

c. Jude 1:4

4. Running the good race: Paul shows Timothy how he ran that race and what awaits him following the end of his life on earth. Read 2 Timothy 4:6-8 and 4:18, and note below when Paul tells us that he will get his crown (i.e., his award or reward) and how he will get to heaven.

5. As we noted above, Paul mentions in 2 Timothy 4:18 that the Lord will bring him safely to heaven. Have you ever thought about life after death as a journey in order to arrive in heaven? Read Luke 16:19-31 and note what it tells us about this journey for believers.

As Paul approached death, he was at peace—knowing that he had run the good race and that his eternal home was waiting for him. Yet while he looked forward to living eternally with his Lord and Savior, he nevertheless continued to have his eye on the work at Ephesus and his spiritual son Timothy.

Paul ends his letter with some personal requests of Timothy and a brief listing of those who had helped Paul's ministry—as well as those had been enemies of it. Paul also wanted Timothy to come and visit him before he was executed; and Paul ends his letter praising God and encouraging Timothy. In spite of his circumstances, Paul was always rejoicing—knowing that he was living every day in the will of God and that, through Jesus, his salvation was assured.

Reflecting on both 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy, there are some common themes that we can take from them which apply to us today as well. These include staying true to our calling, being faithful in and out of season, holding firmly to the truths of the Gospel and not allowing it to be compromised, being on guard for the false teachers and anti-Christ's who are among us within the church, and doing all things for Christ with patience and love. These are as true today as they were in Ephesus during Timothy's days. Furthermore, as Christ's return draws closer, these verses carry added meaning. We are living in a time of apostasy and compromise within the church; and within the secular world. False teachers and anti-Christ's are attacking the followers of Christ and doing their best to discredit the infallibility of the Bible, God's Holy Word. Be alert, know sound doctrine, and do not allow your faith to be compromised when someone is trying to appeal to your "itching ears."

Just as with Paul and Timothy, let us run the race that God has set before us. May he find us faithful and working towards his coming again when indeed he does return!

In Christ,

Wes