

TEXT STUDY 2

The Meaning of Life: A Gift From God

Second Sunday: Life Is a Gift To Be Respected as God Is Taking It

“Is it OK to pull the plug? Do I really need a medical directive?”

Last week we talked about how important it is to defend life as the gift of God that it is, the blood-bought value it has. Today, we see that respecting God as the Author and Controller of life means not trying to prevent Him from doing what He does – not thinking ourselves above Him– but being willing to let go.

Sermon Text –

2 Timothy 4:6-13 ⁶ For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 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. ⁹ Do your best to come to me quickly, ¹⁰ for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. ¹² I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. ¹³ When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

Context: Paul had been serving God faithfully. He had seen his share of successes (whole churches brought to faith through his work). He had also seen his share of struggles – having been thrown into prison frequently, flogged severely, left for dead again and again. Previously he had written: “²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.” (2 Corinthians 11:24-27) He was at the end of his journey, imprisoned at Rome for a second time. This time it didn’t look like he’d be getting out. So he wrote a letter to his co-worker and friend – Timothy. Consider what he writes as he sees his life coming to its physical end.

GNT **2 Timothy 4:6** VEgw. ga.r h;dh spe,ndomai(kai. o` kairo.j th/j avnalu,sew,j mou evfe,sthkenÅ

NIV **2 Timothy 4:6** For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure.

ga.r - Everything Paul encourages Timothy to do in the first verses of this chapter (preach the Word, be prepared, do the work of an evangelist) is encouraged in view of what Paul had gone

through and is now going through...

spe,ndomai- Present passive indicative – *I am being poured out as a drink offering* The word is used in reference to the offering of wine to God that was poured out on the ground around the base of the altar (Numbers 15) as the final act of the sacrifice. With each sacrifice (depending on the type of animal), an amount of wine between a quarter of a hin (approximately one quart) and half of a hin (think of a two-liter bottle) was poured out to God. The term was also used to refer to martyrs pouring out their blood, totally given over to God. Twice in Scripture Paul uses it to refer to his sufferings and service to the Gospel. Paul viewed his entire work as an offering in thanks to God.

o` kairo.j - The proper time, the right season for something to happen. It might have been easy for Timothy and other believers to think that Paul died too soon, his churches were too young. Paul reminds us all that God's timing is right.

avna,lusij, ewj, h` - noun, fem. Genitive – loosing, untying, departure. The word is used with two different pictures. Homer uses the term to describe the “loosing from the moorings preparatory to setting sail” (Thayer's Lexicon) – in other words, being released from the dock and free to sail. The picture is also used to describe breaking up an encampment, untying the tents, etc. (BAGD, Thayers) Notice how both are such beautiful pictures of the Christian preparing for death. With the moorings of this earth no longer holding us back, we set sail for the perfection and joy of eternity. Our time of camping on this earth – temporary as it is – is over, and we are heading home to heaven.

evfi,sthmi - perfect tense – It has stood upon (approached) and the continuing result is that it is currently at hand. The right time was coming all along, and now it is here.

Think of how Paul knew this. As a prematurely aged Christian, he just knew it was time, and he was ready. Look at how he continues.

GNT **2 Timothy 4:7** *to.n kalo.n avgw/na hvgw,nismai(to.n dro,mon tete,leka(th.n pi,stin teth,rhka*

NIV **2 Timothy 4:7** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Paul continues his stream of picture language. Now he brings in the athletic imagery we've had drilled into our consciousness with all the non-stop coverage of such events as the Olympic Games.

to.n kalo.n avgw/na hvgw,nismai - Fought the good fight. He has agonizomai'd the agona. We see our English words *agony and agonize* in there. This is an all-out effort, with every fiber of his being. In Olympic matches, have you ever noticed how tired the athletes were by the end? They had expended every ounce of their energy with the hope of doing their country proud, with the hope of winning the prize. In one Olympic boxing match I watched, the American fighter thought he was ahead in the last minute and did his best to avoid his competitor, who was happy to let him continue backing away since

he was actually winning. That American took a break. Paul didn't. He gave it his best effort until the end.

to.n dro,mon tete,leka - *tele,w* perfect active indicative. *I have finished* (and the result is that it is finished) *the course* (the pre-set course for the race). Again, think of the Olympic Games – the hurdler, after leading the whole race, trips on the last hurdle and is passed by the other competitors; the marathoner who leads for 25 miles and then collapses, etc. Paul did not come up short. He did what God had set out for him. The next phrase emphasizes that.

th.n pi,stin teth,rhka\ - Perfect active indicative - to keep or guard. He has guarded while he was fighting the fight and running the race, he made sure to do it according to the faith - th.n pi,stin at the same time as he guarded his personal faith from temptation. We talk about the fides quae creditur (the faith which is believed – the truth of Scripture and salvation) and fides qua credimus (the faith by which we believe – the gift to believe given by the Holy Spirit). It is true that in this context one wouldn't exist without the other, and commentators fall on either side. I prefer to see it first and foremost as that fides quae creditur, the truth of Scripture as Paul had taught and as Timothy was being encouraged to teach in the face of heresy.

Yes, these are first person verbs, but the objects all precede the verbs and Paul does not add a first person pronoun. He isn't emphasizing what he has done, but rather the good fight, the race and the faith – the gifts God has allowed him to be a part of.

Paul realizes what God is doing with him and he is ready. He shows why in the next verse.

GNT **2 Timothy 4:8** loipo.n avpo,keitai, moi o` th/j dikaiosunh,j ste,fanoj(o]n avpodw,sei moi o` ku,rioj evn evkei,nh| th/| h` me,ra|(o` di,kaioj krith,j(ouv mo,non de. evmoi. avlla. kai. pa/si toi/j hvgraphko,si th.n evpifa,neian auvtou/

NIV **2 Timothy 4:8** 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.

loipo.n - adverb – *remaining, left over...in the future*

avpo,keimai -Present middle-passive indicative, *to be put away, stored up, reserved*

o` th/j dikaiosunh,j ste,fanoj - *Crown of righteousness* – The Olympic athletes competed for a crown of laurel branches or some other temporary prize depending on the games' host.

Paul's prize that he kept as his motivation and that he places as our motivation is the reward of eternal righteousness and perfection that we only experience in full after this death. This prize is what is already his, just waiting for him in heaven.

evn evkei,nh| th/| h` me,ra - *on that day* – when he *crosses over*, when he dies.

Now Paul opens this up and makes it clear he isn't just talking about his death – the death of this super-apostle – but about the death of each believer. Look at how the believers are described – those who (perfect tense) *have loved* his appearance. We love all that we have seen of him and because of his promises, we love the thought and confidence of seeing him again – so the NIV translates “all who have longed for his appearing.”

GNT **2 Timothy 4:9** Spou,dason evlqei/n pro,j me tace,wj\

NIV **2 Timothy 4:9** Do your best to come to me quickly,

Paul now gets to the practical instructions. But as we see these, we see what his priorities are as he is getting ready to go home to heaven. First, he is longing for Christian companionship, surely for his own sake and also for the sake of those that will be with him.

Spou,dason - Paul uses the aorist imperative stressing the fact of what he wants done. Hurry to come. Then he adds the adverb – quickly.

NT **2 Timothy 4:10** Dhma/j ga,r me evgkate,lipen avgaph,saj to.n nu/n aivw/na kai. evporeu,qh eivj Qessaloni,khn(Krh,skhj eivj Galati,an(Ti,toj eivj Dalmati,an\

NIV **2 Timothy 4:10** for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.

evgkatalei,pw - to leave behind, abandon, forsake. Paul shows that this was not a good parting by the participle he uses – “because he loved the *now age*.” Think about how easy that is. “This work is too hard. It’s easier to live like the people around us.” And think about how difficult that would have been for Paul.

Demas – When Paul writes the Colossians from Rome during his first imprisonment in 61 or 62 AD, Demas is there with him sending greetings to the believers in Colosse. In Philemon (written at the same time) Demas is called Paul’s “fellow worker”. But he deserted all that. He didn’t finish the race or keep the faith. Instead of loving the Lord’s appearing (v. 8), he loved the things of this world more. Now, during Paul’s second imprisonment (65-67 AD), Paul finds himself virtually alone.

Crescens – It is a Roman name, and this is his only mention in the New Testament. Maybe Paul had sent him on a mission to Galatia, since it seems he had sent Titus to Dalmatia (across the Adriatic Sea from Italy).

Titus – Paul’s faithful co-worker, sent at many times to check on the work in various mission areas and often trusted with difficult missions. After this mission to Dalmatia, tradition says he lived many years as bishop on the island of Crete, where Paul had previously left him to oversee the work

GNT **2 Timothy 4:11** Louka/j evstin mo,noj metV evmou/Å Ma/rkon avnalabw.n a;ge meta. seautou/(e;stin ga,r moi eu;crhstoj eivj diakoni,anÅ

NIV **2 Timothy 4:11** Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

Luke – The Gospel writer and travel companion and co-worker of Paul. He is the only one Paul has left in Rome. Think of the solitude of prison and how much work Paul wanted to accomplish. That’s why he constantly sent these workers off and had them report back.

Mark – This is the same man (John-Mark) who deserted Paul on the first missionary journey and accompanied Barnabas on the second. He and Paul had since worked together powerfully as is indicated in Paul’s desire to have him in Rome – “for he is to me useful (of good use) for ministry (service).”

Notice, as Paul is getting ready to depart, he longs for co-workers and fellow Christians to be with him, and at the same time, be working for the Lord.

GNT **2 Timothy 4:12** Tu,cikon de. avpe,steila eivj :EfesonÅ

NIV **2 Timothy 4:12** I sent **Tychicus** to Ephesus.

Tychicus – Another faithful co-worker of Paul, mentioned five times in the New Testament as a dear brother and co-worker, being sent here and there bearing messages from Paul and sharing in the work.

GNT **2 Timothy 4:13** to.n failo,nhn o]n avpe,lipon evn Trw|a,di para. Ka,rpw| evrco,menoj fe,re(kai. ta. bibli,a ma,lista ta.j membra,najÅ

NIV **2 Timothy 4:13** When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

failo,nhj, ou, o` - This is the heavier outer garment for protection from wintry weather.

Carpus – His name means “fruit.” This is the only time his name appears in New Testament. Who knows why he left his cloak there. Perhaps he planned to return to pick it up before the winter but was arrested. Maybe he was taken without a chance to pack. Either way, it is something Paul would like to keep warm. And right along with that basic necessity of clothing, he mentions another necessity for him...

kai. ta. bibli,a ma,lista ta.j membra,najÅ – *and the scrolls (books), especially the parchments (animal skins used for making scrolls and books)*. Paul wanted Timothy to bring him his Bible. God’s Word is powerful and necessary, especially as we look at our “journey” when the moorings are loosed, and we set sail to our heavenly home.

Obvious applications here include the necessity to be in the Word as we prepare for our end and be the Timothy and Mark, encouraging those who are near their end. Keep them comfortable (the cloak) and nourish them with God’s Word.

Other Relevant Passages:

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. ² For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

Philippians 1:23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Romans 14:8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Psalms 31:5 My times are in your hands.

Psalms 90:12 Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Text Thoughts:

Readings for day explore how David, Paul and Simeon face their deaths

Malady: Anything less than finishing the race and keeping the faith **Telic**

Note: Being ready (for death and all that leads up to it)

Specific Law: "...because he loved the world" (v. 9). The Holy Spirit through Paul directs us to focus squarely on Christ and His appearing and condemns me when I become a Demas.

Specific Gospel: A crown of righteousness is in store for me, for all who love Jesus' appearing.

Preaching Thoughts on Life Sunday #2

The story of John Brown. After a bedside devotion on Romans 8, discussing the absence of condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus and the presence of Jesus that nothing can separate from us, this man – dying of cancer – grabbed my hand and spoke some of his last words to me, his wife and another family member – "I'm ready to go home, I'm ready to go home. My sins are forgiven. I'm ready to go home."

Is it OK to want to die to go be with Jesus?

How often should I visit Grandma, since she can't respond and maybe can't understand?

Imagine being trapped in a useless body – what would your mind be going through?

Do we have to use every medical measure possible to keep someone alive who is ready to meet their Savior?

This text gives us several examples: Being ready to go home, being confident of the crown, the natural desire for companionship, comfort, and most of all, the Word.

Outline Thoughts:

The Right Way to Die (Or - Let's Learn From Paul the Right Way to Die)

- I. Having Finished the Race
 - a. View Life as a Drink Offering
 - b. Keep the Faith
 - c. Expect the Crown of Righteousness
 - d. Long for Jesus' Appearing
- II. Having Needs Met
 - a. Companionship
 - b. Comfort
 - c. God's Word

Introduction Idea:

Intro idea: Time to pull the plug? When do I give up? When we read the text, doesn't it sound like Paul is checking out, ready to call it quits?