

# “A GLORIOUS ENDING TO A FAITHFUL LIFE”

## II TIMOTHY 4:14-18

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### INTRODUCTION

Every man of God has both loyal supporters (cf. vv. 9, 11-13, 19-21), opposition (vv. 14-15) and betrayers (10, 16). A servant of God must be prepared for the endurance of heartaches brought about by such persons. Despite faithful service, the man of God is frequently hurt by others, and the memory of such can bring sharp pain—as to Paul here. Even those who profess loyalty at times are MIA when the servant needs them the most (16). Then there are some who work well at first (Col. 4:14) but later “are swallowed up by the world (v. 10).

Minnick shows that for such reasons we cannot focus ministry upon people and their responses, but rather upon God’s Word and His will. **“We cannot alter our charge because it pleases men that we should program and promote rather than preach. Not only is it to desert our chief responsibility, but it is to ensure our failure.** In the end, no matter how hard we’ve tried, some persons will be disappointments. And if we’ve catered our ministries to them, and their whims, rather than to God, and His will, what will we have in the end. We’ve lost on earth, and we’ll lose in Heaven” (40).

But for Paul, at the end, he was able to say that he had kept his charge until it was completely fulfilled (v. 17). God had stood with him when others had forsaken him (17). The same Lord who had commissioned him had sustained him until the end. And He will continue to “save us” all the way into His heavenly kingdom (v. 18). Such a God and Savior fully deserves our praise and adoration (18b). Matthew 24:13 states, “He who endures unto the end shall be saved.” Scripture does teach the doctrine of **the perseverance of the saints**. *Note, this doctrine does not mean salvation by works. Salvation is and always has been by grace and through faith. But it does mean that the salvation that works is genuine salvation. Only such genuine salvation endures until the end!*

### YOU MUST ENDURE UNTIL THE END, AND YOU WILL BE SAVED.

Paul did—as we see in our text.

- I. THE SORROWS OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE
  - A. Opposition (14-15)
    1. His identity (14)
      - a. Likely the man of I Tim. 1:19-20)
      - b. His occupation
    2. His deed—“did me much harm”
    3. His danger (15)
      - a. Protect yourself against him.
      - b. He greatly withstood our words—of teaching and defense.
  - B. Betrayal (10, 16)
    1. Demas has forsaken—next message (10).
    2. No one stood with Paul at his legal defense (16).
    3. All deserted him (16).
  - C. Forgiveness—“May it not be reckoned to them.

## II. THE SUSTENANCE OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

- A. The Lord stood with me—as He always had—at Corinth, when captured and put on trial in Jerusalem, when on the ship to Rome, etc.
- B. The Lord strengthened me
  - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me—Phil. 4:13.
  - He infused me with inner strength and power—able to face any and all opposition and danger.Why? Paul goes on to tell us.

## III. THE SUCCESS OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

- A. The Full Accomplishment of the Proclamation—Paul did not stop or give up until finished!
  - 1. Kerygma—official proclamation
  - 2. Finished his task in his final imprisonment—his imprisonment is not defeat!
- B. The Hearing of all the Gentiles—his original commission now fully carried out
  - 1. Caesar and his court and household get to hear.
  - 2. The most significant people in the most significant city—the Word conquered the empire!
- C. The Deliverance from the lion’s mouth—imminent death; protected by the hand of God until his work is done.

## IV. THE SALVATION OF THE CHRISTIAN SERVANT

- A. Deliverance from every “evil work”
  - 1. Applies to “bad works” in the believer’s life
  - 2. Applies to bad works of others against us
  - 3. We are “more than conquerors.”
- B. Salvation into His heavenly kingdom
  - 1. He completes the work in me which he has begun.
  - 2. He brings me safely into the kingdom which is in heaven—and which heaven rules over
- C. Shouts of joyful doxology

## CONCLUSION

Note that here, as elsewhere, Paul expected to go to heaven immediately upon his death; we may compare such passages as Ps. 73:24-25; Lazarus being carried into Abraham’s bosom in Lk. 16:22; the thief being immediately with Jesus in “paradise” (Lk. 23:43); the building from God not made with human hands waiting for the believer in II Cor. 5:1; the immediate “gain” at death (Phil. 1:21) and the “far better” state after death (Phil. 1:23); and the fact that the souls of the martyrs were under the altar in heaven immediately (Rev. 7:13-17).

What if Paul had failed his Lord at the end? What if he had lost his testimony? After all of the persecutions and sufferings which were the rule of his life rather than the exception, to have faltered at the end would have been tragic indeed, “an inglorious ending ... to a glorious life”

You must endure the sorrows of Christian service; you must live under His divine sustenance; you must experience His success; you must see the culmination of your salvation.

**YOU MUST ENDURE UNTIL THE END, AND YOU WILL BE SAVED.**