

THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH

II Timothy 4:1-8

Step Number Ten - Passion: Pleasing You Is My Ruling Passion

We are at Step number 10. Passion: Pleasing You Is My Ruling Passion.

Paul is getting ready to die at the present time and for Timothy this is very traumatic.

This is a passage that you have probably heard preached at funerals.

It is a passage that you many times hear summarizing somebody's life.

It is their legacy; it is the statement they make.

In our study of 2 Timothy, we have come to the final chapter, chapter 4.

This is Paul's FINAL CHARGE to young Timothy.

He also WRITES HIS OWN EULOGY in this very emotional passage.

Paul may be an old man who is dying but there is still fire in his bones.

What I am asking you today is how passionate are you in your relationship with the Lord Jesus?

Do you really love him with a passion?

That is the critical key.

We will not make a fantastic finish
without a passionate love for the Lord Jesus.

For Timothy, this is his UPPER ROOM EXPERIENCE,
because the great apostle is getting ready to go home.

This is Paul's LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

Step #10 in the TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH
is:

Passion: Pleasing You is My Ruling Passion.

Our KEY VERSE is verse 2.

The older we get the more intense our PASSION and
PARTICIPATION should become about Jesus Christ and His
personal agenda.

Jesus said in:

John 9:4

*“As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me.
Night is coming, when no one can work.”*

Let's look at the eight verses we have in today's study:

Verse 1: *“I am charging you in the presence of God and of
Christ Jesus, the one who is about to be judging the living and
the dead and by His appearing and His kingdom.”*

Paul is making his final appeal and charge to young Timothy,
in view of his impending death.

He is making this charge:

“IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND OF CHRIST JESUS.”

There is a **THREE-FOLD REMINDER** of what is just ahead:

1. This charge is **“IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND OF CHRIST JESUS WHO IS ABOUT TO BE JUDGING THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.”**
2. **HE IS COMING AGAIN!**
3. **“HIS KINGDOM”**—this time when we will rule and reign with Christ.

“[Timothy] *I AM CHARGING YOU IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND OF CHRIST JESUS, THE ONE WHO IS ABOUT TO BE JUDGING THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.*” The One who’s coming again and the One who is going to set up **“HIS KINGDOM.”**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German pastor who just before the liberation at the end of World War II was hanged by Nazi Germany because as a pastor he was against Hitler and against Fascism and Nazism and all of that stuff and they hung him just days before the liberation in 1945. He wrote these words:

**“Alone you stood before God when he called you;
alone you had to answer that call;
alone you had to struggle and pray;
and alone you will die and give an account to God.”**

That is reality.
This is serious but that is the way it is.

Okay, what is the charge?
You know when you want to say something real fast and you want to be sure you get it across what do you do?
You shout about five commands to save time.
You have done it with your kids.

Well that is what Paul does here.

Look at the five commands in verse 2,
V. 2 *“Preach the word, hold yourself in readiness when it is convenient and when it is inconvenient, reprove, rebuke, exhort with unlimited patience and teaching.”*

There it is, five things, let us look at them a little closer.

Command #1: This judge is coming to set up his kingdom. *I am charging you in His presence and in the presence of God the Father to preach the word.*

“Preach the word.”
Life answers are in the word.

Do you remember where we ended last week?
Those last two verses, *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, it is God breathed and it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God (what purpose) may be fully mature and fully equipped for every good work.”* When you have the tools of the word of God you are equipped for the ministry that God has for you.

That is why you learn the word. That is why you are in it, soaking it up and reading it daily so you have what you need as a tool to communicate.

Command #2: “*Hold yourself in readiness when it is convenient and when it is inconvenient.*”

All he is saying is be alert, be ready, and press home the word on all occasions.

One writer explained this phrase by saying you either take or make your opportunities. If you get one take it, if you do not get one make it.

In other words, take action now realizing you do not have forever to communicate with those you love.

It is “*when it is convenient and when it is inconvenient.*”

Command #3: The word “*reprove*” means when somebody is teaching error, reprove them.

Show them chapter and verse.

Show them where they are in error.

Use the word to reprove. Study and then have an answer from the scripture for those things.

Command #4: “Rebuke.” When you see someone living in sin and compromising and you know biblically that it is sin, it is time to rebuke. And say, “Christ died for this. You are not glorifying him by living in this way.”

You are rebuking.

Command #5: “Exhort with unlimited patience and teaching.” Now that word “*exhort*” can also be translated encourage.

Whatever your temperament is – if you have the gift of mercy and you are passionate and loving and concerned then come softly but come with the book.

Take your bible and use it to encourage.

Now this happens to be the key verse to Step #10. **Passion: Pleasing You Is My Ruling Passion.**

When you think of the word passion, most of us think of passion between lovers, the husband and the wife. That is a very limited definition of the word.

The word in the dictionary “passion” means intense emotion. It means intense enthusiasm for something.

Really what Paul is telling Timothy is the time is so urgent you need to crank it up a notch.

In view of the judgment, in view of the coming, and in view of the kingdom—get busy and do not wait until a more convenient time.

Timothy, do not lose your passion for the Lord. Keep that fire burning and preach the word. Be worthy and available at all times. Reprove, rebuke, and exhort.

Verse 3

V. 3 “For the time will come when they will not listen willingly to wholesome instruction, But after their own desires, they will accumulate to themselves a great many teachers who are tickling their ears.”

Here Paul states the REASON for the charge and the importance of it:

“FOR THE TIME WILL COME,” Paul says, and is probably already present, with many of the difficulties they have been encountering in the Ephesian church.

“FOR THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THEY WILL NOT LISTEN WILLINGLY TO WHOLESOME INSTRUCTION.”

Ezekiel 33:30-32

“As for you, son of man, your countrymen are talking together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, saying to each other, ‘Come and hear the message that has come from the Lord.’ My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.”

The word “BUT” forms the CONTRAST:

“BUT AFTER THEIR OWN DESIRES, THEY WILL ACCUMULATE.”

“ACCUMULATE” means to “heap up.”

“THEY WILL ACCUMULATE TO THEMSELVES [FALSE TEACHERS] A GREAT MANY TEACHERS WHO ARE TICKLING THEIR EARS.”

Verse 4

v. 4 *“And they will turn away their ears from the truth and will wander off into myths.”*

When these *“teachers who are tickling their ears”* begin to speak, the response will be that the audience:

They will not listen to truth
and when they do not listen to truth
they will wander off into that which is false.

You know it is pretty sobering when you realize that you and I have a responsibility to pay attention to who we listen to and whether or not what we are listening to is in accordance with divine truth.

And you have to know enough about it to know whether or not you are hearing it.

I think one of the saddest stories in the whole of the Old Testament is in 1 Kings 13.

This prophet was told to go and give a message, not to eat any meals, but to leave Dodge after he gave his message.

Now listen to what happens.

1 Kings 13:18-19

... “I too am a prophet [an old man said in the city], as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the Lord: Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.” (But he was lying to him.) So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.

Skip down to verses 23 and 24:

“When the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the prophet who had brought him back saddled his donkey for him. As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and killed him, and his body was thrown down on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it.”

When the old prophet heard the news of his death, he said in 1 Kings 13:26:

... “It is the man of God who defied the word of the Lord. The Lord has given him over to the lion, which has mauled him and killed him, as the word of the Lord had warned him.”

Now that is a tough story.

But the thing you get out of it

is that you better be paying attention

to what the Lord says and be obedient to that

and not let somebody be tickling your ears

with some fancy talk that allows you to be selfish.

And to live for the here and now rather than in view of eternity and a passionate love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Just remember the sad, sad consequences of failing to be obedient.

Verse 5

V. 5 “But you [do four things] be self-possessed under all circumstances, bear hardship patiently, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

If there is ever a four-prong statement that is relevant for today, there it is

your job description.

Paul's final words of exhortation to Timothy are four little bullets and that is what you and I should be consumed with.

1. ***“Be self-possessed under all circumstances.”***

Let's define it like this: wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove, keep your head screwed on straight, be under control, do not panic, stay in there.

2. ***“Bear hardship patiently.”*** You are going to suffer, bear it. Do you remember when Paul told young Timothy in chapter 2 he said, thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. In other words, be a good soldier and bear your hardship patiently.

3. ***“Do the work of an evangelist.”*** Wake up every morning singing rescue the perishing, care for the dying, snatch them in pity from the sin and the grave. Weep for the erring ones, lift up the fallen, tell them of Jesus who is mighty to save. That is our responsibility. That is the number one thing we do everyday. God, increase my ministry, my influence, give me an opportunity as in the prayer of Jabez to speak to somebody today about the Lord Jesus Christ.
“Do the work of an evangelist.”

4. ***“Fulfill your ministry.”*** Get your job done. I have finished mine, now you do yours. Fulfill the responsibility that you have before the Lord.

Now when you get to verses 6, 7, and 8, here is the eulogy. Here are the final words of the apostle to Timothy with regard to his present circumstances.

Verse 6

v. 6 *“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.”*

This is strong.

He has given the charge.

He has said *“but you”* and it is now *“For I.”*

Now lets take that phrase

“I am poured out as a drink offering.”

There are no Levitical instructions on a drink offering. It is simply a cup of wine that is poured over the burning sacrifice.

What happens to wine when it is poured over a burning sacrifice?

It goes up in steam.

And that is exactly what Paul wants.

He wants his disappearance to take place and for Christ, the fragrance, to be left behind.

Now he used that same picture in Phil. 2:17 when he said:

“But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.”

That is okay because in verse 23 he said:

“I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better.”

You fulfill your ministry, I am finishing mine.

Would you notice one other thing.

Death is a departure it is not perishing.

You are going to be with someone.
You are departing.

Let's talk about the word departure for a moment?
It only occurs twice.
Phil. 1:23: "*I am having a desire to depart.*"
That is the verb form of it.

And here "*the time of my departure,*"
a noun form of the same word.

That word has so many great meanings to it.
It will bring you a great deal of comfort
when you go to the next funeral for a believer.

First of all, it pictures the yoke of the oxen
being taken off.
He is being unyoked.
It is the picture of a prisoner who is being set free.
It is the picture of a boat that is ready for a cruise
and it sets sail.

Imagine when you see a boat set sail and you watch it until
you cannot see it on the horizon what do you say? She is gone.
But what are they saying on the other side?
Here she comes. That is great.

That is the picture of what we are talking about.

*"I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the
time of my departure has come."*

I desire to depart and to be with Christ
for it is very much better.

Verse 7

V. 7 *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.”*

These words reminded me of David's final words to Solomon:,” 1 Kings 2:2-3 *“I am about to go the way of all the earth,”* he said. *“So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go.”*

In verse 6 Paul has focused on the present.

In verse 7 he focuses on the past in those three little phrases.

1. He is saying *“I fought a good fight.”*

The emphasis is on the word *good*.

As he evaluates his fight he is saying, you know,

I did a pretty good job. I have had a good fight.

He has fought sin, Satan, and the system for all these years.

And war on three fronts has gotten him but he says

I sure fought a good one.

That is a good feeling inside to be able to feel when you get toward the end.

2. *“I finished the course.”*

Now I do not even have to tell you that.

Over and over in the scripture he likens life to a race. Phil. 3:14, Gal. 5:7, 1 Cor. 9:24, Heb. 12:1.

3. And he says *“I have kept the faith.”*

I did not wander off into myths.
I did not forsake the Lord.
I did not let suffering affect the relationship.
I have kept the faith unto the end.

There is Paul. All the suffering, all the beatings,
all the shipwrecks, all of the anger,
all of the hatred, that is gone, and Timothy
I am sitting here a contented old man
ready for my departure because of a work
that has been accomplished.

One writer says,
“Footprints on the sands of time are not made by sitting
down.”

That brings us to our final verse today.
And we come to verse 8.
We looked at the present in verse 6,
the past in verse 7, and now he turns his thoughts
to the future and our final thoughts.

*V. 8 “In the future there is reserved for me,
the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous
judge [who is going to judge the living and the dead] will
award to me on that day and not only to me but also to all who
have loved His appearing.”*

The Lord is going to honor this task
that he has completed.

Have you ever received one of those deals in the mail where it
says you have won \$500,000 and you can now think about
what you are going to do with all of this money you have.

All you need to do is sign this form and mail it in and everything is going to be wonderful.

Then you read the fine print down there that you can hardly read and it says you have 1 in 80 million possibilities of winning this.

Would you notice the apostle Paul does not say there might be laid up for me.

He does not say there is a slight chance it is laid up for me.

He is saying there is laid up for me.

It has your name on it.

Get excited about it and be thrilled.

Now there are 12 lessons that come out of this study.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: Can you say to the Lord right now, “Lord, pleasing You is my ruling passion”?

LESSON #2: Only passions, great passions, can elevate the soul to great things.

LESSON #3: The runner who puts the last ounce of effort into the race feels the glorious satisfaction of having given everything to the moment.

LESSON #4: Are you carrying out Paul’s five-fold charge to Timothy in your life today? “Preach the word, hold yourself in readiness when it is convenient and when it is inconvenient, reprove, rebuke, exhort with unlimited patience and teaching” (verse 2).

LESSON #5: Are you endeavoring to be obedient to the four things Paul says to Timothy in verse 5? “But you be self-possessed under all circumstances, bear hardship patiently, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

LESSON #6: In view of your impending departure in death, are you living by the words of the Psalmist in “numbering your days and applying your heart to wisdom”? (Psalm 90:12).

LESSON #7: How concerned are you for the lost and doing “the work of an evangelist”? (verse 5).

LESSON #8: What are you doing presently to reach out and touch the lives of others?

LESSON #9: Are you consistent in your walk with God?

LESSON #10: If you died right now, could you say, “I fought, I finished, I kept”? (verse 7).

LESSON #11: Are you looking forward to His coming?

LESSON #12: Your departure gate and flight time have already been scheduled on the great computers in the sky.

STUDIES IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

“The Twelve Steps to a Fantastic Finish”

Key verse 2:15 — *“Make every effort to present yourself to God, approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path.”*

STEP NUMBER 10 – **Passion: Pleasing You is My Ruling Passion**

2 Timothy 4:1-8

Key verse 4:2

Notes

v. 1 I am charging you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, the one who is about to be judging the living and the dead and by His appearing and His kingdom.

v. 2 Preach the word, hold yourself in readiness when it is convenient and when it is inconvenient, reprove, rebuke, exhort with unlimited patience and teaching.

v. 3 For the time will come when they will not listen willingly to wholesome instruction, But after their own desires, they will accumulate to themselves a

great many teachers who are tickling their ears.

v. 4 And they will turn away their ears from the truth and will wander off into myths.

v. 5 But you be self-possessed under all circumstances, bear hardship patiently, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

v. 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

v. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.

v. 8 In the future there is reserved for me, the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will award to me on that day and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 2 Timothy 4:1-8 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.
2. What is the Lord about to do, according to verse 1?
3. What is Timothy charged to do, according to verse 2?
4. How is the culture going to respond in the last days to the teaching of the Word, according to verses 3 & 4?
5. Outline what Timothy is supposed to do in this situation, according to verse 5.
6. What does Paul say about his present circumstances, according to verse 6?
7. What three things does Paul say about his ministry, according to verse 7?
8. What does Paul have to look forward to in the future, according to verse 8?
9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?