

Faith That Finishes
Dr. John Carmichael

[2Ti 4:6-8 NASB95] 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future 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.

- The Apostle Paul wrote these words not from a pulpit but from a prison cell. His race was nearly run, his body weary, but his faith unbroken. He did not look back with regret; he looked forward with reward.
- As we move through this season of transition at North Church, we are reminded that finishing well matters as much as starting strong. Many begin with passion but fade when pressure comes. Paul shows us how to endure to the end with unshakable faith.

What does finishing faith look like for NT believers?

Here are five attributes of finishing faith from 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

I. Finishing Faith Lives with Eternal Perspective

- a. [2Ti 4:6 NASB95] 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.
- b. Paul likens his life to a drink offering—a complete outpouring to God. The Greek word for “departure” (analsis) describes a ship loosed from its moorings. Paul saw death not as defeat but as release into eternity.
- c. [Phi 1:21 NASB95] 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
- d. Faith that finishes lives for what is eternal, not temporary. Every sacrifice made for the gospel has eternal reward. Don’t fear transition or change. See it as a new assignment from God. Let every service, prayer, and gift be poured out for His glory.
- e. Evaluate your motives. Are you living for comfort or calling? Ask the Holy Spirit to renew your eternal focus.

II. Finishing Faith Fights with Perseverance

- a. [2Ti 4:7a NASB95] 7 I have fought the good fight...
- b. The word fought (Greek agon) gives us “agonize.” Faith is not passive. It contends. Paul didn’t fight people; he fought unbelief, discouragement, and spiritual opposition.
- c. [1Ti 6:12 NASB95] 12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
- d. The fight of faith is not about winning arguments. It’s about holding on to the promises of God when everything says otherwise.
 - i. Keep praying when answers delay.
 - ii. Keep giving when resources feel tight.
 - iii. Keep loving when it’s difficult.
- e. Resist spiritual fatigue. Be strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:10). Recommit now to the good fight, knowing that the Spirit empowers you to overcome every opposition.

III. Finishing Faith Runs with Endurance

- a. [2Ti 4:7b NASB95] ... I have finished the course ...
- b. Paul’s “course” was unique: his personal calling and obedience. The Greek word dromos (course) speaks of a marked path. He didn’t choose the race; he simply ran it to completion.
- c. [Heb 12:1-2 NASB95] 1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily

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entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- d. Every believer has a God-given race. Don't compare lanes. Stay faithful in yours.
- e. Endurance comes from focus on Christ, not circumstances. When you feel like stopping, remember Who called you.
- f. How? [Isa 40:31 NASB95] 31 Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up [with] wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.
- g. Ask the Lord for grace to keep running: through seasons of weariness, change, or uncertainty. He gives strength to the runner who refuses to quit.

IV. Finishing Faith Keeps (Guards) the Faith

- a. [2Ti 4:7c NASB95] ... I have kept the faith;
- b. To "keep" (tereo) means to guard or preserve. Paul had been entrusted with the gospel and had preserved it against false teaching and fear.
- c. [Heb 10:35-36 NASB95] 35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.
- d. Finishing faith guards truth in a world that abandons it.
 - i. Keep your faith when culture mocks it.
 - ii. Keep your faith when the answer delays.
 - iii. Keep your faith when your emotions want to give up.
- e. Reaffirm your trust; say aloud, "Lord, I still believe."

V. Finishing Faith Looks to the Reward

- a. [2Ti 4:8 NASB95] 8 in the future 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.
- b. The "crown" (stephanos) was given to victors, not spectators. Paul's crown was righteousness: both the reward of Christ's grace and recognition of a faithful life.
- c. [Rev 2:10 NASB95] 10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.
- d. The reward of faith is not earthly applause but eternal glory. God keeps records of every tear, offering, and prayer. Finishing well brings joy that outlasts every trial.
- e. Encourage weary believers: the crown is real, and it's waiting. Don't stop now! The finish line is in sight.

- **Faith that finishes is faith that refuses to quit until it sees Jesus face to face.**
- Paul's testimony reminds us that the Christian life isn't a sprint; it's a marathon of faith. He finished, not because he was strong, but because he kept his eyes on the One who strengthens.
- As North Church steps forward in this new chapter, may we, like Paul, fight well, run faithfully, and keep believing until we see the Lord.
- Your best days are not behind you. They are before you, because the same Spirit that sustained Paul still empowers you to finish.