

Having given warnings and encouragement Paul now issues a solemn charge before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Man in glory at God's side. A charge to each believer today not only to Timothy then.

Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season—ready at all times in all situations, ready even when not expecting an opportunity.

Ready to reprove, rebuke, exhort, actively engaging in meeting spiritual needs of others and fending off the attacks of enemies of the cross.

Ready to do so with all longsuffering, and doctrine.

There is no authorization or permission given for traditions, human reasonings or speculations to supplement or substitute for the inspired scriptures.

Paul forecasts a time when men will not endure sound doctrine but seek for teachers with doctrine more to their liking. That time surely has come! Centuries ago it came and continually prevails despite repeated revivals among God's faithful. Beware of such teaching, don't fall for it. We must test everything we hear, 1Corinthians 14:29; 1Thessalonians 5:19-21. Avoid those who do not teach the truth of scripture; avoid those who bring other teaching, fables or myths; warn others about these persons and when appropriate confront them.

And we must recognize and encourage those bringing sound teaching and a sound gospel that they not become disheartened. Help them. We must be ready, anytime, convenient or not, to present the truth from scripture or defend it with scripture. Remember scripture itself is the sword of the Spirit, Ephesians 6:17. One does not need to defend a sword. God's word is itself sharper than any two edged sword, Hebrews 4:12 **Always Use It.**

Watch. Be alert, not asleep. Watch for wandering sheep. Watch for wolves sneaking in unawares. Watch for the weak and sickly physically, emotionally and spiritually. Watch for wolves in sheep's clothing arising in the midst of the assembly. Watch for untapped pent up spiritual gift in timid brothers. Watch that the little ones not be stumbled or stolen away by appealing teachers.

Be ready to endure afflictions. This may seem to be a remote possibility in this country, but may not continue as more and more feel the liberty to scoff at God and thumb their noses at his righteousness and to belittle and dishonor His Son. Nations rise like mountainous waves of the sea and come crashing down foaming out their own shame.

Do the work of an evangelist. Not many are gifted evangelists and fewer are faithfully using their gift for the Lord. But each believer can do the work of an evangelist. You shine in your corner and I in mine. Live a faithful, consistent Christian life, a word or two at the right time and place, working at Bible camp, have a backyard children's class, give a tract, visit a sick or needy neighbor, let us do what is set before us. The time is short and salvation of the

lost depends upon them hearing the word.

Make full proof of what you have been equipped and gifted to do for the Lord. If you see a need you likely are equipped to meet that need and should prayerfully attend to it. God gives each of us insights and initiative to undertake actions consistent with the ministry He has assigned us. Carry on what the Lord began through Paul.

Paul has largely completed the assignment given him by the Lord. He is ready to go, ready to be offered, not just waste away and die. He thinks of it as a libation to be poured out for Christ's glory, like wine on cooking meat.

Philippians 2:17 Yea, and if I be offered [Gr. poured forth] upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

4689 spendw spendo, verb; to pour out as a libation, i.e. (figuratively) to devote (one's life or blood, as a sacrifice) ("spend")!--(be ready to) be offered.

*Paul has fought the good fight, combated the good combat, not as in a battlefield combat but as in a medal contest in the Olympic games. Let us do so too.

*He has finished his course. Finishing a race within bounds of a course laid out by another, Hebrews 12:1-2; 1Corinthians 9:24; Philippians 3:13-14. Let us do so too.

*He has kept the faith. Watched over, preserved the whole body of scriptural truth he was given to be cherished, observed, and preserved. Let us do so too.

He looks forward to a marvelous reward, **a crown of righteousness**, for faithful completion of his life's work given him by the Lord. A victor's wreath akin to an Olympic gold today. One that has been laid up for him awaiting "that day" when it will be presented personally by the Lord. This award is not simply a sentimental gesture by the Lord toward one who has demonstrated true devotion. It is given by the Righteous Judge. It is a righteous reward based upon clear and just judgement of his deeds for the Master. Works done for Him by Paul and all those **who love His appearing**. What appearing? The future public appearing of the Lord Jesus with His saints occurs at the beginning of His reign over the earth. He comes earlier, secretly for His Bride and the Old Testament saints. Then, after the marriage supper of the Lamb, He appears with His saints to conquer the world and take up His Kingdom. Then He presents awards to each of us, another incentive for our faithful service of love for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Yes, we desire to be with Him, but we also yearn for **His glorious public manifestation before all creation**. We lay up treasures in heaven with that in mind. For He will be glorified in them then. It isn't as though we look forward to receiving "our medals" but that He will be then glorified by the display of what we have sacrificially done for Him in His name with no thought of present recognition. It is as Jesus did for the joy set before Him, Hebrews 12:1-3.

By Ron Canner.