2 Timothy 4:6-22

8-14-05

"Come Before Winter!"

1. Intro:

- 1.1. You've heard old soldiers compare their **battle scars** & **stories of war** when they get together. When we arrive at our heavenly home, I'm sure we will tell of the goodness & faithfulness of God, who brought us through every trial along the way.
 - Now, can you imagine being singled out as the only one to have never experienced sorrow?
 - During the Amer Civil War, at the battle of Lookout Mountain,

 Tenn., a surgeon asked a soldier where he was hurt. The wounded soldier replied, "Right near the top of the mountain".
 - 1.1.3. He was not thinking of his gaping wound but was only remembering that he had won the ground near the top of the mountain.
 - 1.1.4. In the end God will examine your life not for medals, diplomas, or degrees, but for **battle scars**. (scars of service)
- 1.2. **Outline:** 3 Accomplishments; 3 Appeals; 3 Requests; 3 Problem People; 3 Promises; 3 Important Words.

2. COME BEFORE WINTER! (6-22)

- 2.1. **3 ACCOMPLISHMENTS!** (6-8)
- 2.2. [1] I have **fought** the good fight I've done the best in my life's contest.
 - 2.2.1. At the height of WWII, Protestant theologian **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** was imprisoned for taking a stand against <u>Hitler</u>. Yet he continued to urge fellow believers to resist Nazi tyranny. A group of Christians, believing that Hitler was the Antichrist, asked Bonhoeffer, "Why do you expose yourself to all this danger? Jesus will return any day, and all your work and suffering will be for nothing." Bonhoeffer replied, "If Jesus returns tomorrow, then tomorrow I'll rest from my labor. But today I have work to do. I must continue the struggle until it's finished."²
- 2.3. [2] I have **finished** the race I've faithfully followed the course the Lord set before me.
- 2.4. [3] I have **kept** the faith I've maintained the sound doctrine of Christianity.
 - 2.4.1. This isn't Paul **boasting** of his accomplishments, but instead a **confident reflection** of his *life & ministry*.
 - 2.4.2. Here's what the grace of God has produced in me!

-

¹ Streams of the Desert; Dec.12; pg.461

²Galaxie Software. (2002; 2002). 10,000 Sermon Illustrations. Biblical Studies Press.

- 2.5. (6) Paul saw his approaching death as:
 - 2.5.1. {Do you see death in the same way? why or why not?}
 - 2.5.2. [1] The **Offering** of a **sacrifice** to God.
 - 2.5.3. [2] The **Ending** of a **difficult race**.
 - 2.5.4. [3] The Gaining of a glorious crown.
 - 2.5.4.1. This is the **Victor's crown** given to winners at the Greek Olympic Games.
 - 2.5.4.2. The Indians have a wonderful saying: "When you were born, you cried, and the world rejoiced. Live your life in such a manner that when you die, the world cries, and you rejoice."
- 2.6. Note: Past(fought), Present(finished, kept), & Future(crown).
- 2.7. (6) Departure (LKGNT) Euphemism for death. Used of a **ship** drawing up anchors; or a **soldier** or **traveler** pulling up camp.
 - 2.7.1. Lit. translation "I am ready to be poured out like a drink-offering, & the time is at hand for loosing the anchor & setting sail, for taking down the tent & moving on." (2 Cor.5)
 - 2.7.2. This is Paul's "Anchor Aweigh" speech "Weigh" comes from the archaic word meaning to heave, hoist or raise. "Aweigh" means that that action has been completed. The anchor is aweigh when it is pulled from the bottom. This event is duly noted in the ship's log.
 - 2.7.3. Paul had his **preliminary hearing** before Nero, & was expecting the **final one**. It wouldn't be crucifixion, as roman citizens were not crucified.
 - 2.7.3.1. If the death penalty was demanded it would be decapitation, hence the figurative ref. to a drink offering being poured out.
- 2.8. (8) Q: What kept Paul going for more than 30 yrs of tough ministry?
 - 2.8.1. He loved Christ's appearing! (2nd Coming)
 - 2.8.2. He crossed the line as the Victor, & was assured the emblem of Victory!
 - 2.8.3. What do they race for at the Tour de France?
 - 2.8.3.1. Why do they prepare some 22,000 miles a year for it?
 - 2.8.3.2. What do they endure this grueling 2000 mile race for? 2.8.3.2.1.A yellow Jersey!
 - 2.8.3.3. Gilbert Duclos-Lassalle summed up the purpose, "Why, to sweep through the Arc de Triomphe on the last day. To be able to say **you finished** the Tour de France!"
 - 2.8.3.4. Regarding Lance Armstrong's 7th win this year they say, "It's the end of an era!"
 - 2.8.4. Vince Lombardi said, "The quality of a man's life is in direct proportion to his commitment to excellence, regardless of his chosen field or endeavor.... I firmly believe that any man's finest hour -- his greatest fulfillment to all he holds dear -- is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle, victorious."

- 2.8.5. High in the Alps is a **monument** raised in honor of a faithful guide who perished while ascending a peak to rescue a stranded tourist. Inscribed on that memorial stone are these words: HE DIED CLIMBING. [May it be said of us Christian!]
- 2.9. **3 APPEALS!** (9-16)
- 2.10. [1] Timothy come (9,11) Christian companionship. His son in the faith. 2.10.1. Walter Winchell, *A friend is one who walks in when others walk out.*
- 2.11. [2] Timothy, bring Mark (11) He's useful same as 2:21. Mark is "suitable" for the Masters use!
 2.11.1. Paul was willing to forgive & forget, the mark of a great man.
- 2.12. [3] Timothy, I have Ephesus covered (12) 1 Tim.1:3 "remain".
- 2.13. **3 REQUESTS!** (13)
- 2.14. A cloak to warm his body & the Scriptures to warm his soul!
- 2.15. [1] His Cloak (LKGNT) It was a large sleeveless outer garment, made of a single piece of heavy material, w/a hole in the middle through which the head passed.
- 2.16. [2] His **Books** were probably some of his own writings.
- 2.17. [3] His **Parchments** a piece of skin prepared for writing. (OT Scriptures) 2.17.1. While awaiting trial, Paul would spend his time studying the Word. What an example to follow!
- 2.18. **3 PROBLEM PEOPLE!** (10; 14-15; 16)
- 2.19. [1] Demas (10) –
- 2.20. [2] Alexander (14,15) –
- 2.21. [3] Roman friends (16) –
- 2.22. (16) Defense The verb is technical for a witness or advocate standing forward in court on a prisoner's behalf. (LKGNT)
- 2.23. **3 PROMISES!** (17,18)
- 2.24. [1] God stood with & strengthened him –
- 2.25. [2] God delivered him –
- 2.26. [3] God preserved him -
- 2.27. (17) No matter what your **enemies** do, no matter what **people** do, no matter what your **friends** do...the Lord will never leave you or forsake you! (see Is.49:14-16)
- 2.28. Lions? Maybe the **literal lions** of the amphitheater, or the **Emperor Nero**, or maybe **Satan**?

- 2.29. **3 IMPORTANT WORDS!** (19-22)
- 2.30. Wow! Facing certain death, Paul still thought about **others**. (like Christ)
- 2.31. (20) Trophimus I have left...sick! Indicating to us that **not all saints** are to be **healed**, & that the **absence of healing** doesn't necessarily prove a <u>lack of spirituality</u>.
- 2.32. (21) Come before winter!
 - 2.32.1. This is dungeon talk! Paul, hidden beneath the streets of centuryone Rome. Isolated in that grim & grimy home. Stone blocks black w/age. A cold lonely prisoner whose days were numbered.
 - 2.32.2. Why? Once winter begins ships couldn't travel the Mediterranean.
 - 2.32.3. Come Timothy Before the unbearable cold. Before the final sentencing. Before the executioner's blade ends my earthly sojourn & sends me home.³
 - 2.32.4. See, more than a cloak, books, or parchments, he wanted him!!!
 - 2.32.5. Read Swindoll's Intro to "Come before Winter"!
- 2.33. Reminder: Opportunities don't last forever!
 - 2.33.1. It's before winter or Never!
 2.33.1.1. There are some things that will never be done unless you do them before winter.
 - 2.33.2. Q: Are there **opportunities** you are neglecting today that may soon vanish? **People** you should contact? **Decisions** you should make?
 - 2.33.3. Q: Do you hear a voice calling from an old friend? A strained relationship? A family member you've been shunning? An elderly family member or friend in their twilight years whispering Come before winter?
 - 2.33.4. Q: What about Christ's voice calling you to come before winter?
 2.33.4.1. He never calls for anyone to come tomorrow but it is always today! "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."
 - 2.33.5. Today is yours; Tomorrow may be too late...Come before winter!
- 2.34. Grace be with you! Grace was the key word in his ministry. 2.34.1. May it be the key word in **our lives** as well!
- 2.35. Bonhoeffer said, "If Jesus returns tomorrow, then tomorrow I'll rest from my labor. But **today** I have work to do. I must continue the struggle until it's finished."

_

³ Chuck Swindoll; Bible Study Guide; pg.27