Keep Your Head In All Situations (Daniel 6:10-23 and 2 Timothy 4:1-22)

08-Nov-26

Daniel 6:10-23

10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home
to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times
a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he
had done before. 11 Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying
and asking God for help. 12 So they went to the king and spoke to him about his
royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days
anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty,
would be thrown into the lions' den?"
The king answered, "The decree stands—in accordance with the law of the
Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."
13 Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays
no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still
prays three times a day." 14 When the king heard this, he was greatly
distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until
sundown to save him.
15 Then the men went as a group to King Darius and said to him, "Remember,
Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or
edict that the king issues can be changed."
16 So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the
lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually,
rescue you!"
17 A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king
sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that
Daniel's situation might not be changed. 18 Then the king returned to his palace
and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being
brought to him. And he could not sleep.
19 At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions'
den. 20 When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice,
"Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually,
been able to rescue you from the lions?"
21 Daniel answered, "May the king live forever! 22 My God sent his angel, and he
shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found

innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty."
23 The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

2 Timothy 4:1-22

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.
6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store 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 longed for his appearing.

Personal Remarks

9 Do your best to come to me quickly, 10 for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. 12 I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. 13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.
14 Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. 15 You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.
16 At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. 17 But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord

will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

19 Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. **20** Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. **21** Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers and sisters.

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

I encourage you to have your **Bibles opened** at **2 Timothy chapter 4.**

There is a sermon outline if you would like to take notes.

Let's pray…

Intro/Final Words

2 Timothy chapter 4 is the final words (written) from the Apostle Paul before his execution in Rome.

As I prepared this week I was struck by how difficult it must have been for Paul – in prison – in terrible conditions – knowing his death is imminent but hoping to see Timothy one last time before he dies.

Chapter 4 is 473 words.

It's worth asking ourselves…

Who would we write to and what would we write in our final 473 words before our death?

(pause)

My mum's final words to me were very sweet "***I love the bones of you, Paul!***"

This chapter - got me thinking.

What would I say to my loved ones?

What would I want them to know?

Well – in this chapter Paul tells Timothy and us – some **very important things that we ALL need to know** – and perhaps they might shape our final words to our loved ones…

Very Important Things We ALL Need to Know

[Slide-1st Point]

1st point **– As Christians we are under the authority and the presence of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ – who will one day judge the living and the dead** (v1).

Therefore we can remind our loved ones that God is sovereign over all things and He has given His sovereign authority to His Son Jesus.

We all must stand before Jesus one day to be judged.

If we have repented of our sins and put our faith in Jesus' death and resurrection – we will be saved from the wrath of God and saved for Heaven – but if we haven't repented of our sins and do not believe in Jesus - we will face the wrath of God and will be sent to Hell.

Our loved ones need to know this – especially if they don't believe in Jesus!

With the sobering thought of judgment…

[Slide-2nd Point]

2nd Point – **People urgently need to hear God's Word and the Good News of Jesus** (vv2-4)

Paul tells Timothy (v2) to ***preach the word: be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.***

There was once a Church of England minister who spent all of his ministry preaching the gospel; his whole parish were saved. Then he started preaching in neighbouring parishes, and the ministers of those parishes were offended. They asked the bishop to make the man stop. When the bishop confronted him he said, "I hear you are always preaching and you don't seem to be doing anything else." The minister answered, "Well bishop, I only preach during two seasons of the year." The bishop said, "I'm glad to know that; what seasons are they?" He replied, "In season and out of season!"

Paul's point is that Timothy must always be ready to preach God's Word – whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether people want to hear it or don't want to hear it.

Why is this so urgent?

Because Paul knows (v3) that ***a time is coming when people will no longer put up with sound doctrine. They will gather around themselves teachers who will tell them what their itching ears want to hear!***

We have the same thing today – don't we?

People don't want to hear about their sin, nor about God's wrath and judgment nor about Hell. They would rather hear that God is a God of love and He wants us to be happy and He accepts whatever we choose to do.

And sadly, there are churches and even whole denominations that have moved away from the authority of God's Word because they would rather tell people what they want to hear than what God's Word actually says.

But we need to be careful too! This isn't just a warning about other people or other churches. It's a warning to us too!

We need to hear **ALL of God's Word** – even the parts that challenge us, confront us, convict us and make us uncomfortable.

Because as Paul says in v4 – people will turn away from God's truth and follow myths.

Again we have this happening today.

The myth that says *all religions lead to Heaven* – whereas the Bible says Jesus is ***the only way to the Father in Heaven*** (John 14:6)

The myth that says *God loves everyone, so everyone will ultimately be saved* – whereas the Bible says ***salvation is only through faith in Jesus*** (John 3:16)

The myth that says *I'm basically a good person*; *God will accept me* – whereas the Bible says ***all have sinned and need God's grace*** (Romans 3:23-24)

The myth that says *the Bible needs to change to fit the times we are living in* – whereas the Bible says of itself: ***all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness*** (2 Tim 3:16-17)

and that ***Jesus (who is God's Word) is the same yesterday, today and forever*** (Hebrews 13:8)

Instead of myths - ALL people need to hear God's truth and the Gospel Good News of Jesus – before it's too late. If people haven't believed in Jesus – before they die – or before Jesus' returns – it will be too late.
Is there someone we know – that hasn't heard the Good News of Jesus?
They need to hear it from us!

And we also need to stick to the <u>truth</u> in God's Word.
A great example of this comes from our Old Testament [OT] reading from Daniel 6.
King Daruis – the Mede – has taken over ruling the Babylonian Empire – 522BC - and he has been tricked by devious officials into making an edict that anyone who prays to any god or human other than praying to the King, must be thrown in the lions' den.
These devious officials are hoping that Daniel will disobey the King's edict – and they are not disappointed!
Even though Daniel knows this edict – He refuses to obey it. Daniel can only pray to the **<u>one true God – YHWH</u>** – he can't allow himself to pray to an earthly King.
So Daniel refuses to obey this edict and he is thrown into the lions' den.
Like Paul, Daniel, is prepared to die for the truth of God's Word and is compelled to obey God alone not humans who go against God's Word!

Are we prepared to stand for God's truth like that?

(pause)

[Slide-3rd Point]

3rd point – **Following Jesus is not easy but it's worth it – the best is yet to come!** (vv5-8)

Paul does not pretend that the Christian life is easy – let's face it – he's in prison and about to be executed!

He urges Timothy (v5) to ***keep his head in all situations***. Timothy is to ***endure the hardship and keep doing the work of an evangelist***. Remember the word evangelist – literally means – a good angel. What is an angel? An angel is God's messenger. So Timothy is to be a good messenger for God - bringing the good news of Jesus to others. No matter how tough the circumstances are, ***Timothy is to keep discharging all the duties of his ministry!***

Now – we could say – well these instructions from Paul to Timothy don't relate to us – we are not ministers or pastors

But remember – in the Great Commission – Jesus calls all of us – to go and make more disciples of Jesus.

So in our own context – we all have duties of ministry: to teach God's Word; reach the lost with the Good News of Jesus; care for and encourage people; guard against false teaching and persevere through hardship!

Paul himself describes his hardship and how he is feeling (v7) – he says - it's like he is one of the OT drink offerings poured on the altar [as an expression of giving something valuable to God]. Paul feels like his life has been a sacrifice

poured out to God - so that the Gentiles (non-Jews) could hear the Good News of Jesus.

And Paul is totally okay with that!

As he says in v7 – ***I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race, I have kept the faith!***

Paul knows the Christian life is like a spiritual boxing match – and we have to fight a <u>good fight</u> to the end! We can take great satisfaction knowing we have done our absolute best for the Lord!

Paul knows the Chirstian life is also like a <u>marathon</u> – not a sprint – and we have to run the race to the end. To do that, we must have staying power!

And Paul knows the Chirstian life is about keeping faithful to the very end of our lives.

And it's all worth it – v8 – Paul doesn't regret the suffering he went through – no! He looks forward with confidence to receiving a crown of righteousness from Jesus in Heaven. This is not a reward we earn through suffering or good works. It is God's gracious promise to those who belong to Jesus and persevere in faith.

Remember by belonging to Jesus – we receive His righteousness – and so we are right with God and approved by God!

In the original Olympic games the greatest prize given was the laurel wreath with which the victor of the race was crowned. It was the greatest honour.

This laurel crown would wither after a few days. Paul knew the victor's crown waiting for him in Heaven would never wither or fade!

As Paul sat in prison, he knew what Emperor Nero's verdict on him would be – but He also knew what God's verdict would be. We can have that same assurance that God will say to us at the end of our days - "***Well done, good and faithful servant, come and share your master's happiness!***" (Matthew 25:21)

So I urge us all this morning!

Don't give up! Don't lose heart! Keep running the race. Keep the faith. Because your crown awaits!

[Slide-4th Point]

4th point – **People will sometimes let us down – but the Lord will never forsake us** (vv9-18)

Paul gives several examples of people deserting him

Demas (v10) – went to Thessalonica and deserted Paul because he loved the world!

Crescens went to Galatia and **Titus** to Dalmatia (v10)

Alexander the metal worker (vv14-15) – did Paul a great deal of harm and opposed the Gospel message!

And Paul didn't even have any support (v16) at his first defence in court when he faced the authorities!

Imagine that! Paul, the great apostle, standing before the authorities, facing possible execution, and nobody comes to stand alongside him.

And notice Paul is gracious enough to ask - that even though many have let him down – that this offence not be held against them!

A light globe moment for me in this passage is just how much Paul's ministry and Christian walk - mirrored our Lord Jesus – even down to suffering and sacrifice for the sake of the Gospel!

Paul knows what it is like to be let down by people. And it's important we recognize that. Sometimes we can have unrealistic expectations of other Christians. We think that because we are all followers of Jesus, we will never hurt one another or disappoint one another. But sadly, that's not the case. The church is made up of sinners who have been saved by grace – and we still get things wrong. We disappoint one another. We sometimes fail one another. But here's the important thing: we must not allow the failure of other Christians to undermine our faith in Jesus Christ!

And let us not forget that

V17 – like with Paul - the **Lord is by our side in times of suffering**. **He won't forsake us**. He will give us strength to keep going in those tough times – so that we can carry on telling people the Good News of Jesus!

And V18 – like Paul we can safely say that – ***The Lord will rescue us from every evil attack and bring us safely to His Heavenly Kingdom!***

Even if we were to lose our life for the sake of the Gospel – we can join Paul and say as he does in Philippians 1:21 - ***to live is Christ and to die is gain!***

[Slide-5th Point]

5th point – **In our Christian walk – we need faithful Christian brothers and sisters alongside us** (vv11-13, 19-21)

It's not all bad for Paul

Luke is still with Paul (v11) – and it's Luke who wrote the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts!

Paul also wants **Mark** to come to him because Mark is useful to Paul in his ministry (v11) – which is particularly encouraging as previously Mark and Paul had parted company and had a sharp disagreement! (Acts 15:36-39)

This shows that past failures and disagreements amongst Christians do not determine their future usefulness in God's service. There is always room for forgiveness, restoration and renewed service!

Paul can also trust **Tychicus** (v12) whom Paul sent to Ephesus – presumably to help Timothy!

And Paul can trust his fellow tentmaker friends **Priscilla and Aquila** (Acts 18) and **Onesiphorus** whom we know was a great help to Paul and refreshed him (from 2 Timothy 1:16)

It's a great reminder to us that we are not meant to live our Christian walk alone. We need fellow Christians. We need people who will encourage us, stand alongside us, refresh us and help us keep going!

On Friday I chaired the annual Presbyterian Women's Association [PWA] meeting – I shared with the ladies how much I appreciate them and our partnership in the Gospel. It's fair to say I could not do ministry without their love and support.

I also have the support of my dear wife Heather – the elders – my assistant Lina and my pastoral care assistant Jenny! Praise God!

The Apostle Paul and this Paul are saying – ministry is a hard gig – thank God we have fellow Christian brothers and sisters to walk alongside us!

Perhaps it's worth asking ourselves this morning – who can we walk alongside to encourage them in their Christian walk?

Why not approach them at morning tea and offer to pray with them or meet them for coffee?

Conclusion/Our Final Words

To finish up then…

Having heard Paul's final words.

My challenge to us all this morning is

Spend some time praying and reflecting on **what important things your loved ones need to know** – and then write them down.

Those words will be your spiritual legacy left to them!

[Slide-1 John 5:11-12]

Let me finish with these verses from **1 John 5:11-12** which gets to the heart of what's most important.

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. Amen.