

July 28, 2019

2 Timothy 3:12-17, 4:1-8

ENDURING

Introduction. The incredible call of leadership is that it involves giving yourself for the maturity of those you lead or disciple. This is difficult in that leaders must lead saints to not only desire truth but to be able to stand on their own in contending for the truth. Before Timothy is a massive test of dealing with false teaching and bringing saints to reflecting maturity (1 Timothy 1:3-4) and what is required to accomplish this is nothing short of diligence to the Word of God (v.15). This diligence is to be reflected in Timothy working and laboring with all that he has - doing his utmost best - in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, to finish the race set before him. His study of the Word is to be disciplined in order that he may be able to discern not only truth from error but also those who belong to the Lord and those who do not.

PERSECUTION IS COMING (2 Tim. 3:12-13). Taking a stand for anything demands siding against something that not everyone will agree with. Standing for the Lord and living for His glory not only opposes the norms culture, but because of this, will invite suffering. This section begins with Paul highlighting his life for the Lord along with his varied and many sufferings for the gospel he has endured. Paul is the object lesson of what Timothy (and all who desire to live godly) should expect (2 Timothy 3:12). It is not that Paul is saying that we should seek after suffering for suffering sake. It does not mean that we should be negatively antagonistic against the culture in an effort to *bring* suffering. Paul is saying that with our diligence to live for the glory and honor of the Lord by behaving as a contrast society to the broader culture the enemy will attack us. Herein is a valuable implication that Paul is teaching us that we would do well to remember: the enemy is not scared or afraid of our verbal confession of Christ but of our total life submission to His Lordship. Imposters (or those who pose as Christians) will be increasingly discerned by in their progression in evil (2 Timothy 3:13), but those who are godly will be recognized by their suffering (2 Timothy 3:12).

GET EQUIPPED (2 Tim. 3:14-17). The aim of the enemy towards believers is the distortion of their faithful witness in the world. He cannot destroy their eternal life in Jesus but he can destroy our present usefulness for the kingdom through the distraction and discouragement of suffering. Paul tells Timothy that the inevitability of suffering and its false teaching can only be countered by minds and hearts equipped with the truthful, enduring, inerrant and all-sufficient Word of the living God (2 Timothy 3:14-15). Therefore, Paul is calling Timothy and all believers, to be more than readers of the Word. We must be devoted to it, allowing it to master our minds and to consume our affections so that we might be fully equipped to live out His calling for our lives in this present age (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

PREACH HIS WORD (2 Tim. 4:1-4). Paul has called Timothy to be diligent in the Word, (2 Timothy 2:15) as well as devoted to the Word (2 Timothy 3:14-17) because the work of preaching is serious. The Lord is present and judgment is coming (2 Timothy 4:1). We are to be ready to proclaim the gospel at all times and modeling the virtues that reflect our Lord (2 Timothy 4:2; 2 Timothy 2:24). The urgency of Paul's command is rooted in the end time

reality of the growing demand for false teaching and the corresponding need to protect the faithful from being led astray (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

FINISH WELL (2 Tim. 4:5-8). When I ran my first 5k the hardest part was the last mile and at the last half mile I felt like death and quitting was a real possibility! I only finished being driven by being so close to the goal. This is what Paul is telling Timothy in these final words. Paul is always a drink offering; his blood being spilt for the honor of God and in short order, through execution (2 Timothy 4:6). He finished, amid persecutions and sufferings because the crown, the prize, was ever before him, energizing him when difficulties made him despair of life (2 Timothy 4:8-8; 2 Corinthians 1:8.9). Timothy is to model his mentor, his father in the faith. He must finish *his* race, and, like Paul, see his life as an offering. Willingly enduring suffering and being aggressive in spreading the gospel to as much as possible to those who have never heard (2 Timothy 4:5).