

Sermon Title: The Attributes of Hope in Death

Sermon Text: 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to endure in ministry in light of hope in death.

Sermon Proposition: There are 3 ways to encourage faithfulness at the close of a ministry.

Introduction: The words of dying people tend to be stripped of all hypocrisy. The words of dying men tend to reveal the heart, what's really there.

Napoleon, on his death bed said, "I die before my time and my body will be given back to the earth to become the food of worms such is the fate which so soon awaits the great Napoleon."

It was Mahat McGahandi said at the edge of death, "My days are numbered. For the first time in 50 years I find myself in a slew of despond, all about me is darkness, I am praying for light." It is interesting that the phrase, "slew of despond" comes from Pilgrims Progress which he had read but not believed.

The epitaph of Benjamin Franklin reads as follows, "Here lies the body of Franklin. Like an old book stripped of its lettering gilding it lies here food for worms, but the work shall not be lost for it will appear once more in a new and more elegant edition revised and corrected by the author."

I. The readiness of a faithful slave encourages endurance in ministry. V.6

A. The readiness for a sacrificial offering. V.6a

The great Biblical writer William Barclay describes the scene with words that should challenge us all:

"Paul did not think of himself as going to be executed; he thought of himself as going to offer his life to God. His life was not being taken from him; he was laying it down. Ever since his conversion Paul had offered to God – his money, his scholarship, his strength, his time, the vitality of his body, the acuteness of his mind, the devotion of his passionate heart. Only life itself was left to offer, and gladly Paul was going to lay his life down." (The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, pp. 240)

B. The readiness for a sure departure. V.6b

"Observe . . . with what pleasure Paul speaks of dying. He calls it his departure: though it is probable that he was facing a violent death, a bloody death, yet he calls it a departure, or his release. Death to a good man is his release from the imprisonment of his flesh and this world." (Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol. 5, pp.849)

Romans 14:8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. **22** But if *I* live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. **23** For¹ I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better.

Philippians 2:17 Yes, and if I am being poured out *as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me¹, "Write: `Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

Proverbs 14:32 The wicked is banished in his wickedness, But the righteous has a refuge in his death.

- 1) To depart is the picture of a ship.
- 2) To depart is the picture of "breaking up camp."
- 3) To depart is the picture of unyoking an animal.

II. The reflections of a faithful slave encourages endurance in ministry. V.7

- A. The reflections on a fight that was fought. V.7a
1 Timothy 1:18 This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,
1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
- B. The reflections on a race that was finished. V.7b (**1 Cor. 9:23-27**)
Philippians 3:14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
- C. The reflections on a faith that was kept. V.7c

III. The rewards of a faithful slave encourages endurance in ministry. V.8

- A. The reward of a righteous crown. V.8a
- B. The reward of a righteous judge. V.8b
- C. The reward of a righteous crowd. V.8c