

2025 10 19 2 Tim 4:6-8
Rev. Dr. Hae-Jeong Yoon

Finishing Well

Imagine that your life finishes at the end of this year, December 31, 2025. A couple of months are left. It is the time like you are in the hospital that the doctor has told you that your life is all done. Then, you face the inevitable question: “Did I live it well? Did I do all the best before God? Will Jesus Christ, the righteous judge, say “Well done, good and faithful servant”? There will be a significant advantage to having a trial run at our own mortality.

In **Psalm 90**, Moses speaks about how to acquire a heart of wisdom to understand the best way to live. He prays, **“Teach us to number our days so that we may obtain a heart of wisdom.”** Simply put, remembering that our lives are short and our deaths are imminent can lead to great life-revolutionizing wisdom. Periodically contemplating these truths can bring profound insights.

By counting your days, you become more aware of the present moment. Each sunrise presents an opportunity, each breath a blessing, and each moment a chance to make faithful choices. My Korean teacher, Suk Hun Ham, on his 75th birthday, shared that he had lived 27,375 days. If he continues to live until 80, he has 2,825 days left. This realization was truly awakening, making me realize how limited our time on Earth is.

This brings us to one of the most powerful passages in all of Scripture. In **2 Timothy 4:6-8**, the Apostle Paul writes from a Roman prison, knowing his execution is imminent. Listen to his words: **“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all who have loved his appearing.”**

Paul isn't boasting here; he's reflecting. At the end of his life, he can look back with confidence, not because he was perfect, but because he was faithful. Notice his declarations: “I have **fought the good fight**” - he engaged in the spiritual battle. “I have **finished the race**” - he persevered to the end.

1

What is the meaning of keeping the faith through good fight and endurance? When you have faith in somebody, it means you take them at their word. You count on them to live up to what they say. You trust their counsel. You have confidence in their promises. When Paul said, “I have kept the faith,” he meant, “I have kept on taking Christ at his word, I have kept on counting on what he said, I have kept on trusting his counsel, I have kept on having confidence in his promises.”

If we claim to have faith in his death as a means of forgiveness for our sins, yet we persist in acting as though many of his promises are false (for instance, the promise that if you seek his kingdom first, then all will be added unto you), then we are not truly trusting Christ. Faith in Christ is faith in all his words, because it is faith in his integrity and his power. Therefore, when Paul said that he has kept the faith, he meant that he has consistently upheld Christ's word.

Keeping the faith must be incredibly challenging. It involves spiritual battles and endurance, which inevitably bring stress, strain, and discomfort. Think about boxers who endure blows to the face and runners who push themselves to the limits of their physical and mental tolerance. Both engage in long, monotonous hours of training. It's no wonder it's hard. Jesus put it this way: **"The gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and many enter by it. But the gate is narrow and the way is *hard* that leads to life, and few find it."** It certainly seems difficult. Yes, it is.

What makes it challenging? Simply put, **our old selves make it difficult.** How can we overcome this obstacle? By entering into the abiding mode of Jesus! Receive the power of the Holy Spirit! Transform your thought pattern into that of a true self by thinking, *"I am maturing; I am gaining patience; I am growing in Jesus; Jesus is holding my hands; I can enjoy deeper communion with Jesus; I can see how God works in this; and I can surrender more to God!"*

This idea is said in the scripture **Matthew 11:28–30, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is *easy* and my burden is *light*."** So, if you yoke up with Jesus, it becomes easy.

This is the beautiful paradox of Christian living. We are in a battle, but we are not fighting alone. We are running a race, but we are not running in our own strength. When we dwell in Christ and abide in His presence, the battle becomes His battle, and the race becomes His race.

All of us tend to overcome obstacles *on our own*. It's humiliating to accept *help*, even from God, deep down in our hearts. We don't want to appear helpless, so we don't trust God's mercy. If this tendency persists, faith will be a struggle.

He reminds us that in all of us there remains **the old self** to make faith a struggle. Regarding how to deal with our old self, Paul speaks, "So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus." (Romans 6:12) It means, do not respond to the old self; choose new self's thoughts that are aligned with the HS. That is the key.

2

Paul proclaims, "I have completed the race and maintained my faith. Now, a crown of righteousness has been laid upon me." While you can run five miles, ten miles, or even twenty miles in a marathon, the ultimate reward is not the distance you cover but the triumph of crossing the finish line. Revelation repeatedly emphasizes this principle: **"To him who**

conquers, I will grant the privilege of eating from the tree of life, which is located in the paradise of God.” (Revelation 2:10) “Be faithful to death, and I will grant you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2:11) “He who conquers shall not be subject to the second death.” (Revelation 3:5) Maintaining faith is not a one-time event but a lifelong commitment.

How can we practically live each day as if it might be our last, while also responsibly planning for the future? How can we find a balance between urgency and peace? What is the way?

Dwell in Jesus and abide in Jesus. Let it be the guiding principle of our lives. It's like receiving oxygen through breathing prayers and maintaining constant communion with the Lord. You receive wisdom of God here. This connection empowers us to overcome the three adversaries of our faith: the world, our own prideful nature, and Satan. These three entities relentlessly attempt to corrupt all God's good creations into idols by enticing us to place greater trust in people and material possessions than in the divine. Every day, these enemies present us with choices between God's path and our own, between truth and deception, and between love and selfishness. Our spirit should be awakened, not remain dormant.

This spiritual warfare isn't a dramatic Hollywood special effect; it's often quiet and subtle. It's the choice to forgive when we want to hold a grudge, the decision to speak truth when a lie is easier, and the commitment to serve others when we'd rather serve ourselves. It's the discipline to pray when we'd rather sleep, to read Scripture when we'd rather scroll social media, and to gather with believers when we'd rather stay isolated. The enemy of our souls doesn't usually attack with obvious temptations; he attacks often with discouragement, distraction, and delay. He whispers, *“You can start tomorrow,” “You're too busy today,” and “You're not making any real difference anyway.”*

This is why daily time with God is so crucial. They're not just good habits, but weapons of warfare. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit in the battle against Satanic power. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, Jesus, who was the Word of God, used the Word of God for victory. How much more do we need the Word in our hearts? Satan is helpless before the Word of God. The fight of faith is a lifetime of wielding the Word of God against the deceits of our own heart and against the wiles of the devil.

When the year 2025 finishes, at the imaginary last moment of your life, what would you say? One will say, "I fought no fight because I felt no great desire to follow Christ's teachings and trust his promises." Another will say, "I felt some desire to trust Christ and go his way, but whenever a conflict arose, I was defeated every time. I really didn't fight a very good fight." And a third will say, "Praise God, it was a hard but glorious year. The Word of God came alive for me. The power of Jesus was in me and helped time and time again to overcome difficult moments. It wasn't always easy, but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord."

May this blessing be yours while you prepare for the rest of the year!