

Finishing the Race

(2 Timothy 4:1-8)

Yearly Theme: “Joy is...”

Series Title: “The Fight for Joy”

November 29th, 2020

Something to think about:

As we close out this series today on “The Fight for Joy,” we come toward the end of Paul’s life and his final instructions to Timothy to keep the faith.

As Paul closes out his letter to Timothy, he gives him solemn warnings to be faithful to preach and teach the word of God and the Gospel of Christ, knowing that this message will be rejected and that Timothy’s resolve will be tested. As one who has fought the good fight of faith, and has finished the race, Paul (who writes from prison) knows that the end of his life is near. With confidence Paul exhorts Timothy to do the same, explaining that the prize that awaits him also awaits all those who eagerly look forward to the return of Christ.

Follow along with me this morning...

2 Timothy 4:1-8 (NLT)

¹ I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he appears to set up his Kingdom: ² Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching.

³ For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear.

⁴ They will reject the truth and chase after myths.

⁵ But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don’t be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you.

⁶ As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. ⁸ And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will

give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.

Key Point: “The fight of faith is not easy, but it’s good.”

Why is the fight of faith not easy? Let’s take a look...

- 1. In our endeavors to live out our faith, we must be prepared whether the time is favorable or not.**
- 2. There will be people who reject the truth and chase after myths.**
- 3. We must not be afraid to suffer for the Lord while telling others the Good News.**

Something to take home:

In his book, *Fan the Flame*, J. Stowell writes,

“The Greeks had a race in their Olympic games that was unique. The winner was not the runner who finished first. It was the runner who finished with his torch still lit. I want to run all the way with the flame of my torch still lit for Him.”¹

Fighting the good fight of faith is not easy. It takes time, effort, working through challenges and difficulties and problems. Fighting the good fight of faith requires strength and courage in the face of rejection and persecution and being willing to suffer (and expecting to suffer) for the sake and the cause of Christ. And what’s the end result? Well, the end result is a prize that is greater than any other prize the world has ever known. The prize that awaits believers in Christ, just like the prize that awaited Paul, is eternal life.

So, no matter what this world throws at us, no matter how many bruises we get along the way, no matter how many jeers and insults from naysayers, or how many people scoff at us, fighting the fight of faith is not easy, but it’s always good!

Key Point: “The fight of faith is not easy, but it’s good.”

¹ J. Stowell, *Fan The Flame*, (Moody, 1986), 32.