10,29,26 2 Tim. Chapter 4, Paul's Final Deep-Dive into the End-Time Deception

We're moving into the last chapter of 2 Timothy. This is Paul's crescendo chapter to Timothy. I'll need to set the stage by defining a couple terms before we start because I'm starting to realize that the word "spiritual" has almost as many meanings in today's Christianity as there are churches professing it. So, in order to keep us all on the same page (since Paul uses this term numerous times in all his letters), here's what it means.

When it's used to distinguish between that which is "natural" vs. that which is "spiritual". the word in the Greek that is used for "spiritual" most often is "pneumatikos". "Natural" refers to that which unbelievers or carnal Christians use to make decisions and evaluations (in other words, decisions made from "human nature"). That which is "spiritual" doesn't have its source in our mind, our soul, it has it' source in the Holy Spirit communicating "spiritual" truth to our human spirit, which sends that communication on to our soul or mind. When that happens, we can see the true meaning of what's behind and inside the words on the pages of scripture.

The carnal Christians do not have an *activated* human spirit to receive spiritual truth from the Holy Spirit. They are depending on their mind and emotion (in other words, their soul) to discern reality. The spiritual man is listening to the Spirit of God, he has an "ear to hear what the Spirit is saying", and his soul or mind is subordinate to his spirit.

The natural man is "soulical" or "soulish"; the spiritual man is spiritual. The Soulical or "natural" man can't know the things of the Spirit of God, but the spiritual man can. The soul is meant to be secondary, not primary. The classic passage for this distinction is 1 Cor. 2:14 & 3:1;

> The (lit. "Soulical") man (or carnal Christian) does *not* receive the things of the Spirit of God . . . *nor can he know them*, because they are spiritually discerned . . . and I, brethren (Corinthian Christians) could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal . . .

The word “carnal” is Sarkikos which means, “governed by human nature, not by the Spirit of God.”

Obviously, the only way we can live in the reality of God’s Spirit is if we are spiritual people. If our soul (our mind and emotions) is the means we’re using to determine reality, we (quote) “are not able to receive the things of God”; not at a level that takes us beyond the academic into the realm of that which is spiritual Truth, as it is in the mind and heart of Christ.

Ok, all of this, so far, is just to ensure we understand the terms Paul is using.

As we saw last week in the quote I read by Sparks; “Christianity has become a system of human interpretation of the thoughts of God.” This was the enemy’s goal all along – to replace the spiritual with the natural and succeed in creating a “form of godliness” in which we are “ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth.”

So, when a Christian goes into action seeking to serve God, the distinction between natural and spiritual looks like this: Everything *we* do *for* Christ is called “dead works” (Heb. 6:1), and “wood, hay and stubble” (1 Cor. 3:12). It has no spiritual or eternal value because its source is in us; our creativity, our ideas of things we believe we should do motivated by our love for the Lord; in other words, our obedience to our sincere alignment with what we know of Christianity.

But that which *Christ* does in and through us is “good works” or “gold, silver and precious stones” because the Source of *this* activity is Christ. The creative and energetic works that *we* do out of gratitude to the Lord are “dead works”; only that which comes from the indwelling Spirit of Christ is spiritual and is *God’s* will for us, not *our* will for Him (as if we know better than Him what should be done).

Our Lord explained what this relationship was intended to be in passages like John 14:10; “The words that I speak to you I do not speak out from My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.”

The Source of the words and works of the Son of Man was His indwelling Father. The Source of *our* words and works are to be coming from the indwelling Christ.

This is Paul's prophetic description of final generation of Christians prior to the rapture – a global acceptance and embracing of a near perfect counterfeit Christianity, created by the minds of Christian leaders, which appeals to, and makes perfect sense to the natural or soulical man; but which is seen for what it is and is rejected by the spiritual man who can discern its source.

When we become Christians, we are no longer intended to be soul-based in our thoughts and conclusions, we are intended to receive all genuine Truth from the Holy Spirit communicating that Truth to our human spirit and *then* to the soul, to our minds. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit; that's exactly what we are now even though most Christians don't know how to live and function as spiritual people.

So, in principle, it's not complex, it's just an issue of what our Source of information is – is it men, is it us, or is it the Spirit of Christ? Is it from our soul or from God's Spirit? Are we soulical or spiritual (as we saw in 1 Cor. 2 & 3)? This distinction is a division in the body of Christ that separates those who are moving forward, through spiritual growth, as over against those who have settled into a Christianity, a "form of godliness", that is *not* aligned with the mind of Christ; but *looks* like it is.

This is Paul's emphasis in his final chapter in 2 Timothy, because this is the greatest danger we face in this final generation which Paul is writing about prophetically.

The first part of this chapter is basically a repeat of much of what he taught in 1 Timothy in the sections that were prophetic. But I'm not going to skip it just because we've already touched on it. If it's important enough for Paul to repeat this prophetic warning, then I'm assuming it's important for us to look at it again also.

What I *will* do though (this time), is include some things I didn't have time to add the last time we studied this and I'll also approach it from another angle that will hopefully make what Paul is emphasizing clearer to us. This may allow us to get a better idea of why this was so important to Paul (and to the Holy Spirit) that it would be doubled-down on in Paul's final letter to Timothy.

When I got into this more deeply, I realized *why* it's more important than we would normally think, why it's repeated so often for emphasis – it's not just another principle of our warfare that we should consider, and then move on, so try not to zone out on the parts of this that feel like unnecessary repetition. It *is* repetitious in places, but it's not unnecessary.

Ok, let's look at the first 5 verses:

> I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

I'm sure you've noticed by now, as we've gone through both of Paul's letters to Timothy, that Paul has cited several, what we might call 'pragmatic' exhortations to help Timothy deal with every-day kinds of situations and challenges common to anyone in a leadership position. But when you stand back and look at these two letters as a whole, it's obvious that the majority of what Paul wrote dealt with a combination of two major themes – the first is the danger of deception and the second is Paul's explanation of what a pastor needs to be and do in order to combat this.

There is so much that could have been written to Timothy about the Christian life, about what it is and how it's lived, so I think it's interesting (not necessarily surprising) that Paul would dedicate the majority of his instructions to Timothy to address the issue of deception.

It seems in Paul's mind (and that of the Holy Spirit who guided Paul's writings) that deception is the one most likely danger we face that could sabotage everything else we might learn (and then try to live) as Christians.

When Paul talks about us having to wrestle with principalities and powers, that wrestling match centers in their attempt to throw us off course in terms of knowing and living the truth about what this life is meant to be. I'm sure the enemy would just kill us all if he was allowed to, but since he's not, his agenda or tactics are focused on pulling us into an imitation Christianity that is very appealing, but lacks the present activity of Christ Himself. It's a man-made system of interpreting the thoughts of God by human wisdom and intellect, and it is designed to keep God's people in a place of excited and committed spiritual infancy.

I still remember the way Major Ian Thomas summed all this up when he said, "There is nothing more dangerous than unenlightened enthusiasm". And Sparks addresses it from this angle in *his* comments on 2 Tim. 4:3-4;

> Paul said to Timothy, "The time will come when they will not endure sound teaching; and they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." And he goes on to say that they will believe the lie instead of the truth. Why is that? Because these teachers appeal to the natural life. People do not like the teachers who tell them what is wrong, that this thing and that thing are contrary to God. They like leavened bread; it pleases the flesh.... He says there will be leaven, there will be corruption and defilement everywhere, but the teaching of the New Testament is: Keep yourselves doctrinally pure. See that your garments are not spotted. Walk in this sinful world as those who do not belong to its nature, its ways, it's so-called wisdom. Although there is leaven everywhere, you must be the unleavened bread. But the religious world may not like you, they will not like unleavened bread. It does not please the flesh, or the flesh-dominated soul, but the bread which is pure is pleasing to God. Compromised or watered down teaching is a leaven to the soul and a dishonor to God.

The other thing I gathered from Paul's emphasis on imitation and deception is that to him, this part of our battle is significantly more permeating in the Church than most Christians believe it is. We all know it's important to propagate the Truth; but according to what we see in Paul's description of this final generation, most of the Church won't know what the Truth is and will be propagating what Paul calls

“fables”. “Fables” doesn’t mean writings like those Aesop wrote, the word “mythos”, translated “fable” literally means, “A story that is an invention”; “a falsehood” or “misrepresentation of the Truth”.

If the enemy can move the Church corporate into an “invented” form of Christianity, there is a real sense in which he can win the minds of God’s people and reduce their spiritual resistance against his invasion of the Church. That’s why this extremely powerful and intelligent being, whom Jesus called “a liar from the beginning”, is driven to deceive us. For him, deceiving us is a survival issue.

We saw in the last couple of weeks that the battleground for all of us as related to the devises and work of the enemy is the “mind”. If Satan can replace the thoughts of God in our minds with Satan’s “inventions” and “stories” which misrepresent the Truth, we will be unable to understand, let along walk in the spiritual life we’re offered in Christ.

And because of the depth in which Paul understood this danger, he wrote things like this to Timothy (vs’s 2-3)

> Teach the word! Be ready in season and out of season (literally, “whether it’s convenient or inconvenient”) convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.

In other words, take the authority God has given you and go to war against anything and everything that would dishonor the Truth of God’s Word. Don’t hold back; don’t think this is less serious or less dangerous than it is; and do whatever you have to do to protect God’s people and demand that the honor of Christ be upheld.

This isn’t a game; it’s not a religion; it’s not a matter for discussion and debate; it’s a matter of spiritual life or death for the objects of God’s greatest love. Anyone who sees deception as something less than those things, is a person who does not understand what’s at stake. They’re just going to agree to disagree and hold hands, and sing the next chorus. Paul’s approach was significantly more severe than that.

It's impossible to claim to love God's people and to love the Lord, and at the same time take an apathetic, casual or halfhearted approach to the warnings given to us in the scriptures. We may not yet be at a place spiritually where we would feel like "warning others night and day for three years with tears" like Paul did (Paul didn't do that for everything, but he did for this). If we ever *do* see these things as Paul saw them, we would definitely not do little or nothing about them. A person doesn't pray 24/7 for three years with tears for something that is only mildly important.

Another obvious sign of Paul's concern about this was the way he began this last chapter of his letter to Timothy in vs. 1;

> I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom.

And then he closes that paragraph with vs. 5;

> But you be watchful in *all* things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

To me, those sentences indicate that Paul is hoping to get Timothhy's attention; first by reminding him that he will be held accountable for what he does with what Paul wrote; and second by directly commanding Timothy to (quote) "Fulfill your ministry".

You're in this position by God's grace; it's a position of both authority and responsibility; as a shepherd of the Lord's people, you are responsible for their protection from the wolves that seek to devour them. It would be unwise, let alone unloving, for you to allow the people God has entrusted to you to be harmed, to be deceived, when you have the information you need to protect them.

Just as an FYI – the word translated "evangelist" means simply "a bringer of good tidings", "a messenger". So, even though it can be used to describe someone who preaches the gospel to the lost (which Timothy would have been expected to do), it also describes someone who has been commissioned to bring the truth to those who need it – as a messenger or herald of God.

There's a spiritual gift of 'evangelist' (as we see in places like Eph. 4:11), but the word itself, depending on context, simply refers to someone who has been sent or commissioned to communicate a specific message from one person to another.

Now, I want to share a familiar passage to show what our responsibility is, and what it is not, when it comes to applying these things to our lives personally.

> (Ezek. 3:17-21) "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul. "Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you did not give him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless, if you warn the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also, you will have delivered your soul."

Regardless of what the message is that we are asked to communicate, we aren't held accountable for the *other* person's response. It could be a message of warning to the lost regarding salvation, or a warning to a believer regarding the danger they are in doctrinally, but whatever the Lord is asking us to do, if we don't want to be swallowed by a giant fish and end up delivering the message anyway, it would be wise to "do the work of a messenger" when those opportunities are presented to us.

I'm sure you noticed that specific passage in Ezekiel is the one Paul used to describe his motivation to warn the Ephesian elders about deception in Acts 20:26;

> I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

Paul is saying that he told these elders everything he was supposed to tell them and now it's up to them what they are going to do with it. The specifics of the warning he gave them was in Acts 20:29-31;

> For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

So, again, the issue was how to combat the tactics or "wiles" used by the enemy to infiltrate the Church and introduce false (sometimes translated "perverse") doctrine. The word itself literally means "misleading". It would be doctrine or teaching designed to "lead" a person in the wrong direction. All of this is identical to what we've been looking at in Paul's instructions to Timothy, so Timothy became responsible to carry that torch forward.

And Paul gives his reason for 'passing the torch' in vs. 6, "I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand."

I don't know if we will all know when our time has come to graduate, but Paul did, which gave him time to do what he could to prepare Timothy to move forward and, as we saw in 2 Tim. 2:2; "The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." The goal from day one was to have all these things we're studying passed on from generation to generation for 2000 years until a specific generation arrives that is exactly what Paul prophesied about in our passage in 2 Tim. 4.

We are there, which is great, because it means this Age is nearly complete, but it's also concerning in the sense that what we see predicted (prophesied) shows that the intensity of our heavenly conflict with the principalities and powers seeking to deceive us has increased massively over what existed before this generation.

So, now that we're here, whether we come out as overcomers or as spiritually defeated will depend largely on how seriously we take Paul's warnings. That's why

I'm being so annoyingly repetitious and dogmatic. There's never been as much at stake for the Church as what we are facing at our time in history.

We also saw in our last study that the primary means of end-time deception will be done by imitation, not by direct attack. There may be times when false doctrine surfaces and you will be able to spot the imitation and avoid it. But Satan is definitely capable of perfecting imitation on the level of our eyes and ears, meaning that what you see and hear could be *observationally* perfect – in activities, programs and even doctrine. In that case, the only way you can be safe is if you can use something other than your mind and emotion to detect what's happening, and that's where the spiritual sensing comes in.

We saw that it isn't unbelievers that make up the congregations of the last days imitation Christianity, it is believers who have no idea that what they are doing and perpetuating is a counterfeit. They have not engaged their spiritual discernment because they don't know what that is or how to use it. As a consequence, they believe things are fine when in reality, spiritually, their church is dead. In writing to Sardis, our Lord said;

> (Rev. 3:1) These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a reputation that you are alive, but you are dead."

The reputation of the believers in the church at Sardis, whether it was from their own self-estimation of their spiritual condition, or whether it was from the observation of the community around them, everyone agreed that Sardis was a very spiritually alive church – but Jesus said they were "dead". Not "dead" in relation to salvation; "dead" in relation to what the Lord means by spiritually alive.

Make this personal- as you sit in the front row, trying to make sense of what's happening around you, you're trying to be a Berean because you remember that you're living in the Laodicean Age of the church; so, you don't want to be critical or judgmental, but you know you need to be careful.

You may begin to sense that the one thing which is *the most important thing* in any church is missing; and that is the presence of Christ. Everything you see and hear

checks all the boxes, but it's an empty shell. It's a perfect "form of godliness" but it lacks the power of the Spirit of Christ. (Eph. 4:14) ". . . (immature) believers are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine". They have no depth, no certainty; they are unsure of what to believe or who's telling them the truth; so, they either follow the crowd, that which is popular, or they follow the most impressive and dynamic teachers.

But a person with fully developed spiritual senses can identify spiritual reality; versus unreality, even though what others are experiencing may *seem* perfect. This is one of the main reasons spiritual maturity is God's highest priority for every one of us.

Without effective discernment at the level of spiritual maturity, we will live in uncertainty and possibly in Laodicean or Sardis deception without even knowing it.

Now, let's say, hypothetically that you believe the Lord wants you to share your insights with someone so they can also see what you see. What do you do when that church literally appears to check all the boxes, but you're this one man or woman who senses that the church is spiritually dead. You're faced with "reputation" versus "reality" coupled with the inward sense that you should probably say something. Well, if you proceed with your sharing, this is what is likely to happen;

> When the spiritual stands to confront the popular and "natural," then there is going to be trouble. This is not now merely the reaction from the world: it is the reaction from religion. I would go further, and say it may be the reaction from Christianity. There is a very great difference between "natural" Christianity, on the one side, and spiritual Christianity, on the other; a great deal of difference. So much so, that this also becomes a battlefield – the battlefield of a lot of trouble.
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> Leave what's popular alone, and everything will go on smoothly and quietly. Leave the set order of things as it has been for quite some time; that framework of things as it has been constituted and set up and established by man; the Christianity which is the accepted system of things – and you will

> escape a great deal of trouble. But when you seek to bring in a truly spiritual order of things, trouble arises at once. And YOU are one accused of being the trouble maker! The truth is that the trouble lies in the existing condition, the situation; but it is only brought out and exposed by your action. And so spiritual men and women and spiritual ministry, throughout history, are called "trouble makers," because the two things cannot go on together. That is where Israel was. They had the traditions, they had the oracles, they had the ordinances, they had the testimonies; they had the forms, they had the system – they had it all; but, in the days of the prophets, there was this vast gap between the "externals" and "internals" of life in relation with God. The heart is far removed from the lips. The spiritual reality is not found in the outward. You may have it all – but then bring in the truly spiritual meaning of things, and trouble begins in that very realm. It is the trouble which arises when what is external and popular comes into conflict with something which is truly spiritual.

Think about this point Paul made in 2 Tim. 3:5 again for a minute. He told Timothy that our generation would primary be a “form” of godliness without spiritual power and life. The word for “form” in Phil. 2 “morphe” is the same as 2 Tim. 3. Phil. 2 tells us the Jesus took on the “morphe”, the “form” of Man, which is telling us that it was “perfect” or “exact”. When you put those together (the morphe in Phil. 2 with the morphe in 2 Tim. 3), the first is referring to the true form of Man as God intended Man to be, the other is referring to an exact *outward* form of Christianity (I use the word “outward” because Satan can’t duplicate inward spiritual reality).

That was 2 Tim. 3:5, and in 2 Tim. 3:8 Paul adds Jannes and Jambres (the great imitators). So, you can see in principle, that Satan’s goal for the last 6000 years has been to somehow develop a flawless counterfeit of God’s plan for when the Lord’s people gather to worship and learn from Him. It may not have been easy for him to build that, but in concept, the *goal* has been simple. Paul is showing us that in the final generation of the Church, the imitation Christianity that deceives the children of God will be so exact that only those with the ability to see the unseen – to spiritually discern reality over counterfeit, will be the remnant. It will be too precise and too outwardly perfect for anyone else to discern the difference.

This is just another reason why we have to press on and why, as we've seen in *both* of Paul's letters to Timothy, whoever is in leadership absolutely has to be able to see past the surface to the true spiritual condition of his church in order to protect God's people.

For all of us, what we are able to spiritually sense in the person of the pastor and in the atmosphere of the assembly has to take us beyond sound doctrine alone and beyond the capabilities in our soul and mind for emotional or intellectual evaluation. If we can't do that, if we can't go beyond our soul to our spiritual relationship and insights *from the Lord,* then we will eventually, gradually assimilate into that which most appeals to our natural senses and understanding.

If you continue to expose yourself to that which is false or superficial without making absolutely sure you're receiving the teaching you need to keep moving forward, you will eventually make an inward transition from having a genuine insight of spiritual life to becoming as blind, excited and committed as those who make up the counterfeit, and you won't even see it coming.

We can *say* we promise never to "lean unto our own understanding" of the reality around us, but we have to know how to ". . . in *all* our ways", align with the Lord's understanding and insight. If we can't see as He sees, we're going to be deceived, because Satan has reached his final goal – he now has a "morphe of godliness" that can convince and deceive the overwhelming majority of those who belong to Christ. This was Paul's prophetic warning to the final generation; it's our most difficult and important battle, and now it's all around us.

We used to be able to recognize dangerous pastors or churches by examining their doctrine – if it's sound, they're safe. And we believe we're even more safe if, in addition to correct doctrine, the people are friendly and the church has a lot of in-reach and outreach programs to help people and the worship band and songs are inspiring. And baptisms are off the charts this year, etc., etc.

That doesn't work anymore.

If the teaching is *obviously* inaccurate on the essentials of the faith (things you can't just 'overlook' for the sake of unity) then outward observation and evaluation might work; but things aren't that obvious any more.

We are now living in a generation that is significantly more advanced in the area of imitation than at any other time in history. We are meant to be spiritual people wrestling against spiritual enemies who have perfected their deceptive weapons and unless *our* main defensive weapon is spiritual (not intellectual or emotional or relational), we simply won't see what we need to see to avoid being deceived.

Those who are born-again into the world of the Spirit as members of a new creation humanity have to be able to grow to the place where they are able to see, to sense, that which is *not* part of their new humanity in Christ. They have to be able to sense the presence or absence of Christ in that which claims Him. And their minds and emotions, in other words, their "natural" powers of observation and examination, are completely helpless to give them what they need.

> Again (1 Cor. 2:14) "The natural or soulical man *cannot* receive the things of the Spirit of God . . . "

But in His grace, knowing what we'd be up against, God has provided a way for us to develop spiritual discernment, to see the invisible, in order to keep us safe and to enable us to help keep others safe.

> (Rev. 3:17-18) You say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

First, the Lord said; "You do not know" and then finally He told them they needed "eye salve, so that you may see." Their problem wasn't just moral or religious, it was a problem of spiritual eyesight. And that is the bottom-line reason why Laodicea *is* Laodicea; they *think* things are fine, they *think* they can see what's

needed, but things *aren't* fine; they are simply blind to their own spiritual condition.

The Truth would set them free. That's why God gave us the Truth, so that we can be free to breath the atmosphere of light and life, both of which are our inheritance in Christ. But pride, coupled with spiritual immaturity, causes us to grieve and quench the light offered to us because, after all, our pastor and church seem awesome, so why question anything; why go Berean when everything looks and feels great?

God *honored* the Bereans even when they questioned *Paul,* so especially in our generation, the Lord wouldn't fault anyone for spending some serious time in prayer and study to make sure they are safe. And if it does turn out that we are able to see some things we needed to see, we can be someone who could help others; which is one of the main reasons this is so important.

So, welcome to the essential nature of the word morphosis- the final and most successful deception of the entire church age – by God's grace, we've been prophetically warned in detail.

Finally, the last few verses in 1 Tim. 4 are Paul's closing to all he wanted Timothy to have while Paul was still alive. I'm only going to touch on a couple things that stand out; most of Paul's closing is both self-explanatory and pragmatic. Here's the overall section (vs's 7 and following);

> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.
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> Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.

> Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.
>
> At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also, I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!
>
> Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick. Do your utmost to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.
>
> The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

Ok, just to highlight a few things as we wrap up;

First, fighting this fight and staying faithful will gain us a position of authority (a crown) in the Lord's kingdom. We've spent a lot of time on that subject, but I just wanted you to see that Paul included this in order to remind and motivate Timothy to not give up, even though things may get very difficult.

Second, the way in which "loved His appearing" unfolds in the original text is pointing to those who are eagerly looking for Christ's "manifestation" (parousia in the Gk.) at His coming to take us home. The word "loved" is actually in the "perfect tense" not the past tense (agapao) which (quote);

> Indicates they had fixed their love on Christ's appearing at some time in the past and were still in that condition. Thus, the perfect tense speaks of the permanence or steadfastness of their love for Christ's appearing. The idea is that they had fallen in love with His appearing and were still in love with it as they wait for His full manifestation at His return. This brings to mind the bride (the Church) who is longing for her Bridegroom's coming.

In addition to these things, Paul tells Timothy about people and places relevant to Timothy's circumstances – people who Paul wanted Timothy to be wary of and why, and people Paul wanted Timothy to honor. And as I mentioned, Paul also adds some practical instructions like "Try to get here before winter, it will be cold and I could really use the cloak I left at Troas."

So, we'll end there and next week we'll start a new study and a new book. I'll leave you with a quote by Watchman Nee that can be an encouragement to keep in mind when you feel overwhelmed by this battle for life and light that we find ourselves in;

> John 14:18; "I will not leave you desolate as orphans; I will come unto you."
>
> The Lord will not leave us as orphans. He will himself take care of us, nourishing us, edifying us, and bearing the full responsibility for us. In other words, the indwelling Holy Spirit is to translate into our *subjective* experience the *objective* fact of what Christ has accomplished for us on the cross. The Spirit of truth is to guide us into *reality.*
>
> "Comforter" in the original includes two thoughts: one means "called to one's side"—that is, to one's aid. This is to say that the Holy Spirit is our present help. Whenever we need His aid, He is always alongside us to help. The other means "one who pleads another's cause"—an advocate. Christ appears before God to plead for us—that is, to plead for our good.

One of the biggest resistance mindsets against making sure that Christ, not us, is the Source of literally everything that matters in this life is unbelief. If we just stop and think this through, we have a God Who has chosen to be our Father as well as Creator, He is omniscient, there is nothing He doesn't know and the Cross alone should convince us that every decision He makes is coming from a place of everlasting love for us.

Why would we ever hesitate to allow His will to override ours? Why would we ever complain about the decisions He *does* make? We could never plan our own lives in a way that even comes close to being what would ultimately be in our best interest, and our Lord always moves in that direction for us. The wisdom of trusting Him

over us (or anyone for that matter) not only fits everything we see in the Bible about what God has shown us in His relationships with His people, but any other position is self-destructive compared to what will have if we “present our bodies as a living sacrifice” and take our hands off the steering wheel. Do we really think He can’t be trusted, or that we can?

Anyway, this is the reason getting to know Christ as He is opens the door to a life of faith and an ultimate outcome of victory – that’s His desire for us and He is completely able and more than willing to take us as far as we are willing to go.