

THE LIFE THAT HONORS GOD (5)

1 Timothy 1:18, 2 Timothy 4:6-8

If you were at the point of death, getting ready to leave this world to go home to be with your Heavenly Father, what words would you leave to the lives of others? What words of wisdom would you share with those that are to come behind your life, and are walking their earthly pilgrimage. In 2 Timothy, Paul is sitting in a Roman prison awaiting the capital charge of insurrection against the Roman government. Emperor Nero will soon be handing down a sentence that will rest on the life of Paul...that of execution. While the Bible doesn't reveal how much longer Paul has to live...one thing is sure...his earthly life is getting ready to conclude and soon he will be going home to be with the Father. He will soon enter paradise, that place where all the redeemed of all the ages now abide.

1. THE LIFE THAT HONORS GOD- STAYS FOCUSED ON BEING A LIVING SACRIFICE UNTO GOD UNTIL THE END. It is interesting that Paul didn't say, "I am about ready to die", but rather "my time of departure is at hand." Paul didn't think of himself as being "executed" but literally giving himself as an offering to the glory of God. Paul knew well what it was to offer his body unto the Lord, and now at the point of death, it is no different. He doesn't view what is happening as simply "death" but rather he views his circumstance as a "departure". Paul knew well what the word "departure" meant. It carries with it the meaning of pulling up the anchors, loosening the moorings and leaving one country and entering another country. Paul was about to set sail for the greatest of all ports-heaven itself, and Paul knew his entrance there was all because Jesus Christ was the supreme sacrifice for his sins....therefore how could he do anything less. Imagine the thought if Paul would have stayed focused on being a living sacrifice for a majority of his life, and then quit. There is no honor in a runner that runs 98% of the race and quits at the very end...yet there are many that do just that.

Paul had been a faithful soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ and had endured many hardships out of obedience to the Lord God. Could the Heavenly Father say that about your life? Have you endured hardships for the glory of God and to live a life honoring and pleasing to Him? Have you given your life in sacrifice to the work of the Lord God? When all is said and done about each of our lives, what sacrifice will the Father say that you gave unto Him? Paul knew the reality of being hated and despised for the sake of the kingdom of God. Is that said of your life, to the glory of God. Do people find your life so linked with the Lord that they immediately know where you stand on the moral issues and the weightier matters of life?

Paul could have lacked moral fiber, and backbone and thrown in the towel...but he could not do so and bring glory to the Lord God. If it meant death...and the giving of his life's blood for the glory of the One that redeemed Him...he was willing to do so. He was willing to sacrifice his life, his body...out of love for the God that sacrificed the very life blood of His ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, in order that he (Paul) could have everlasting life.

2. THE LIFE THAT HONORS GOD- REJOICES AT THE THOUGHT OF GOING HOME. It is interesting to notice the way that Paul talks at the very end of his life when execution is soon to take his earthly body. He doesn't moan and groan and live in fear of what is getting ready to happen...but rather says, "my departure IS AT HAND..." No doubt Paul will probably die a cruel death before he breathes his last breath, but he knows this...that all the pain, turmoil, trials, and difficulties will soon be over irregardless of all the pain. Paul knew that soon he was going to be going home to be with the One that had saved his very life and given to him "divine, eternal life". Paul knew that he was soon to "depart" or "be released from the yoke of burdens that are associated with this earthly life, and Paul also knew that the One that redeemed him could not and would not leave him in this crucial hour of need...based on His divine Word. Paul could rejoice at the prospect of his departure for a number of reasons.

First, he knew that his sins had been forgiven and been completely washed away by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Can you say that before God in complete honesty. Do you know deep in your soul that your sins have been forgiven and that heaven is your eternal home?

Second, he knew he had followed through with the assignments given to him by the Father. Only the

Lord knows how many miles Paul traveled! How many roads Paul walked! How many ships Paul sailed on! The truth is, all that Paul did was in response to the grace of God and the assignments that were given him by the Lord. When the time comes for you to depart this land and go home and be with the Lord, if you are a child of God, will the Father be pleased with your obedience to the assignments that He has given to you? Have you obeyed His assignments or walked in disobedience? Has He called you to some special ministry and you have felt for years that you are unable to do what he ask? Paul could only rejoice...in the fact that he had obeyed the Father in the “assignments given”. While Paul didn’t look forward to the pain involved in death...he was anxious about his soon departure...for he knew where he was going....he was finally going home to paradise.

3. THE LIFE THAT HONORS GOD- STAYS TRUE TO HIM. Paul declared, “I have kept the faith”. Put very simply, Paul declared in essence, “I have kept the truth of God, declared the truth of God, especially in reliance upon Christ alone as the means of salvation”, and Paul had done so in a spirit of love to all he came into contact with. Paul was willing to put away any religious teaching that was not consistent with the truth of God’s Holy Word. Paul was willing to cast off anything in his life that did not line up with the truth of God’s Word.

There is a way that Satan works in the lives of humanity over the passing of time when it comes to the “belief system”. You may know a person that once had deep seeded biblical convictions, but for one reason or another, they have drifted. The life that honors God is not a life that is based on “personal beliefs” or “traditional beliefs handed down by others”, but rather beliefs that are etched from the Word of the Living God. Paul was a Jew, and according to his system of training, he was taught that a person was in right standing before God according to certain guidelines and the following of the Jewish commands. Yet, when God revealed to Him truth, Paul was willing to believe God and His Word alone. Can God see in you a person that is true to Him? While we may not be an apostle Paul, we can be true to Him and true to His divine Word...or does God see in your life and belief system a person that more interested in following “man made beliefs, rules, regulations” over and above the divine Word of God. Paul knew it was totally possible to drift away from the truth. It was for that reason that he declared in *1 Thes. 5:21-22 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

When the end of his life had come, Paul was found “remaining true” to all that the Lord entrusted to Him. Paul didn’t dump his faith! He didn’t ignore his faith! He didn’t forsake his faith! But in all things to the finish he was faithful and true. What can the Father say of each of us. Have you forsaken the faith? Have you ignored the faith entrusted to you?

4. THE LIFE THAT HONORS GOD- LIVES A LIFE TO BE RICHLIY REWARDED. Paul didn’t declare that he was simply “going to heaven”...but rather he declared, “there is laid up FOR ME a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day.

Paul didn’t think up the idea of rewards, or the notion of rewards...but rather simply believed the truth of God...namely that rewards will be given to all based on their life’s work. If you struggle believing in rewards listen carefully to what the Bible says about rewards.

Matthew 10:42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Luke 6:35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

1 Corinthians 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

Paul knew well that the Lord the Righteous Judge had watched his life carefully during his earthly pilgrimage, and the Lord would make it his business to reward him according to his life’s work. All the pain, and difficulty and now the problems arising at the point of death were all going to be worth it for Paul had lived a life to glorify and magnify the Lord Jesus Christ. What will be said of us?

