

Day 197, 2 Timothy 4

by David Servant

David Servant emphasizes the importance of persevering in ministry, staying faithful to the end, and remaining true to one's beliefs, even in the face of challenges and difficulties.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:2-3, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 12:3, 1 John 2:15

Topics: "Sound Doctrine", "Persevering Faith"

Description

David Servant preaches about the importance of holding fast to sound doctrine in a time when many within the church are turning away from the truth to embrace false teachings and easy beliefs. He emphasizes the need to boldly preach the word, reprove, rebuke, and exhort with patience and instruction, following Paul's example to endure hardship and fulfill one's ministry. Paul's exhortation to Timothy to 'not grow weary and lose heart' serves as a reminder for all believers to persevere in faith and love Christ's appearing, striving for the 'crown of righteousness' that awaits those who remain faithful.

Transcript

It is difficult not to think that we are living in the time that Paul describes in this chapter, when those within the church "will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth" (4:3-4). When so many embrace a false gospel that is nothing more than a license to sin, or think that they are safe in God's grace without holiness, or believe that there is nothing they could ever do to forfeit their salvation, or trust that there is no possibility that they will have to endure tribulation, or expect Jesus to return twice, or flock to preachers who tell them that God wants them to be even wealthier than they already are, or believe that God has sovereignly predestined some to be saved and some to be damned, or think that Jesus did not die for the sins of everyone in the world, then surely we are living in the time that Paul foretold.

This sad state of things is not reason for us to put our heads in the sand, but reason to continue to boldly "preach the word" and to "reprove, rebuke [and] exhort, with great patience and instruction" (4:2), just as Paul solemnly charged Timothy to do. Paul knew that if Timothy did those things he would suffer hardship. He would also, however, fulfill his ministry and be ready to stand before the Lord (4:1, 5). Paul set an excellent example for Timothy to follow, describing his own ministry as the "good fight" and as a race that he had run. Fulfilling his own calling required great determination and perseverance. But in the end, he knew a prize awaited him, "the crown of righteousness" (4:8). That same crown awaits all "who have loved

Christ's appearing" (4:8), which would of course be all true believers. All of us, like Paul, must "not grow weary and lose heart" (Heb. 12:3).

Note that Paul declared that he had "kept the faith" (4:7), which means that it would have been possible for him not to have "kept the faith." This is one more nail in the coffin of the idea that once a person is saved he is guaranteed to always be saved.

Additionally, Paul makes reference to a man named Demas, who at one time was his traveling companion and a servant of Christ whom he mentioned in other epistles (Col. 4:14; Philem 24). Demas, however, had recently deserted Paul, "having loved this present world" (4:10). John wrote, "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). Tragically, Demas had been lured back to that from which he had been delivered.

I can't imagine that Timothy was not moved to tears as he read Paul's words, "The time of my departure has come" (4:6). From reading his story in the books of Acts, we know that Paul proved to have had an accurate foreknowledge of major future events in his life. Timothy was certainly well aware of Paul's accuracy in foretelling his own future, so he knew that his long-time friend and mentor would soon be "going home." Paul, however, did not believe that his death was just days away, as he requested that Timothy visit him as soon as possible and that he "make every effort to come before winter" (4:21). Timothy would be bringing Paul's cloak that he left in Troas, which we assume he needed for warmth in the winter months (4:13).

Paul's trial in Rome had already begun, and he had made his "first defense" (4:16), at which those whom he hoped would bravely testify in his favor sadly deserted him. Apparently, however, Paul felt that his first defense had gone well, as he was "rescued out of the lion's mouth" (4:17). We don't know if that expression was meant to be taken figuratively or literally. We do know, however, that the Romans sometimes entertained themselves by executing criminals by means of confining them with wild dogs, bears, boars and lions. Regardless, Paul has been in heaven for almost 2,000 years enjoying his reward!

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