

“Prepared to Meet Your God”—2 Timothy 4:6-8

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Prepared to Meet Your God”, is 2 Timothy 4:6-8 → *I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up 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 loved His appearing.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Preparation is a common activity in our daily lives. Everything we do takes some kind of time and effort involving planning and preparation. Take, for instance, the process of preparing for a wedding ceremony. While months and months are spent on preparation for the wedding day, the actual event and activities connected with it usually last for only a day or two, if even that long!

It is a mysterious dynamic that, with all our preparations for activities and events in life, when they actually take place many times we still feel like we're unprepared! Of course, such feelings of unpreparedness are heightened when we encounter those unexpected “surprises” as the activity unfolds.

What kind of thoughts come to your mind when confronted with the question: “Are you prepared to meet your God?” Maybe you could answer with a confident, “Absolutely!” However, there are many who would be flooded with thoughts of anxiety over sinful behavior, fear of the judgment of God upon them and feelings of being unprepared for such an encounter.

Could one be prepared to meet Jesus at His 2nd Coming and yet feel that he is not ready to enter eternal life? It may be as a result of an overwhelming feeling of unworthiness and knowing that he doesn’t deserve eternal life. It may be because there are still so many experiences which he wants to experience in this life before entering the next. It could be that he believes that his service to others for the LORD is not finished and he desires more time to share Christ with others. The focus of this third reason is different than the others. The others reflect a self-centered focus on “my feelings and perceptions” while the third option focuses on Christ’s desire for all people—to come to the knowledge of the truth and believe in Jesus to be saved.

The apostle Paul was absolutely prepared to meet His God but was torn about the timing of this event in his life. This is because there were so many times in his life when he was on the verge of “meeting God” by the possibility of being sentenced to death for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Sitting in prison, not knowing the outcome of his “trial” taking place outside the prison

walls, he said in Philippians 1:22-24 → *If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.* Prepared to meet his God, he still wanted more people to meet Jesus with him by remaining *in the flesh* so that more people would come to Christ through his ministry!

Could being prepared to meet God have something to do with feeling “close” to God? Many people “feel close” to God in the midst of two extremes: When they are engaged in “religious” activities such as reading the Bible, praying and doing “church” things or when their circumstances have driven them to desperation, causing them to seek the LORD by praying or reading the Bible more. Both of these extremes can give a person a false sense of being prepared to meet their God. In our text, Paul reveals the true basis upon which one is prepared to meet his God even though his circumstances were rather unfavorable.

At first glance it almost sounds as if Paul was making his “last will and testament” under the expectation of dying. However, he isn’t concerned about funeral arrangements, the distribution of his possessions, burial considerations and the like. He said in verse 6 of our text: *I am already being*

poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

The picture is one of sacrifice. Part of the sacrificial system of God's people in the Old Testament involved a drinking offering being poured on the sacrifice, sometimes the last act of the sacrifice. As Paul considered his possible impending death at the hands of unbelievers he continued to view his life as a sacrificial service to others in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Philippians 2:17 he said: *Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.* In other words, joy should accompany his martyrdom because it is serving the eternal desire of the LORD for all people—faith in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of sins, a new life now and eternal life in heaven!

Thus, Paul is expressing that he is truly prepared to meet his God. But why? Could it be because of his hard work . . . because of his suffering for Jesus and the strong commitment which he expressed in his ministry? After all, he does say in verses 7-8 of our text: *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day.* Was the focus of his being prepared on his own dedication, works or feelings?

His testimony expressed in this “last will and testament” is undergirded by *the faith*, the object of which is Jesus Christ. Thus, those judges considering his “case” outside of the prison walls are not the true judges in his situation and are by no means righteous in their persecution of him. Notice he states that he is in the hands of *the **righteous** judge*, Jesus Christ!

The amazing, wonderful aspect of this testimony is that Jesus’ righteous judgment is not based upon your works, sufferings or feelings while functioning as living sacrifices for Him. It is so amazing and wonderful that His righteous judgment is based upon the righteous life that He lived under the Law **for you** and the righteous judgment for your sin which He took upon Himself on the cross **on your behalf!** *The faith* is not based upon your perception of Jesus’ Person & Work. **It is based completely on the accomplished fact of His Person & Work alone!**

The crown of righteousness which is award on the Last Day *to all who have loved His appearing* is also a picture of reigning victorious along with Jesus over the power of sin, death and the devil eternally. Those *who have loved His appearing* is connected to *the faith*. Those who love the appearing of Jesus when He came in the flesh to fulfill all righteousness are those who repent of trusting in their own righteousness to be prepared to meet God and trust in Jesus alone Who has prepared them in His forgiveness and salvation.

“Are you prepared to meet your God?” Christ has accomplished all and prepared you by His grace and the faith given by the Holy Spirit to meet Yahweh at any moment. Yes, the circumstances under which we live in service to the LORD may be very unfavorable and adverse, requiring us to fight the good fight of faith in the midst of temptation and run the race in perseverance. However, we fight and run based upon faith in Jesus Who has won the victory for us! We fight and run not in an effort to be prepared for eternal life but because we already are prepared for eternal life in Person & Work of our righteous Judge, Jesus! Amen.

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, **by the mercies of God,**
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

(Romans 12:1)

Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.