good fight. How do you fight the good fight?

8. Is there a crown of righteousness for those who do not finish the race? Is the righteousness of Christ in salvation different from this crown? What about those saved yet so as by fire? Does the crown of righteousness await them? The Scriptures are clear that rewards of heaven are not the same for all. Many times the Scriptures tell us that we will receive our reward according to our labor. Mt 16:27 The righteous judge rewards according to obedient investment. All believers are recipients of eternal life because of the righteousness of Christ but the rewards in heaven differ according to our surrender to be useful tools in the Master's hands. The crown is not just Paul's, but thank you Holy Spirit for including me in this verse, all those who long for the parousia. They long for it because they long to see the One they love and to go to their reward for investing their lives in the Kingdom. Those who have tried to straddle the fence want Christ to put off his return because they have plans of their own. Where your heart is there your treasure is also. One of these days the eastern sky is gonna split... Except for the following personal remarks this is the end of Paul's letters. He ends looking for Jesus to come. He ends knowing he has poured out his life in love to the One who had mercy on him. He ends knowing with surety that he is bound for heaven and a heavenly reward. I hope we all end that way!