

Final Words Bring Eternal Perspective

Series: Fan Into Flame (2 Timothy)

Life Group Discussion Guide

I. Welcome & Getting to Know One Another

Describe a time you recall how you felt when you were at the end of a long race or a long trip and about to experience its completion?

II. Centering

Take a quiet moment to center your soul on God's presence. Have one member read the following Scripture aloud slowly, 3 times, allowing space for silent reflection after each reading. Participants may close their eyes, take a deep breath and prayerfully listen and allow the words to speak to them. Conclude with a brief opening prayer, inviting God to guide your discussion and open your hearts to His teachings.

James 1:12

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

III. Exploring

This week we are continuing engaging the Biblical Book called "2nd Timothy" Paul, an apostle, is writing to younger Timothy who has been his spiritual "son" and faithful co-worker. Paul is now in prison in Rome and anticipates these are his final days. In this week's text, we come to the more climatic final words of Paul.

Have someone read aloud the following next section while all follow the text:

2 Timothy 4:1-8

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.

1. As you consider that Paul is at the end of his life, from the whole of this section, how would you describe the broad desire that Paul has for Timothy?
2. *What is the purpose and power of Paul beginning in verse 1 by invoking the reality of being before the presence of God... as judge and king?
3. There is a sense in which certain people are called to this unique task of preaching the word. But there is also a sense in which all Christians are called to do so. How might this distinction be helpful? How might this distinction have become unhelpful and more than what the Scriptures intended?
4. *Paul's central charge to Timothy is to "preach the Word." Drawing from verses 2 and 5, identify and share some of what Paul says is needed in the process of this preaching and why you think it is important? How might these be important to one who teaches the Scriptures to others?
5. *What do you imagine Paul has in mind when he refers to being "prepared in season and out of season" (v.2)?

6. How does Paul's description of his life "being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of his departure being near (vs 6) strike you?
7. Paul speaks of feeling completion, of having "fought the good fight... finished the race... kept the faith." How would you describe what Paul was feeling? How does this sense of completion speak to you?
8. *Paul describes the reward as the "crown of righteousness." He has lived his life as if already rooted in eternity... that already exists but is awaiting our union. How does it speak to such rewards to recall what Jesus taught when he said "your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." (Matt. 6:18) and "those who seem least important now will be the greatest then." (Matt. 19:30)
9. As some are seeking to engage the season of Lent, how does Paul's example speak to us about the value of practicing forms of shifting attachments from the temporal to the eternal?

** These questions may serve in a more "optional" manner if time is short or the group is large.*

IV. Ending

Break into smaller groups of two or three, as able, to pray for one another for what you might be facing this week. As an option for prayer time, share one area of your life where you feel challenged to live out the teachings from today's discussion.