

Paul's Epistles to Individuals

Lesson 23 – 2 Timothy 4:6 – 22

I. Paul Announces His Life is Near the End and His Victory (vs. 6 – 8)

Following Paul's admonition to Timothy in **v. 5**, he goes on to describe his earthly life as being nearly over. Paul here describes his time on earth as short (**v. 6**), though he expects some time limited for future visits and deliveries of personal items (**vs. 9, 11, 13**).

A. *The Drink Offering*

In **Verse 6**, the NASB says, "*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering*". The KJV says, "*For I am now ready to be offered*". The reference to "drink offering" is actually found in the Greek word "*spendomai*", from which the phrase is translated. From "*spendo*" and the suffix "*mai*", Strong's defines the word as a primary verb meaning "to pour out as a libation, figuratively to devote one's life or blood as a sacrifice". The suffix is a present tense first person application to the verb, as the English "I am". So, the entire English phrase comes from this singular Greek word. Paul uses this word one other time in **Phili. 2:17** and is figuratively referring to the Old Testament sacrifices in **Num. 15:1-10** and throughout **Num. 28 and 29**. It seems that during these sacrificial ceremonies, the wine libation was poured out as a final act of the sacrifice. As such, Paul draws a parallel with the end of his life. Everything has been done and his pending physical death is the last act of his life of sacrifice and service to the Lord.

B. *His Time of Departure*

Paul says the time of his departure "*is at hand*" (KJV), or "*has come*" (NASB). Here he uses "departure" as a metaphor for his physical death. The word "departure" is from the Greek word "*anulusis*", meaning to "unloose". Commentators suggest both a military and a nautical use of the word. In the military sense, an army would break camp and leave. In a nautical use, the idea is to release the moorings and set out to sea. The same word is used in **Phili. 1:23** wherein Paul mentions his desire to "depart" and be with Christ. There he describes his departure as "far better" because "to die is gain". When Paul wrote the Philippian letter, he recognized he had work yet to do but here, he knows his work is done and he is ready to leave this earth and be with Christ.

C. *His Work is Finished*

In **verse 7**, Paul acknowledges he has "fought the good fight", "finished the course", and "kept the faith". Paul considered himself a soldier and an athlete who has performed well, keeping the faith. He has told Timothy before to "fight the good fight of faith" (**1 Tim. 6:12**). Paul has fought against false teachers, false doctrine, earthly temptations, and things that would appeal to a personal pride, for his own benefit and for those who observed his life. Paul has used the military metaphor often (**Eph. 6:11-18; 2 Tim. 2:3-4**) while making clear that the warfare is spiritual and not carnal (**2 Cor. 10:3-5**). Paul has also used the athletic metaphor several times (**1 Cor. 9:24-27; 2 Tim. 2:5**), making it clear here that his race is finished. Paul never gave up, all the way to the end. A lesson we should all learn. There is no "retirement" from our service to the Lord. In like manner, Paul kept the faith, synonymous with "the gospel", "the word" and "truth" (**Acts 6:7; 1 Pet. 1:25; Jude 3**), it is God's saving power (**Rom. 1:16**) and Paul kept it both in word and in deed (**Col. 3:17**) without compromise (**1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 2:2**).

D. The Reward is Great

Paul's confidence is unshakeable that the reward promised will be delivered. The Great Judge, Jesus will determine who will be the recipients (**John 5:22; Acts 17:31**) of this crown of Glory (**1 Pet. 5:4**) and crown of Life (**James 1:12**).

II. Personal Matters (vs. 9-22)

Paul, after reflecting in some detail on his own experiences and condition now writes about specific individuals with whom he had relationships. Some are encouraging and some are disappointing. Paul warns Timothy and future readers of the threat of abandonment of the faith by citing specific examples of those who have fallen away. He also shows reason for encouragement by citing those who remain his faithful friends and brethren. First, in **v. 9**, he encourages Timothy to come to him as soon as he can, knowing his time is short. A few of the individuals mentioned are specifically discussed below.

A. Demus (v. 10)

Demus had been a trusted traveling companion to Paul in his work (**Col. 4:14; Phile. 24**) who had forsaken Paul and the faith by returning to the world. The world that Demus loved is antithetical to the love we are to have for God (**1 John 2:15-17**). We can't love both.

B. Crescens, Titus and Tychicus (v. 10, 12)

These two individuals were probably sent by Paul to these areas to care for the churches there as he sent Tychicus to Ephesus (**v.12; Col. 4:7**) although we can't be certain if they went on their own accord. Paul had worked in these areas (**Rom. 15:19**) and there is no indication that these two had abandoned Paul as had Demus. Paul had great concern for the churches and desired that they be encouraged (**2 Cor. 11:28**).

C. Luke and Mark (v. 11)

Luke, the writer of the Acts was a close companion of Paul's at least on his second and third journeys and was with him in Rome along with others (**v. 21**). Paul's call for Mark to join him is a great encouragement and lesson to us considering the difficulties they had experienced in the past (**Acts 15:37-40**). Though Paul had apparently been frustrated with Mark, his love and appreciation for him endured to the degree that he wanted him present in his last days.

D. Alexander the Coppersmith (vs. 14-15)

We cannot be sure of the identity of this man other than is described here. The name is mentioned several places but there is no certainty as to how many individuals existed by that name. We can know what he did. He "*vigorously opposed our teachings*". Paul pronounces by inspiration that justice will be served. Let there be no mistake, "*eternal punishment*" awaits those who are enemies of Christ just as surely as "*eternal life*" awaits the righteous (**Matt. 25:46; Rom. 2:6-11; 1 Thes. 2:13-16**).

E. All Deserted Me (vs. 16-18)

Some find difficulty here but the "all" here likely refers to a class of individuals as in **2 Tim. 1:15**. Probably indicating that all who had opportunity to defend him in his first trial (**Acts 23-25**) failed to do so, it does not likely mean every human being on earth abandoned him.

F. Prisca, Aquilla and the Household of Onesiphorus (vs. 19)

The same as in **Acts 18; Rom. 16:3-5 and 1 Cor. 16:19**, Priscilla and Aquilla were beloved and trusted co-workers. Onesiphorus risked himself to minister to Paul (**2 Tim. 1:16-18**).