

Living in God's Church Today

Final Instructions

2 Timothy 4:9-22

Rev. Freddy Fritz

November 27, 2022

Final Instructions

Introduction

Commentator David Helm notes the following:

Final words are often meant to communicate things of first importance. Parents remind children of something important just before walking out the door—“Now, remember what I told you. Don’t forget!” Bosses give their employees final instructions before leaving for an extended vacation. And every spring, educational institutions gather their graduating seniors for one final speech before sending them out into the world. Final words communicate things of first importance.

I suppose this explains why the church has always placed special significance on the last words of her leaders. When Samuel Rutherford was on his deathbed, someone was close by with a pen to record his dying testament: “Dear brethren, do all for Him. Pray for Christ. Preach for Christ. Do all for Christ; beware of men-pleasing. The chief shepherd will shortly appear.” John Wesley’s final declaration was captured as well: “The best of all is, God is with us.” He would say those words three times in succession, as if for emphasis, and then he expired with, “Farewell.” Lyle Dorsett, able historian and lover of Jesus, retells some of the closing declarations of the great evangelist D. L. Moody. “The ailing preacher roused from sleep and in slow, measured words announced: ‘Earth recedes; Heaven opens for me.’” Dorsett goes on to speak of various family members coming to Moody’s bedside to receive final instructions about their role in the work after his departure.¹

¹ David R. Helm, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 203.

The Apostle Paul concluded his last letter to Timothy with some final instructions. It is filled with names—18 by my count—of people with whom Paul has interacted. As Paul concluded this letter, he gave final instructions of a dying man.

Scripture

Let's read 2 Timothy 4:9-22:

⁹ Do your best to come to me soon. ¹⁰ For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹ Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. ¹² Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. ¹³ When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. ¹⁴ Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. ¹⁵ Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. ¹⁶ At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! ¹⁷ But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁹ Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. ²⁰ Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus. ²¹ Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.

²²**The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.**
(2 Timothy 4:9-22)

Lesson

2 Timothy 4:9-22 gives us the final instructions of a man facing death.

Let's use the following outline:

1. Final Requests (4:9, 11-13, 21a)
2. Final Sorrow (4:10, 16)
3. Final Warning (4:14-15)
4. Final Deliverance (4:17-18)
5. Final Greetings (4:19-20, 21b)
6. Final Benediction (4:22)

I. Final Requests (4:9, 11-13, 21a)

First, a man facing death expresses his final requests.

Paul wrote to Timothy in verse 9, **“Do your best to come to me soon.”** Paul wanted Timothy to come to him **soon** (quickly) because he knew that his death was imminent. Paul repeated this request in verse 21a, where he wrote, **“Do your best to come before winter.”** Traveling on the Adriatic Sea during winter was treacherous. Paul did not expect to live until spring. Paul wanted to see his beloved associate Timothy before he died. More importantly, it seems that Paul wanted Timothy to **“bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments”** (4:13). Even though Paul anticipated death sometime soon, he wanted to continue his work for the sake of the gospel.

Paul noted in verse 11, **“Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me**

for ministry.” Paul wrote about two more coworkers. In Colossians 4:14, Paul called **Luke** “the beloved physician,” and in Philemon 24, Paul referred to **Luke** as a “fellow worker.” Luke had accompanied Paul on several of his missionary journeys and was presently staying with Paul to care for him and his medical needs. The other coworker Paul mentioned in this verse is **Mark**. John Mark had previously deserted Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:13), but he later proved himself and attended Paul in his first Roman imprisonment (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24). Paul now wanted Timothy to bring **Mark** to him because he had proven his usefulness in his ministry to Paul.

Paul continued in verse 12, “**Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.**” **Tychicus** was a trusted coworker of Paul. **Tychicus** had carried at least two other letters of Paul to their destinations. During an earlier imprisonment in Rome, Paul sent his letter to the Ephesians with **Tychicus** (see Ephesians 6:21-22). During that same imprisonment, **Tychicus** delivered the letter to the Colossians from Paul (see Colossians 4:7-8). In addition, **Tychicus** may have brought this letter to Timothy since Paul was sending him to Ephesus. It is also possible that **Tychicus** delivered Paul’s letter to Titus (see Titus 3:12). This reference to **Tychicus’** departure may be the reason why Paul wanted Timothy to come to him soon. Paul wanted Timothy to take the place of **Tychicus**. It is also possible that **Tychicus** was to replace Timothy in Ephesus. **Tychicus** was an invaluable coworker in the advancement of the gospel.

What would I do if I knew that I only had months, or weeks, left to live? It is easy to speculate what I might do when I am not in such a situation. I know that I might want to take a long vacation or try to do the things that are on my “bucket list.” I don’t know how zealous I would be to keep advancing the gospel. That is why Paul’s example is so powerful to me.

He worked and sought to advance the gospel right up until the end of his life. I hope that will be true of me as well.

II. Final Sorrow (4:10, 16)

Second, a man facing death shares his final sorrow.

Paul wrote in verse 10, **“For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.”** The reason Paul wanted Timothy to come to him soon is that some of Paul’s other coworkers were no longer with him. Particularly sorrowful for him was **Demas**. Paul mentioned **Demas** in two other instances, in addition to this one. In Philemon 24, Paul called **Demas** a “fellow worker.” And in his letter to the Colossian Church, **Demas** also sent greetings to them (Colossians 4:14). Now, here in verse 10, Paul said that **Demas** had deserted him. **Demas** was a fair-weather disciple because when Paul needed him most, **Demas** deserted him. Paul stated that **Demas** left him because **Demas** was **“in love with this present world.”** Having started with Paul, when things got tough, **Demas** returned to his former way of life.

History will show a decline in church membership in 2020 and 2021. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, almost every church stopped in-person worship services for several months. Then, once in-person worship services resumed, church members cautiously returned to their churches. But not all of them. Some of them took the opportunity to watch the live-stream services of other churches. And when they returned to worship, they went to a different church. But some did not return to in-person worship services at all. Their love for Jesus had been put to the test, and it had been found lack-

ing. And so they did not return to church. They were like Demas because they were **“in love with this present world.”**

Paul then wrote in verse 16, **“At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them!”** In the Roman legal system, an accused person received two hearings. The first hearing, the *prima actio*, was similar to our arraignment, and it was designed to establish the charge and determine if there was a need for a trial. The second hearing, the *secunda actio*, was designed to establish the accused person’s guilt or innocence. Thus, Paul was referring to his first hearing, which may have been held early in his stay in Rome (see Acts 28:30-31). At that hearing, Paul said that **“no one came to stand by me.”** That could be because the Roman Christians were not aware of Paul’s ministry. Or, more likely, they were aware of Paul’s ministry but were not aware that he was in Rome. A third possibility is that the Roman Christians were fearful for their own lives and did not want to be seen in alliance with Paul. Paul did not hold it against them but forgave them. He asked for God’s mercy on those who had deserted him. Nevertheless, it was still a sorrow for him.

III. Final Warning (4:14-15)

Third, a man facing death sounds his final warning.

Paul wrote in verses 14-15, **“Alexander the copper-smith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message.”** Alexander was a common name at the time of Paul’s ministry. It is not clear which Alexander Paul is intending to single out here in this verse. It could be the same Alexander that Paul excommunicated in 1 Timothy

1:19-20. Or it could be a Jew named **Alexander** who stopped the rioting in Ephesus (see Acts 19:33-34). Or it could be some other man named **Alexander**. Paul did not say exactly what wrong **Alexander** did, other than **Alexander “did me great harm”** and **“he strongly opposed our message.”** This might mean that **Alexander** had argued with Paul when he sought to teach others the good news of the gospel. Or it might mean that **Alexander** testified against Paul at his trial. Nevertheless, Paul said that **“the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.”** Paul left vengeance in God’s hand (see Deuteronomy 32:35; Psalm 62:12; Proverbs 24:12; Romans 12:19).

IV. Final Deliverance (4:17-18)

Fourth, a man facing death rejoices in his final deliverance.

Paul wrote in verse 17, **“But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion’s mouth.”** Paul testified to the truth of what Jesus said at the end of his Great Commission in Matthew 28:20b, “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Moreover, this is a promise the Lord made on several occasions under the Old Covenant as well. For example, we read in Deuteronomy 31:6, “Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.” And also in Deuteronomy 31:8, “It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.” And also in Joshua 1:5, “No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not

leave you or forsake you” (see Hebrews 13:5). Paul used every occasion, even very difficult ones, to proclaim the good news of the gospel. And he did so again at his first defense. Paul said he **“was rescued from the lion’s mouth.”** This was a common expression to indicate rescue from danger. It most likely came from the time when the prophet Daniel was rescued from the lion’s den (see Daniel 6:26-27).

Paul also wrote in verse 18, **“The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”** Paul wrote this letter anticipating that his execution would be soon. Assured of the Lord’s presence, as he asserted in verse 17, Paul was convinced that the Lord would also rescue him from all that lay ahead. This is not likely a physical deliverance but a spiritual deliverance. Paul was completely convinced that his death would mean that the Lord would bring him safely into his heavenly kingdom. Deliverance was not to be *from* death but *through* death. With this thought in mind, Paul once again burst into doxology, **“To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”**

V. Final Greetings (4:19-20, 21b)

Fifth, a man facing death delivers his final greetings.

One of the striking features of Paul’s ministry is the large number of people who banded together with him and supported him in the spread of the gospel. Paul concluded his Second Letter to Timothy with greetings to people. Paul named nine coworkers in these last few verses. Some were in Ephesus with Timothy, some were in Rome, and two were elsewhere. He wrote in verse 19, **“Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.”** Prisca (short for Priscilla) and

Aquila had assisted Paul in Corinth and accompanied him to Ephesus (Acts 18:2-3, 18-19). They had instructed Apollos (Acts 18:26) and had risked their lives for Paul (Romans 16:3-4). **Onesiphorus** had earnestly searched for and found Paul in Rome and had “refreshed” him (2 Timothy 1:16-17). **Onesiphorus** may have lost his life for his loyal service to Paul because the greeting here is to “**the household of Onesiphorus**” and not to him personally.

Paul wrote in verse 20, “**Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus.**” **Erastus** is mentioned in Acts 19:22 who was sent as an emissary of Paul to Macedonia. **Erastus** is also mentioned in Romans 16:23 as a church member and was the city of treasurer of Corinth. It is not clear if Paul was mentioning the same **Erastus**, but Paul knew that Timothy would be interested in the whereabouts of **Erastus**. **Trophimus** is mentioned in Acts 20:4 and 21:29. **Trophimus** was from the city of Ephesus and had accompanied Paul from Greece to Troas. **Miletus** was a seaport city about 50 miles south of Ephesus. **Trophimus** was ill enough that he could not continue the journey with Paul. Again, Paul knew that Timothy would want to know about **Trophimus’** illness. Though Paul was facing death, he was still very concerned about his coworkers and letting Timothy know where they were at that time.

Paul wrote in verse 21b, “**Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.**” Paul sent Timothy greetings from four unknown Christians, although they were likely known by Timothy. The first three names (**Eubulus**, **Pudens**, and **Linus**) are Latin, which could mean that they were originally from Rome. Even names unknown to us were special to Paul.

VI. Final Benediction (4:22)

And sixth, a man facing death pronounces his final benediction.

Paul concluded his Second Letter to Timothy with these words in verse 22, **“The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.”** The benediction that closes Paul’s letter has two sentences. The first sentence—**“The Lord be with your spirit”**—was directed to Timothy. The word **“your”** is singular. Paul’s final word to Timothy was a prayer that the Lord would make his presence known to Timothy.

The second sentence—**“Grace be with you”**—was directed to the congregation at Ephesus. The word **“you”** is plural. This shows that Paul’s letter was primarily for Timothy but Paul did intend for the letter also to be read to the entire church family. Paul ended this letter with a prayer for God’s grace to be known to the Ephesian Church.

Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed Paul’s final instructions in 2 Timothy 4:9-22, we should live our lives in light of our approaching deaths.

The older we get, the more we think about death. Most of us don’t know when that day might be. Paul knew that he was about to die and he was very concerned to share some final instructions regarding final requests, sorrows, warnings, deliverances, greetings, and a benediction.

What final requests, sorrows, warnings, deliverances, greetings, and benediction will you leave for others? Let us so live our lives so that we can approach our deaths with confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church
is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and membership in his church family,
develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

This sermon, and other sermons, by the Rev. Freddy Fritz can
be found at:

1. <https://tampabaypresbyterian.org/SermonAudio>.
2. www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/freddy-fritz-sermons-11181.asp.
3. www.sermonaudio.com/source_detail.asp?sourceid=Fred-dyFritz.

Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church (PCA)

Answers for Life!

Address: 19911 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., Tampa, FL 33647

Telephone: (813) 973-2484

Fax: (813) 973-4673

Email: Office@TampaBayPresbyterian.org

Web site: www.TampaBayPresbyterian.org