

THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH

II Timothy 4:16-22

Step Number Twelve - Finisher: You Fought and You Finished

We come to Step #12: 2 Tim. 4:16-22.

Our word today is Finisher: You Fought and You Finished. Now when we do an inductive study there is a verse that encapsulates the whole book.

And that verse was 2 Tim. 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.”

Then each study is just one word through the 12 steps to make a fantastic finish.

We have said several times that

“Failure to prepare is preparation for failure”

and if you do not take these steps you cannot have the guarantee that you will hear well done, good and faithful servant – which is the desire of all of us.

We are going to be witnessing in our passage today the FANTASTIC FINISH of one of the great finishers, the APOSTLE PAUL.

Our KEY VERSE is verse 18.

We will FOCUS on this step when we get to verse 18.

It was Will Rogers who said,
“Don’t let yesterday use up too much of today.”

(Quotes & Idea Starters for Preaching & Teaching from Leadership Journal edited by Edward K. Rowell) Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. Copyright Christianity Today, Inc., 1996.

There are things you have to put behind you and get going if you are going to make a good finish. Paul understood that because in Phil. 3:13-14 he said: *“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”*

So Paul’s final statement is to finish with victory and to finish with dignity.

As we consider these final verses in our epistle, may our prayer be TWO-FOLD:

1. Lord, I long to finish well and
2. Lord, keep me from being an embarrassment to You in the finishing of my race.

Are you ready?

Let’s begin with the first of our seven verses, verse 16 .

V. 16 *“At my first defense no one stood with me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them.”*

Your key word in verses 16 and 17 is the word *“stood.”* You have *stood* in verse 16, *“no one stood with me,”* and you have *stood* in verse 17, *“the Lord stood with me.”*

One of the Greek writers paraphrased this phrase:

“No one stood by me as my advocate.” It is a legal term.

“AT MY FIRST DEFENSE NO ONE STOOD WITH ME, BUT ALL DESERTED ME.”

This word “DESERTED” takes us BACK to:

2 Timothy 4:10 (DAV)

“For Demas has deserted me, for love of the present world . . .”

All of these things that the Apostle is experiencing here in verse 16, the Lord Jesus also experienced.

You will remember that He came into Jerusalem that last time with great accolades, riding on the back of a donkey.

Thunderous praise was coming from the multitude as they were crying out saying:

“Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!” (Matthew 21:9).

It is just a short trip from Sunday to Thursday when, having been apprehended in the Garden of Gethsemane then on Friday we awaken to the cries of:

“Crucify him! Crucify him!”

Matthew 26:56

“But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.”

Then all the disciples left Him and fled.

Now what is your human response?
You want justice.

Paul's prayer-wish is expressed in the final phrase of verse 16:

“MAY IT NOT BE COUNTED AGAINST THEM.”

You see the exact same response on the part of Jesus in:

Luke 23:34

But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.”

This is also of true of STEPHEN as he was being stoned to death. His final words were recorded in:

Acts 7:60

*And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!”
And having said this, he fell asleep.*

You know the hard thing for me in ministry is to watch people listen and they know what they need to do but they keep putting it off.

You do not know how much time you have.
You can have a heart attack today sitting in these chairs and
be home in an instant.
Have a stroke and lose all comprehension and not be able to
fulfill all those intentions that you desire.

Death is very real and it does not just happen to others. It
happens to us and we must recognize that and be prepared for
it.

It is a certainty that it is going to happen.
It is just a question of how you are going to handle it and how
you are going to glorify God in your exit.
That is what we are talking about.
Finishing is our word.

Verse 17

*V. 17 "But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, in
order that through me the proclamation might be fully
proclaimed and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was
delivered out of the lion's mouth."*

Back in verse 16 we read:

"All deserted me."

Here, in verse 17, we read:

1. *The Lord stood with me.*
2. *The Lord strengthened me.*

Paul is bearing witness to the fact that in the
midst of this he sensed the Lord's:

PRESENCE and

POWER.

The Lord was faithful to “STAND” with him and to “STRENGTHEN” him.

Paul then states in verse 17 the PURPOSE in the Lord’s PRESENCE and POWER:

“IN ORDER THAT THROUGH ME THE PROCLAMATION MIGHT BE FULLY PROCLAIMED AND THAT ALL THE GENTILES MIGHT HEAR; AND I WAS DELIVERED OUT OF THE LION’S MOUTH.”

The PURPOSE is THREE-FOLD:

1. **“THROUGH ME THE PROCLAMATION MIGHT BE FULLY PROCLAIMED,”**
2. **“THAT ALL THE GENTILES MIGHT HEAR,”** and
3. **“I WAS DELIVERED OUT OF THE LION’S MOUTH.”**

The ultimate purpose is that the word might be spread through this experience.

The QUESTION is raised:

What does Paul mean when he says, **“I WAS DELIVERED OUT OF THE LION’S MOUTH”?**

There are those who would say it is the **ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE.**

Others say this is a reference to **NERO.**

Still others think this is a reference to **SATAN** because he is characterized as a *“roaring lion”* in **1 Peter 5: 8.**

It is probably none of these but is just a reference to:

PHYSICAL DEATH or SERIOUS DANGER.

Verse 18 is our key verse.

Basically, these are the final words because the rest of it is greetings.

V. 18 "The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom, to Him be the glory forever and ever, Amen."

WHAT A FANTASTIC FINISH!

WHAT A WAY TO GO OUT!

SINGING THE DOXOLOGY!

IT JUST DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THAT!

Haddon Robinson said, "*When we know God stands with us, it doesn't matter who stands against us.*"

Paul says, "*The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed.*" God is sovereign and Paul understands that.

He will deliver me from every evil deed and ultimately the major deliverance is going to be when I go to be with the Lord.

I guarantee you that, absent from the body is present with the Lord. That is why Paul is so triumphant and so victorious. His final word is, "*the Lord will deliver me.*"

William Cluberston said, “It is important to start right, but it is imperative to end well.”

And you must address your own mortality in order to be able to say you are a finisher, you fought and you finished. The way he does it here it just does not get any better.

Verse 19.

V. 19 *“Greet Prisca and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.”*

Paul in these remaining verses of the epistle is going to be mentioning NINE DIFFERENT NAMES of individuals.

Here in verse 19, he mentions some of his very favorite folks.

These are super-great homefolks who have stood behind the scenes and have done so much over the years in ministry with the Apostle Paul.

Acts 18:2

“And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them,”

Acts 18:18

“And Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were

Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow.”

Acts 18:26

“and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”

Romans 16:3-5

“Greet Prisca and Aquila my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaphroditus my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.”

1 Corinthians 16:19

“The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.”

2 Timothy 1:16-18 (DAV)

“May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my being a prisoner; but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me, and found me—may the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day—and what services he rendered at Ephesus you are knowing very well.”

Verse 20, *“Erastus remained in Corinth, but Trophimus, being ill, I left behind in Miletus.”*

“Erastus remained in Corinth.”

He evidently was the city treasurer in Corinth but he traveled some in ministry with the apostle.

“But Trophimus, being ill, I left behind in Miletus.”

Now Trophimus was a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

They needed somebody of great reputation to go with Paul to take the offering to the saints in Jerusalem. And Trophimus is charged with this responsibility along with some of the other guys.

When they get there Paul is so excited about showing a Gentile, Trophimus, around town that a bunch of the Jews watched Paul showing him and they trumped up an accusation saying that Trophimus went into the no-no place in the temple.

And that precipitated the riot when Paul almost lost his life if you remember.

That was Trophimus.

Now Trophimus leaves Jerusalem, is going with Paul to Rome, but gets sick in Miletus.

He is 30 some miles from Ephesus and he decides to leave him there and let him go home.

Now if Paul has such dramatic gifts and powers of healing why didn't he at this point just speak the words and heal Trophimus so he could get on with the ministry? Simply because that is not the issue. God has a greater plan for Trophimus and it does not involve being in Rome at this time.

Acts 19:22

“And having sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.”

Verse 21

V. 21 *“Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus and Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren are sending greetings to you.”*

This verse TAKES US BACK to verse 9:

“come to me quickly.”

Now it is:

“MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO COME BEFORE WINTER.”

“The wind, the rain, and the cold are on their way and I would really love to have the cloak as well.”

We read a description of the WINTER WEATHER in:

Acts 27:20

“And since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.”

Acts 28:1-3

“And when they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta. And the natives showed us extraordinary kindness; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all. But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand.”

What a tremendous testimony this is.

Right in the very eye of the storm, there are those who are remaining faithful to the Lord and would, at this time, send their greetings to Timothy.

Paul has greetings from:

“EUBULUS AND PUDENS AND LINUS AND CLAUDIA.”

Then he makes the statement:

“AND ALL THE BRETHREN ARE SENDING GREETINGS TO YOU.”

Now our last verse – verse 22:

V. 22 “The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.”

Now that looks impersonal but let me make it personal.

The Lord be with your spirit Timothy and I hope and pray that you are going to get here.

That grace be with you (plural); that is you, that is me.

This letter was meant and designed by the apostle in the final word to be a letter that goes to a lot wider circulation than just to Timothy.

The grace of the Lord be with you.

Do not fold those papers. We are not done yet.

Now we have come to the CONCLUSION of our study of 2 Timothy.

The Twelve Steps to a Fantastic Finish.

Let's take a quick review!

- 1. Integrity: Getting It All Together.**
- 2. Conviction: Here I Stand, God Help Me**
- 3. Courage: I Am Willing To Pay The Price**
- 4. Legacy: What Am I Passing On?**
- 5. Perseverance: In Single-Minded Steadfastness, I Will Stay The Course.**
- 6. Focused: This One Thing I Do**
- 7. Satanic Seduction: I Am Keeping My Eyes On Jesus
(What a study, the night of the horrible bombing that we had experienced.)**
- 8. Counter Culture: Lord, Where You Lead Me I Will Follow**
- 9. Faithful: May He Find Me Faithful**
- 10. Passion: Pleasing You Is My Ruling Passion**
- 11. Servanthood: May I Hear "Well Done"**
- 12. Finisher: You Fought And You Finished**

Do you want to finish well?

Maybe you are not going to be a Bill Bright or a Billy Graham but you are going to finish what God has called you to do.

Listen to the words of that great old hymn:

**I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I'm onward bound,**

**“Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”
My heart has no desire to stay
Where doubts arise and fears dismay;
Though some may dwell where these abound,
My prayer, my aim, is higher ground.
I want to live above the world,
Though Satan’s darts at me are hurled;
For faith has caught the joyful sound,
The song of saints on higher ground.
I want to scale that utmost height;
And catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I’ll pray till heaven I’ve found,
“Lord, lead me on to higher ground.”**

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

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: The Lord delights in those who finish well.

LESSON #2: Failure to prepare is preparation for failure.

LESSON #3: Are you prepared in your heart to stand alone if it is necessary?

LESSON #4: Are you free with your forgiveness for those who fail you?

LESSON #5: We can always count on the Lord being with us in every situation of life.

LESSON #6: You can always count on the Lord’s presence and power.

LESSON #7: He will always be there to deliver His own, whether in life or in death.

LESSON #8: Paul is praising the Lord in the prison, he is singing in the storm.

LESSON #9: When we know God stands with us, it does not matter who stands against us.

LESSON #10: It is good for us to be concerned that when it comes our time to die, we will be triumphant and victorious witnesses for our Lord and Savior.

LESSON #11: God is available to meet our needs through the people who are around us.

LESSON #12: It is good for us to make preparations to have a message as part of our legacy that lives on after we are gone.

**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.*”

**Finisher: You Fought and You
Finished**

**STEP NUMBER 12 – Finisher: You Fought and You
Finished**

2 Timothy 4:16-22

Key verse 4:18

Notes

v. 16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them.

v. 17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully proclaimed and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the

Lion's mouth.

v. 18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever, Amen.

v. 19 Greet Prisca and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.

v. 20 Erastus remained in Corinth, but Trophimus, being ill, I left behind in Miletus.

v. 21 Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus and Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren are sending greetings to you.

v. 22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 2 Timothy 24:16-22 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.
2. How does Paul characterize his court appearance in verse 16?
3. What did the Lord do for Paul, according to verse 17?
4. What was Paul's number one priority and concern, according to verse 17?
5. What two things will the Lord do for the apostle, according to verse 18?
6. What three people does Paul want to Timothy to "greet," according to verse 19?
7. What happened to Trophimus, according to verse 20?
8. What does Paul ask Timothy to do, according to verse 21?
9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?
10. What lesson have you learned from this study?