

2 Timothy 4:7-8

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[0 : 00] Let us turn now to the second epistle of Paul to Timothy, chapter 4, reading from the beginning.

2 Timothy, chapter 4, at the beginning, I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing in his kingdom.

3 Peter, chapter 5, verse 1.

Make full proof of thy ministry, especially the words that follow, for I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. 4 Peter, verse 1.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing.

[1 : 39] 5 Peter, verse 1.

Perhaps the information will come to you with a measure of relief, that God willing, next Sabbath evening, I hope to conclude our studies in the second letter of Paul to Timothy.

5 Peter, verse 1. I often wonder whether it is profitable to be in our situation engaged in a study of a book or letter of this nature.

5 Peter, verse 1. This is the 11th Sabbath evening, which I have stood here and tried to speak from this letter, apart from one digression into Paul's letter to Philemon.

And as I said, God willing, next Sabbath evening, I think, will be the 12th, that is three months, and in studying this letter.

[3 : 10] I must say that for myself, it is difficult for me to believe that three months have passed since we started looking at it from the beginning. But in my situation, one has to assess whether for us as a congregation this kind of approach is profitable or not.

I know that for those who love the Lord and who love his word and who want to get to grips with the teachings of the word of God, I believe that this kind of approach is profitable.

But one must not be selfish, and we have to recognize that there are many who attend the services here who themselves would be the first to claim that they are not converted to Christ, nor are they regular readers or students of the word of God.

And I hope that if they are not, perhaps too long, perhaps too long, I hope that they will forgive me.

And if God spares me, I will take that into account as I consider how best to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ to this congregation.

[4 : 36] We now come to Paul's last known words before he left this scene of time.

Paul's valedictory charge to Timothy. It behoves, as said, a great New Testament commentator E.K. Simpson, who incidentally lectured in the Free Church College at the beginning of the century, it behoves as he says to tread here softly for we are privileged to listen to the farewell message of the apostle of the Gentiles with its interwoven chords of lamentation and triumph.

The great heart of the primitive church issues his parting counsel and warnings not only to his bosom disciple Timothy but to all members of the Christian church thereafter.

A note of deeper solemnity strikes upon our ears in this final trumpet call. And you know yourselves that it is always interesting to hear what people said in their last moments before they left this scene of time.

We very often hear people referring to what men and women have said in their dying moments.

Well the Bible records for us what Paul wrote.

[6 : 21] And as far as we know well for us anyway this is the last things that Paul the last words that he did write. And in them he addresses in verse 1 this charge to Timothy.

I charge thee. And the use that he makes of this word is a very solemn one indeed. It's almost like a judge charging someone standing before him with counsel that he must never ever forget.

Now we're to remember here Timothy's position. We're to remember that day he was living in very very trying and dangerous times and that he was called upon to preach the gospel in such difficult situations.

But the motive that Paul uses here to encourage Timothy in his preaching is this. Remember he says that I'm speaking to you before God and the judge and the Lord Jesus Christ.

You shall judge the quick and the dead that is appearing in his kingdom. Preach the word. Be instant and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

[7 : 44] He counsels him to preach because it is against the backdrop of the coming judgment that he's living and that he is preaching.

The Lord, he says, is going to come. He's going to appear. We've come across this word already. The epiphany of our Lord, the appearing of that, the visible appearance of that which at the moment is hidden to our view.

And we know that the New Testament teaches very clearly that he is the Lord Jesus Christ. He's enthroned at God's right hand. And God the Father has given all judgment, as Psalm 72 tells us, into the hands of the Son.

And the final step in the exaltation of Jesus, as the shorter Catholicism indicates, is that he's going to come again to judge the world.

And that second coming of Christ and the judgment is very much at the heart of apostolic teaching and preaching. And we came across it in the passage we read in the Acts of the Apostles and in 2 Corinthians chapter 5.

[8 : 57] Now what he says to him is this. Let the glory which is going to accompany the coming of Christ as judge, when the quick and the dead, that is those who are alive at his coming, and those who have died.

When the dead will be raised in the resurrection, and when all, as the New Testament tells, will appear before the judgment seat of Christ in the presence of that glory.

And no one spoke more clearly about it than Jesus, particularly in Matthew chapter 25. Let the thought of the glory accompanying the second coming of Christ inspire you to live and to preach.

Now I think that it is true that in days gone by, the thought of the second coming of Jesus was far more before the minds of people than it is today.

I think together with many of the things that we have lost sight of, we seem to have lost sight of this great fact that each one of us is going to appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

[10 : 12] Well, he says to Timothy, I charge you in view of the fact that the Lord is coming as judge and coming in the glory of his kingdom.

See that you preach the gospel, be the word, be instant in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering.

Now here he tells him in this verse what is how he is to preach. He is to proclaim the word. He is to articulate the gospel of the grace of God.

And I think that when you look at the New Testament church and its functioning, and in the way in which it sought to bring the gospel to bear upon people, you will agree readily that this was the method that was adopted.

It was the preaching of the word, the heralding, the proclaiming of the gospel of Christ.

[11 : 21] They were to communicate the gospel by preaching it. Preach the word. And this was the content of the preaching.

It was the word. They were to communicate nothing else. They had no other message to give. They were to invent no other message. They were to come with nothing else.

But the way in which the Old Testament prophets came to the people, Thus saith the Lord. And as you preach it, he says, Be instant in season and out of season.

Be prepared to proclaim this word at all times. And as you proclaim it, proclaim it with eagerness, with urgency.

Be willing to proclaim. Be earnest in your proclamation of it. And make the proclamation of it relevant. Whenever you're called at whatever time or in whatever circumstance or whatever area, to whatever kind of person, make the gospel relevant to them.

[12 : 43] Perhaps again, this is where we as preachers of the gospel are really failing. And at times failing miserably.

I don't want to labor on this because this kind of situation is not the one in which this perhaps application ought to be made.

But if you and I were all preachers, in one sense we are all witnesses unto the gospel. In one sense we are all articulating it.

We are all bringing it to bear upon those with whom we come in contact. And it should never be done. I don't believe it should be done in any sort of slovenly, easygoing way.

I would never counsel anyone who preached the gospel with a pitch with his hand in his pocket. To preach it as though it was just off the shoulder.

[13 : 45] As though it wasn't meaningful or relevant. R.L. Dabney, the great American theologian, said that this is the greatest message the world has ever heard.

And it is worth telling well. You know what's that great story teller? Well, those of us who try to articulate the gospel should try to present it as best we can.

We should do it eagerly, willingly, earnestly, and with relevance.

Be absorbed in it, he said. And be absorbed with it. Always be on duty, be ready. As someone has put it, this is a biblical appeal against laziness in the things of God.

And, as he puts it here, be in view of the fact that Christ is coming in the glory of his kingdom.

[14 : 55] You, he says, you are going out into a world which has its own glory. Which glory is in itself. Which has no time for the glory of Christ or the coming glory.

But that coming glory will eclipse all other glories. And as you recognize that, be caught up in it. Be inspired by it. And be prepared in the face of every difficulty to preach it. Let that thought, he said, stimulate you to constant action.

And as you preach it, preach it so that you enlighten the mind. That's the meaning of the word reprove. Preach it so that you convince the conscience.

That is the meaning of the word rebuke. Preach it. Exhorting people. Bring the comfort of the truth to bear upon people who need comfort and who need encouragement.

[15 : 58] Preach it with all longsuffering and doctrine. Let it be full of meat. Full of teaching. And up, teach it patiently.

Preach it lovingly. And this might be the most difficult part of all in preaching. What's he saying? He's saying just an effect. Make sure that there's content in what you say.

Bring teaching to bear in your preaching. And make sure that you apply it to every single person before you.

And that is what preaching surely is all about. But we leave that because there's a time and a place perhaps for that application to be made.

Then he goes on in verses 3 to 5 to speak again about the contemporary sin. For he says the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.

[16 : 59] But after their own lusts they will heed themselves teachers. And listen to this. Having each. And listen to the emphasis. And the repetition. Having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth.

And shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things and do reflection to the work of an evangelist. Make full proof of thy ministry. Now he has already.

We have already come across this in chapter 3. The picture is given of the contemporary sin. And as you look at what he says of his own time. And of coming times.

You cannot but say this. Well if there's anything at all that this world needs. It needs the message of the gospel. These were dark and difficult days.

These are dark and difficult days today. Then they resisted the truth. They refused to accept the truth. They ridiculed the truth. They called the truth an absurdity.

[18 : 01] It's the same today. In those days they preferred entertainment. To preaching and teaching.

It's the same today. There's nothing new under the sun. It wasn't even new in Paul's day. Long ago. In Ezekiel's day. When he preached during the captivity in Babylon.

Great crowds gathered to hear him at the riverside. They would send for him. Because. As they put it themselves. We like the way you speak. And they disobeyed.

They didn't listen to a word that he said. They didn't apply it to themselves. But they liked the way he presented it. And there are times today. When people just want entertainment.

They want to be entertained. And he goes on here to say. Their time will come when they'll have itching ears. They will turn away their ears. From the truth. What do they want to hear?

[19:01] Well it's not the truth. Itching ears means that. It means really. They want to hear something new. Something novel. Anything but the truth.

The more the statement the better. The more entertaining it would be for them. We've never heard this before. So God's word is replaced.

By the views. And by the interpretations. And by the beliefs. Of other people. And all this. Because there is this declension.

From the truth. Someone writing many years ago. And how relevant is it today. Said this. The taste for spiritual meat has waned.

And a craving for something more flattering. And palatable. Usurped its room. And I think this is true.

[20:04] To an alarming extent. Nowadays. That. People do. By and large. People don't want.

The teaching. Of. The truth. They do not want. Meaty. Exposition. And. Meaty. Deliverances. And people who. Claim. To have a. Some kind of. Understanding of other things. And a great intellect. It's amazing.

How they will allow their minds. To be engaged. In so many other things. And embrace. So many other things. That are difficult for many of us. To understand.

But when it comes. To the presentation. Of a doctrine of justification. By grace. Or by faith. Through grace. And sanctification. And redemption. And the atonement. And the incarnation.

[21:01] And the death. And the imputation of our sins. To Christ. And the voluntariness. Of his death. And the. The glory of the resurrection. And the. His session at the right hand.

And the second coming. All these things. Which are at the heart. Of Christian teaching. And gospel preaching. And ministry. They turn off.

They don't want that. And I think that we're living in a day. When. Someone giving his testimony. Is far more appealing.

To the masses. Than someone coming. And preaching. The gospel. And it shouldn't be like. I know there's a place for testimony. And I believe there's a real place for testimony.

But you and I ought to move on. From these things. As Paul tells. The writer. To the. As Paul tells them. In the epistle to Hebrews. We should. Move on. From first principles.

[22:02] And begin to deal. With other things. And may I say that. You people who have been converted for a few years. You young people. You ought now to be moving on.

From. From wanting to hear nothing but testimony. Testimony. Testimony. I'm reading biography. And biography. There's a place for these things.

I said a real place. But you ought to be moving on. To get into grips. With the things of God. And with the great doctrines.

Of the Christian faith. And when you read. Verses like these. And hear the views. Of other people today. You feel like saying. Augustine.

Step forward. Calvin. Luther. Knox. Jonathan Edwards. C.H. Spurgeon. Come forward.

[22:58] There's no place. For your kind of emphasis today. All that you were saying. Was really meaningless. Wasn't it? That's not good enough for us.

We want something better. We want something new. But my friend. There is nothing else. But the word of God.

Presented in its fullness. This is the answer to the world's needs. Not the newfangled. Ridiculous. Unbiblical views.

Unbiblical views. And teachings. That you come across. So much today. You come across them. Just because. People are defected from the truth.

As we saw last week. Are not prepared to accept. The authority. Of the word of God. Are submit to it. I saw a letter.

[23:55] In the Scotsman. Last week. In which a person was saying. And no doubt. A very intelligent person. I can't remember. If he was a minister or not. Saying that. It's ridiculous to think.

Absurd to think. That anyone should accept. The authority of the word of God. And go on from that.

Well that's what we. If you don't accept that. You can accept anything. You can come with whatever view you like. And some people listen. And some people applaud.

Just because. It is contrary. To the teaching. Of the word of God. And in such a situation. It can be very difficult. To get a hearing.

For the word of God. I mentioned this already. We're living in these kind of days. It's very difficult.

To get a hearing. For the word of God. Almost impossible now. For any Christian.

[24 : 54] Reformed denomination. To get its voice. On the media. On the radio. And on television. And I think quite frankly.

That the day has come. When of any congregation. Such as our own. Or any Bible believing. Denomination. Is given the opportunity.

To articulate the message. Of the gospel. On the media. It should grasp it. With both hands. Be it on the Lord's day. Or on any other day. And I know that.

That presents many problems. I'm aware of that. For example. If you and I. Were given the opportunity. Today. To have this service. Broadcast.

On BBC One. Live. Would you take it? I would. I think the time has come.

[25 : 54] When the problems. That can be associated. With broadcasting. On the Lord's day. Live. Have to be viewed. In the context.

Of the need of the earth. And I wonder. How many of you. Have ever heard. In the past few years. The gospel. Of the grace of God.

Proclaimed. On the television. At peak noon time. I haven't. And I don't know. If any of you have.

And the powers that be. Have effectively. And successfully. And successfully. Muscled. The voice. Of evangelical.

Christianity. Reformed. Evangelical. Christianity. So that the world. Is hardly ever. Heard.

[26 : 51] Today. Today. And I fully believe. That if Paul were alive. Today. And he was given. The opportunity. To articulate.

The gospel. To the masses. In their total ignorance. He would grasp it. With both hands. And I might not be here.

But I would certainly. Counsel the spiritual leader. Of this congregation. That if the opportunity. Is ever given to them. To present. A service.

As I said. Of this nature. On the Lord's day. To this. Needy generation. My friends. Take it.

And you never know. Who may hear the gospel. As I've never heard it. And who may be blessed. As a result. Of hearing it.

[27 : 49] We live in dreadful days. When the. When the. When ignorance. Of the things of God. Is so appalling. That you get four and five year olds.

A day in school. Who have never heard. Of the story. Of the birth of Jesus. Never heard of it. And you don't need to cross. The munch. To the mainland. You have them in your schools.

In the island of Lewis. Well he says. In this time. When they will not. Endure sound doctrine. When they don't. Know sound doctrine.

And when they don't. At once sound doctrine. When they want. Anything else. Accept it. You.

Watch. In all things. Take your opportunity.

Endure afflictions. It's going to be difficult. You know the many other words. Endure. Persevere. In the face of all these difficulties. You keep.

[28 : 48] This is what he's saying to. You keep plugging away. You keep preaching. You keep teaching. You keep articulating. That gospel. The work of an evangelist.

Spread it. That's the work of an evangelist. Gossip. The gospel. The gospel. And make full proof. Of your ministry. Bring your ministry.

On towards. Fulfillment. Always. Move towards. Fulfilling the purpose.

For which God. Has sent you. And that leads him on now. To say this. I. Have fulfilled. Mine. The time of my departure.

Is at hand. I am ready to be offered. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith.

[29 : 45] Henceforth. He says. To me. A crown of righteousness. Which the righteous judge. The Lord. Will give to me. At that day. Not to me only. But to all them.

That love us. Have peony. What's he saying? Well. He's getting ready. To go. As he goes. He does three things. He assesses.

The present. I am now. Already being offered up. And. I am ready. To leave. That's the present. To leave. He reviews the past.

I. Have fought a good fight. I have run the race. I have kept the faith. And then he anticipates the future. There is laid up for me.

A crown of righteousness. Which the righteous judge. Is going to give me. These three thoughts. Very briefly now. At the end of the service. He reviews.

[30 : 42] The past. He. Sorry. He assesses. The present. And he uses two. Images here. Two. Figures speech.

That were. He's thinking in terms of the. Offerings. In the ritual sacrifice. In Israel. In Israel. Where the animal. Was laid on the altar. And was put to death.

And the blood. Is flowing out. And his life. Is ebbing away. And he's ready. For the final act.

Of sacrifice. Death. And that's how he sees himself. His life. Is ebbing. Away. After 30 years.

In the service of Christ. Never having spent. Never having spared himself. But having been prepared. To spend. And to be spent.

[31 : 42] He is now. His energies. As it were. Are ebbing out. And he's ready. For the final act. And the other figure. He uses this.

I. Am ready. To go. The time of my departure. Is at hand. You go down to the. McBrain's office there.

And you see. The notice poured up. The ferry will sail. At such and such a time. That's the time of its departure. That's the language. That he's using here.

The thought. The ship. The ship. Ready. To set sail. Setting sail.

For another shore. Leaving one place. And going to another. All that's required is. The mooring's to be loosed. And the ship is off.

[32 : 39] And that's the way. He considers himself now. Facing death. Anticipating. Release. From the present.

And going on. Going away. Sailing. Into. Eternity. And as he writes these words. To Timothy. You can imagine.

Timothy. As dear friend. His close friend. Paul. Who was his. Spiritual father. To whom he owed so much.

And on whom he leaned so heavily. You can imagine. The pathos. The sorrow. For Timothy.

And notice the note of excitement. In Paul's own mind. He's leaving the old. He's setting out for the new.

[33 : 36] Setting sail. For the shores. Of eternity. And you know. This is a great biblical picture of death. I often wonder myself.

If. We should often. Think of it like this. You know. I don't know about you. But perhaps there are times. You think of death. Perhaps you think of the people. You're going to leave behind you.

Perhaps you think of unfinished business. Of unfulfilled ambitions. And so on. And before you leave. Before you die. Well you would like.

To have these things attended to. And you would like. To have the assurance. That these people. Be well looked after. And. As you wonder.

Well. I wonder. What they're going to be. Or. How they will be. In years to come. And these are very genuine thoughts. I wonder perhaps. If we could replace them.

[34 : 35] Often not by this. It's not. What we leave behind. It's where we're going. There's a sense. Of the excitement. Of the journey.

Perhaps not the journey. So much. As the. Destination. Genuinely. We're afraid. Perhaps. Of what we may have to go through. And death.

But then my friend. Look at what's beyond. It. You are going on a holiday. And I'm sure. There are times. When some of you. Go on holiday. Perhaps you're even thinking. Of holidays.

That the. Christmas has hardly passed. And maybe. Would one bother. With adverts. About holidays. And reductions. For this. That. The next thing. Perhaps some of you. Are contemplating.

Years and months to come. Going off. Somewhere you've never been before. Foreign country. The excitement. Builds up. The things you hope to see. The places you hope to go.

[35 : 31] The things you hope to go. Hope to do. The people you're going to meet. And the people you're going to be with. Well in a sense. Death is like that. It's leaving this world.

Going to the next. Of course for the person in Christ. It should fill him. With a sense of great anticipation. Great excitement. If you're not converted. I can easily understand. Why you don't want to think about it. Why you don't want to talk about it. But here's a man. Who loved Jesus. Who served Jesus. Who longed to see Jesus. Who longed to be with Jesus. Look at the excitement. Timothy. Timothy. I'm almost there. It's just a case of. Cutting away the ropes. And I'm away. And I'm there. That's the way. He assesses the present. [36 : 30] But before he leaves. He reviews the past. He looks back. And he says. I have fought a good fight. I have run a good race.

I have kept the faith. Three thoughts. And he's dead with him earlier in this letter. The good soldier. The good athlete. And the good steward. Now he says. All my life. I've been involved in conflict. I realize he says. That being a Christian. Means that you're in a fight. And it means that you've got to be a soldier. Every day. Remember he had said to Timothy. Timothy says. In chapter 2. You be a good soldier. Of Jesus Christ. Never be off your guard. Always be on duty. Keep your armor. In the readiness. You're always in conflict. So every Christian. Is not just a minister. But every Christian.

[37 : 31] The devil is out to destroy you. You're fighting him. Every day of your life. And he's using means. Perhaps that you don't know. Remember. You had the minister here today.

There are in Ferguson. I remember him telling you. It's a few years ago here. Of a group meeting in Edinburgh. Satanists. Who were praying. To the devil. That. That. Certain ministers. The lives of certain ministers. In the country. Would be destroyed. We don't know what's going on.

Amongst the powers of darkness. We wrestle this call. Not against flesh and blood. But against principalities and powers. Spiritual wickedness in high places. And we know that that is there. There are men in control. As I said already. Of the media today. Who tell you. That only do they not want the word of God. Or the things of God. That are to destroy.

[38 : 31] All. That the word of God stands for. They won't give a platform. To the likes of me. But they'll give a platform. To the homosexual. And the lesbian lobbies. They will give platforms.

To those. Whose behaviour and his views. Are anti-biblical. Anti-God. And immoral. And unnatural. That's a conflict.

That you and I. Have to wage in this world today. People. Who don't want the things of God. The devil. Is behind. And the devil.

Is egging them on. He fought with Jews. Who want to destroy. The Christian. Religion. He fought with the Roman authorities. Who wanted to muscle them as well.

And not allow them. To preach the gospel. Whoever a man fought. Paul fought. Whoever a man knew. That he was in a conflict. He knew. I keep my body.

[39 : 27] He says. In control. I'm like a shadow boxer. I'm fighting every day of my life. Real enemies. Real enemies. And he looks back.

And he says. I have fought. The fight. Can you say that tonight? Do you look back on your own life? Or have you caved in? Have you given in? Or are you in a fight at all? Do you know what it is to wrestle with your own sin? The sin that is abroad in the world.

The sin that attracts. And it's so difficult at times. To keep yourself from getting sucked in. Do you know what it is to fight? Says Paul.

I have fightings within. And fightings without. Every day of his life. Of course he had glorious moments of blessed peace. At the same time.

[40 : 20] But this is what he uses life. This is it. I have fought a good fight. I have run a good race. Remember Timothy. He says to him in chapter 2. Be the good athlete.

Discipline yourself. Keep running in the right lane. Make for the tape. Don't get involved in another race. This is the race of life. The life of faith. The tape is Jesus Christ conformity to his will.

To be like the Lord himself. To be with the Lord. That's the tape. For 30 years. He was running in this marathon. This is not a sprint my friend.

This is a marathon. Some in Galatia thought it was a sprint. And they started. And Paul wrote them. And he said. Oh he says. You have run well. You have started well. You have sprinted.

What's happened to you? Who tripped you up? Who kept you from running? So run he says to the Corinthians. That you may obtain. Right to churches. Right to Christians.

[41 : 21] The Hebrew Christians. Let us run with patience. The race that is set before us. Keep going. Keep going. And keep.

To the rules of the race. And keep your eye on the tape. And he looks back and he says. Yes. I have run that race. Then he says.

I have kept the faith. The faith I believe here to be objective. That is. The faith which was delivered to him. To preach the gospel. The word of God. What he was told to articulate.

By Jesus. I am sending you. He says. To bring those who are in darkness. To the light. There you are. There's my word. You believe it.

Accept it. Proclaim it. And defend it. And don't let anyone destroy it. Now he says to Timothy. Yes. I have kept the faith. I haven't changed it.

[42 : 19] I haven't added to it. I haven't taken from it. The gospel that I received. That's the gospel that I preached. Every day of my life. And here I am in prison for it.

And I have no other gospel for this world. But the one I was given. I have kept it. Now I'm handing it to you. He says. You go on. And you preach it.

You people have been brought up in the three church of Scotland. Who have been used for the gospel of the grace of God. Who know the doctrines of the grace. You know that this is what our whole church is in existence for.

And has been in existence for. For nothing else. You hold on to its testimony. You won't find a better one.

There is no other. But the word of the word of the God. In which you have been brought up. Which has been blessed to you by the power of the spirit of God.

[43 : 17] Don't be ashamed of it. Or the church has given it to you. And when you come to finish your course. And you leave this world. You'll be sure that you're able to say to your family.

And to your congregation. I have kept the faith. And as I said. And I have said with all the emphasis that I can muster.

You won't find a better testimony anywhere. But that which has been given to you. And don't give it up.

And don't abandon it. And then he anticipates the future. Henceforth he said. There is laid up for me.

A crown of righteousness. Which the righteous judge shall give. The Lord shall give to me. At that day. Now. He's leaving the scene of time.

[44 : 20] He's assessed the present. He's reviewed the past. And he's caught up with the excitement of the future. What awaits him. A crown of righteousness.

This is a great biblical term. We came across it again in 2 Corinthians chapter 3. The last verse is there which he read. I would like to afflict which endures. But for a moment worketh for us. A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Now. Whether it is an actual crown or a wreath. You know that in some places. When people won a race. Or when people won a victory as soldiers. They were garlanded.

Heavy garland of flowers. Like a brick huge wreath. Hung round the shoulders. Down the front.

Figurative language. In which he portrays for us.

What the New Testament. What Jesus does so vividly. That there is a reward awaiting those. Who make heaven of it. That's what he's saying.

[45 : 19] Henceforth he says. I know. A reward. Awaits me. What reward? A reward of righteousness. Righteousness.

No. I don't want to take up your time. Any longer time has gone. Just say this about it. If there is one thing about the reward. That awaits the people of God.

Is this. It is all of righteousness. It is all of righteousness. It is all right. It is all just. It is all perfect. It is God.

Who has prepared this for them. A crown of righteousness. He says. Awaits me. It is laid up for me. It is kept for me. It is waiting for me to take it.

And in a sense. It has been kept for him. And prepared for him. From all eternity. God determined. That this is. How it would be. It is the reward of grace.

[46 : 18] Look. It is laid up for me. It is to be given to me. It is God the judge. Who is going to give. It is his to give. You see.

There is nothing here about. Self glorification. There is nothing here about. The idolizing. Of the individual himself. There is nothing here about. Beating his own breast. And saying. What do you think of me? There is nothing here about. Self confidence. Arrogance. It is not that. All the emphasis. Is on the grace of God.

It is laid up for me. It will be given to me. By him. I don't deserve it. He has purpose. In his grace. To give it to me.

And in what way. Is it righteous? Well. As a believer. God. He. You could say this. Everything that God. Had done for him. And to him. Was right. The judge of all the earth.

[47 : 16] He does right. There is nothing wrong. With what God does. Not a thing. Plenty wrong. With what you and I do. But nothing wrong. With what he does. And then.

When we get to heaven. He will give us this. I believe this. Worked out righteousness. This. Inherent righteousness. In other words. Conformity.

To the mind of Christ. Himself. And to the. To the life of Christ. We will be like him. And all. Based upon his own righteousness. The right that he worked out.

By his obedience. And to death. I don't want to get. Too involved. In this kind of. Doctrinal aspect. At the end of the service. Perhaps another day. God willing. You see.

Everything is right. Everything is good. Everything is perfect. And Jesus himself said. That he is going to reward. His own self. Come ye blessed of my father.

[48 : 14] Inherit the kingdom. Repaired for you. Come and receive. The adulation. Well done. Good. And faithful servant. But the reward. Is all.

Of grace. You see. He is looking forward. Leaving behind. The scene of trouble. All his difficulties. All his conflicts. All his agonies.

All his contendings. Leaving it behind. Entering into the peace. Of righteousness. Entering the blessedness. Of the presence of Christ.

I says. That's what awaits me. But wait a minute. You see how relevant makes. How relevant Paul makes. Everything that he's speaking about.

And he says. Not to me only. But unto all them that love. Is appearing. You see. This is relevant now.

[49 : 11] For all who love. The appearing of Christ. At the moment. Christ is hidden from you. But one day. We shall see him.

As he is. Do you love that thought. My friend. Do you love that thought. That you would see. The Lord.

Jesus Christ. I was telling someone. Some people recently. I don't like speaking. But these kind of things. Because. They speak. I'm referring to myself here.

And. I think I might have told it earlier on. I was asked some time ago. To give an account of some of the. Things that they. Interest me. Along life's way.

And some of the things. That influence me. And I was asked a question. What book has influenced you most? And I get to answering that question. Then I plump for this answer.

[50 : 09] The book that some of you may know about. And if you don't. I commend it to you. Hugh Martin. On the shadow of Calvary. As a student at the university. I was reading that book.

Quite on vacation in Glasgow. And as I remember. In the. Reading it in the kitchen. Of the home. Which I shared with my late mother. I remember reading that book.

One day. I was caught up. With the wonder of everything. That Hugh Martin was talking. The glory of Christ. Just. Instantaneously.

And quite spontaneously. I got up. And I had to walk across. I still picture it. Walk across the kitchen floor to the sink.

And I said to myself. I would love to see Jesus. Just like a flash of lightning. These words came to me. Blessed are they who have not seen.

[51 : 09] And yet. Have believed. You know my friend. I don't think there is any thought. That so captivates the mind of the believer.

Quite like this. The thought of. Seeing. Jesus Christ. Oh. Do you not love that thought?

Do you not love. The thought. That you will feel. All. The person who has meant so much to you. Who has sustained.

And fed your faith. Who has kept you going. And one day. One day. The fulfillment of all your hopes. And all your dreams.

And all your ambitions. We shall see you. As he is. Well says Paul. This crown. This reward. Awaits.

[52 : 05] This reward. Awaits. All them. Are you a monster? As you and I leave this church tonight.

I know that there are many questions which you find difficult to answer. I wouldn't start asking you tonight. What does justification mean?

What does sanctification mean? What does the incarnation mean? I'm not going to ask you that question. But I'm going to ask you this question.

Do you love. The thought. Of the coming of Christ. The thought. Or. Do you dread it? Your relationship to Jesus.

Determines. That question. There's one thing sir. You and I are going to leave this world. And if we left it tonight. How would you assess the present?

[53 : 08] How would you review the past? And how would you or would you anticipate the glory of the future?

Let us pray. Oh blessed one. Save our souls who pray thee. Close us in with thyself. And number us amongst those.

Who love the Lord. And who love us appearing. Bless us in our fellowship in the gospel. For thy name's sake.

Amen.