

CROSS THEN CROWN

Part 10 of Confident Living

2 Timothy 4:6-8. The Cornerstone Church, July 11, 2021

INTRODUCTION

Today, we arrive at the end of our series on Confident Living. We have explored nine spiritual disciplines to help us stand firm through the storms of life. These disciplines keep us centered on Jesus who is our strength and shield in every situation. This is not religious self-help. It's all about Jesus and his work in us. The disciplines are:

1. Consistent thinking: Renew our minds with truth
2. Compassionate living: Help people in need, just as Jesus did
3. Confidence by the Spirit: Rely on the Holy Spirit
4. Cultivate community: Connect to other Christians
5. Courage by the Word: Invest in hearing and doing the Word of God
6. Captured by Communion: Participate in Christ at his Table
7. Centered on Christ: Count on his Person and Work for you
8. Committed to the Faith: The basic tenets of the biblical Christian faith
9. Connected to the Church: Make Sunday your church day

Our tenth discipline is: CROSS THEN CROWN.

Our Bible passage today is 2 Timothy 4:6-8, but let's begin at verse 1.

First, we need some context.

THE CONTEXT OF 2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8

Timothy's Task

The apostle Paul sent his protege, Timothy, to the church in Ephesus to sort out several problems. In this second letter, Paul was focused on false teachers in the church. Timothy's primary task was to correct these enemies of the Truth.

Timothy's Resource

In chapter 4, verse 2, Paul tells Timothy how to accomplish his task: PREACH THE WORD; that is, the Word of God. Today, we would say, preach Christ and his Gospel from the Bible.

Timothy's Motivations

Paul gives Timothy three motivations to preach the Word.

1. In verse 1: the **presence** of God and of Christ Jesus, the judge of the living and the dead.
2. In verses 3-5, the **pressure** to abandon sound biblical doctrine.
3. In verses 6-8, Paul expected his time in **prison** would end in his death, so it was necessary for Timothy to complete what Paul started.

Now, with the context in mind, let's read 2 Timothy 4:1-8. Focus on verses 6-8, which is where we'll spend our time today.

2 Timothy 4:1-8

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store 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 longed for his appearing.

PAUL'S SITUATION

For Paul, this teaching was far from theoretical. He was living it. He was chained in a dungeon and awaiting the Emperor Nero's verdict. Paul expected to be condemned and executed.

Paul's Perspective

But look how Paul describes his imminent death in **verse 6: "I am already being poured out like a drink offering and the time for my departure is near."**

Paul saw his martyrdom as an act of worship. A drink offering was poured on the sacrificial lamb before it was burned on the altar (Numbers 28:7). Giving up one's life in God's service is never a waste. It displays God's worth. It declares the importance of the Gospel.

Paul's Retrospective

Paul was dying without regrets. He had answered Christ's call into apostolic service and he had carried it out faithfully. Look what he writes in **verse 7: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."** Each word picture describes his faithfulness. As a soldier, he fought faithfully. As an athlete, he ran faithfully. As a guardian of the faith, he kept watch faithfully.

There's a lesson here for all of us: God does not ask us to be spectacular or even successful. No, he asks us to be faithful to his call in our lives.

Paul's Motivations

How was Paul able to endure such hardships and remain strong in faith. How was he able to stand firm through the fiercest storms of life? How can we do the same? In verse 8, Paul describes the powerful motivations that lay behind his faithful life and ministry. These reasons should keep us faithful too.

Let's look at verse 8.

POWERFUL MOTIVATIONS TO STAND FIRM

Paul's explains his motivations in **verse 8**: "**Now there is in store for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also all who have longed for his appearing.**"

Paul was motivated by two great realities: the coming of Christ and the crown from Christ.

1. POWERFUL MOTIVATION ONE: THE COMING OF CHRIST

Genuine believers stand firm in faith because they want to be ready to meet Jesus when he returns in glory. That's the meaning of "that day" and "his appearing".

Rather than use my own words to describe what that day will be like, let me read what the Bible tells us:

(Mark 14:61-62) Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" 62 "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

(Titus 2:13) ... 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ ...

(Matthew 25:31) "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.

(Colossians 3:4) When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

(Hebrews 9:28) ... Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

(1 John 3:3) We know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

(Philippians 3:20-21) Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

What's going to get us through what we're going through? When the cancer is terminal? When we hit the financial wall or descend into the darkness of depression? When the temptation to sin is so strong we can taste it? When the devil wins another round in the battle?

What will get us through is the expectation of meeting Jesus Christ at his glorious appearing. What a day of rejoicing that will be. His glory will erase all our suffering, his presence will transform us into his likeness, his life will conquer death, and his saving power will deliver us from sin and satan's grip forever.

There is a second motivation to stand firm in faith through the storms of life.

2. POWERFUL MOTIVATION TWO: THE CROWN FROM CHRIST

This may surprise some of us: God has appointed the Lord Jesus Christ to judge the world. The apostle Peter explained all this to Cornelius, the Roman centurion.

(Acts 10:42) He (Jesus) commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

(2 Timothy 4:1) In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead ...

Jesus is coming to judge the world. He will separate humanity - every person who has ever lived - into two groups. Those he judges to be unrighteous will be condemned and sent into eternal destruction. Those he judges to be righteous **by faith** will be sent into eternal life.

Nero condemned Paul, but at the final judgment, Jesus will not. Instead, he will hand Paul a crown of righteousness. Paul was imagining the laurel wreath given to the winner of the Marathon in the ancient Olympic Games. That's a word picture for the gift of righteousness or justification that every believer receives from God. We are motivated to stand firm in faith because it is through faith that we receive God's gift of righteousness.

(Romans 3:21-24) But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

At the final judgment, we want to hear Christ's verdict: righteous. The righteousness that is by faith from first to last (Romans 1:16-17). Let that be a strong motivation to endure in faith until the end.

CONCLUSION: GREAT EXPECTATIONS, GREAT ENDURANCE

We learn from Paul's instructions to Timothy that living and dying for the sake of Jesus and his Gospel is a meaningful offering of worship to our glorious Lord.

We also learn that great expectations generate great endurance. **When we expect our Savior, we will endure our suffering.** Keep your eyes on the prize and you will stand firm in faith until the end.

In this life, we carry the cross so that in the end we wear the crown.

The cross is all the hardships we face by denying ourselves and faithfully following Jesus (Luke 9:23-24). There will be struggle, opposition, and pain. Jesus told us:

(Matthew 10:22) You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

One well-known preacher put it this way:

No pain, no gain. No cross, no crown. No suffering, no inheritance. That's the way it is. And if you ask, "What kind of pain? Is it just persecution he's talking about? Or is it other miseries we face in this life?" ... it is all the groaning that comes with the futility of this fallen age — persecution, calamity, disease, death. Any suffering that you meet on the road to heaven and endure by trusting in Jesus. Any hardship that might destroy your faith and lead you away from God.

John Piper in his sermon, Children, Heirs, and Fellow Sufferers, on Romans 8:14-18. Preached at Bethlehem Baptist Church on April 21, 2002.

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/children-heirs-and-fellow-sufferers?fbclid=IwAR0f3YcsWNesroOqkE4sSIMVamtODU4STPoGtQaUaiTF-sfqo9sLKeCeD3k>

But the burdens of the cross are nothing compared to the beauties of the crown. Life eternal. Life in the glorious presence of Jesus and his glorified people. No more sorrow, no more sin, no more satan. Jesus will wipe away every tear from our eyes.

Cling to Jesus. Stay in faith. Never let go.

Fight the fight, run the race, keep the faith. Wear the crown.

ORDER OF SERVICE**Sunday, July 11, 2021**

1:30	Welcome & Prayer - Dakota
4:14	<i>Glorious Day-Dakota</i>
5:34	<i>Good Good Father-McKenzie</i>
0:45	Pray & Dismiss Kids - Peter
3:00	Bible Reading - Janie - Rom 11:25-36
5:21	<i>O Praise The Name (Anástasis)-McKenzie</i>
3:00	A.C.T.S. Prayer - Tami
25:00	Teaching - Peter -Cross then Crown
10:00	Holy Communion - Tami
4:13	<i>Build My Life- Dakota</i>
1:30	Updates - Peter
0:30	Blessing - Peter

Updates:

- MERGE
- ONLINE GIVING.
- Everything you need to know - FamousGod.com and social media.
- Connect card and contact us. In person and online.