

The Christian Soldier's Crown

INTRODUCTION:

A. 2 Timothy 4:6-8

B. 2 Timothy completes the inspired writings of the apostle Paul as his death came shortly after its completion.

1. He wrote about the Christian armor. . . Now he was about to lay his armor aside.
2. His fighting days were over . . . His sufferings were about to come to an end. (2 Cor 11.23-28)
3. Death lay ahead . . . Paul reveals to Christians everywhere and for all time the life and comfort of a Christian soldier's death.

PAUL'S READINESS . . . "I am now ready..." (2 Timothy 4:6)

A. He had been ready for a number of years. In the home of Philip, the evangelist, in Caesarea, Paul said in Acts 21:13

B. Paul's life was a life of readiness.

1. Romans 1:15
2. Titus 3:1 And was he ever ready!
3. But this time he was ready "to be offered."
 - a. "Offered" was a word for offering a sacrifice to a god.
 - b. Romans 12:1

C. Paul is saying, "My life is not being taken from me . . . I am offering it as a sacrifice/offering to God.

1. Do we have that confidence?
2. Are you ready to be offered?

PAUL'S EFFORT . . . "I have fought a good fight" (2 Timothy 4:7)

A. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Paul's three phrases, in the perfect tense, convey finality. (1 Cor 9.24-27; Heb 12:1-4)

1. Paul knew this was the end.
2. He had called Timothy to "fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Timothy 6:12)
3. His own fight was over. The fight had been worthwhile, and he had fought well.

B. Romans 12:10-11 – "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;"

C. 1 Corinthians 15:58 – "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

D. When Paul says, "I have fought a good fight," he is saying, "I have done my best."

E. When we put forth our best effort, we will be victorious in our personal spiritual battles.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 – "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going."

PAUL'S FAITHFULNESS . . . "I have finished my course" (2 Timothy 4:8)

A. Revelation 2:10 – ". . . Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life"

B. Matthew 10:22 – "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."

C. The beginning is easy in anything because of the dreams and excitement.

1. It is the finishing that counts.
2. The sticking to it . . . That is a challenge for many.

PAUL'S HOPE . . . "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (2 Timothy 4:8)

A. The "crown of righteousness" symbolizes victory for the faithful.

1. It is a "crown of life" for all eternity. Do you have one? Revelation 2:10
2. It is a "crown of glory" that does not fade away. 1 Peter 5:4

B. This reward was not for Paul alone. The "crown" or "victory" has been reserved for the faithful Christian. Psalm 17.15

CONCLUSION:

A. In this study we have seen:

1. Paul's READINESS . . . "I am now ready" 2 Timothy 4:6
2. Paul's EFFORT . . . "I have fought a good fight." 2 Timothy 4:7
3. Paul's FAITHFULNESS . . . "I have finished my course." 2 Timothy 4:8
4. Paul's HOPE . . . "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." 2 Timothy 4:8

B. Paul was ready . . . Are you?

1. If you are not a Christian, then you are not ready!
2. If you have never obeyed the gospel, then you are not ready!
3. If you are not faithful to Christ, then you are not ready!
4. If you are but lukewarm, then you are not ready!
5. If your love for Christ has grown cold, then you are not ready!

C. You can change your state of readiness right now . . . God's Plan for Man's Salvation