

A Faith That Leaves a Legacy

Series Closing Message

Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:7

Theme: *Our greatest testimony is not only what we believed, but how faithfully we lived.*

2 Timothy 4:7 (ESV) — “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

Introduction: What Will You Leave Behind?

Over the last several weeks, we have talked about what it means to have **a faith that works**.

We have talked about a faith that changes us.

A faith that is lived out.

A faith that reaches others.

A faith that stands firm when life gets difficult.

A faith that lives expectantly because Jesus is coming again.

And now, as we close this series, I want us to think about one final question:

What will our faith leave behind?

Every one of us is leaving something behind.

We leave behind memories.

We leave behind relationships.

We leave behind words that people remember.

We leave behind examples that people either follow or avoid.

And if God gives us enough time, we will leave behind a legacy.

But a legacy isn't just about what we leave **to** people.

It is about what we leave **in** people.

Paul's words in 2 Timothy 4 are some of the most powerful words in Scripture.

He didn't say, "I built the biggest church."

He didn't say, "I became famous."

He didn't say, "I accomplished everything I wanted."

He said:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

At the end of his life, Paul knew what mattered.

He had kept the faith.

And that is the kind of legacy God wants us to leave.

1. A Legacy Begins With How We Live

Paul said:

"I have fought the good fight."

Paul's faith wasn't just something he talked about.

It was something he lived.

He faced persecution.

He faced rejection.

He faced hardship.

He was beaten, imprisoned, shipwrecked, and misunderstood.

But through all of it, he kept following Jesus.

That's what we've been talking about throughout this entire series.

Faith isn't just what we believe on Sunday. Faith is how we live on Monday.

It's easy to say we have faith when everything is going well.

It's harder to live by faith when the diagnosis comes.

When the bills are tight.

When relationships are difficult.

When people disappoint us.

When the answer doesn't come as quickly as we hoped.

When we don't understand what God is doing.

That's when faith becomes visible.

Our children don't just hear what we teach them.

They watch how we live.

Our friends don't just hear what we say about Jesus.

They watch how we respond when life gets hard.

People are watching.

And our lives are preaching a sermon every day.

The question is: What are we preaching?

2. A Legacy Is Built Through Faithfulness

Paul said:

“I have finished the race.”

He didn't say the race was easy.

He said he finished it.

There is something powerful about simply staying faithful.

We live in a culture that celebrates the beginning.

New Year's resolutions.

New opportunities.

New projects.

New churches.

New ministries.

But God isn't only looking for people who start well.

God is looking for people who finish well.

You don't have to be the most talented person in the room.

You don't have to have the biggest platform.

You don't have to be the most gifted preacher, teacher, singer, leader, or evangelist.

Just be faithful.

Keep serving.

Keep praying.

Keep worshiping.

Keep giving.

Keep loving people.

Keep showing up.

Keep trusting God.

Keep your eyes on Jesus.

There will be seasons when you don't feel like you're accomplishing much.

There will be seasons when you wonder if what you're doing matters.

Keep going.

Because sometimes the greatest testimony isn't what happened in one spectacular moment.

It's the testimony of someone who simply said:

“By the grace of God, I didn't quit.”

3. A Legacy Is More About People Than Things

One of the greatest mistakes we can make is thinking our legacy is about what we accomplish.

It isn't.

It's about who we influence.

Paul invested in people.

He disciplined Timothy.

He encouraged churches.

He trained leaders.

He preached the Gospel.

He poured his life into others.

And when Paul was gone, the work continued.

That's legacy.

Legacy is when what God has done in you continues through someone else.

Maybe you don't realize it, but somebody is watching you.

Somebody is learning from your faith.

Somebody is encouraged because you keep showing up.

Somebody is learning how to pray because they watched you pray.

Somebody is learning how to forgive because they watched you forgive.

Somebody is learning how to worship because they watched you worship.

Somebody is learning how to remain faithful because they watched you remain faithful.

You may not see the impact today.

But don't underestimate what God can do through a faithful life.

4. Our Legacy Should Point People to Jesus

Paul didn't say:

"I have kept my reputation."

He said:

"I have kept the faith."

That's important.

Because our goal isn't for people to remember **us**.

Our goal is for people to remember **Jesus**.

If people remember how talented we were but don't remember Jesus, we've missed it.

If people remember how successful we were but don't remember Jesus, we've missed it.

If people remember our opinions but don't remember our testimony, we've missed it.

The greatest legacy we can leave is one that points people toward Christ.

We want our children to know Jesus.

We want our grandchildren to know Jesus.

We want our friends to know Jesus.

We want our community to know Jesus.

We want the next generation to know that Jesus saves, Jesus heals, Jesus restores, Jesus forgives, and Jesus is coming again.

That's a legacy worth leaving.

5. Don't Wait Until the End of Your Life to Start Leaving a Legacy

Sometimes we think legacy is something we think about when we're older.

But legacy is being built right now.

Every conversation.

Every decision.

Every Sunday.

Every prayer.

Every act of kindness.

Every time we choose forgiveness instead of bitterness.

Every time we choose faith instead of fear.

Every time we choose obedience instead of convenience.

We're building something.

The question isn't:

“What will people say about me when I'm gone?”

The better question is:

“What am I putting into people while I'm here?”

Because your legacy is being built today.

6. The Greatest Legacy Is Finishing Faithful

Paul's final words are powerful because he could look back and say:

"I have fought."

"I have finished."

"I have kept."

There is a sense of completion.

He didn't say, "I did everything perfectly."

Paul had failures.

Paul had struggles.

Paul had moments of weakness.

But he remained faithful to Jesus.

And that should give us hope.

Because God isn't asking us to be perfect.

He's asking us to be faithful.

There will be mistakes along the way.

There will be disappointments.

There will be seasons when we fall short.

But get back up.

Keep walking.

Keep trusting.

Keep your eyes on Jesus.

Because the goal isn't simply to start the Christian life.

The goal is to finish faithful.

Conclusion: What Will Your Final Testimony Be?

Imagine standing before God at the end of your life.

Imagine looking back over everything.

The houses won't matter.

The vehicles won't matter.

The bank accounts won't matter.

The titles won't matter.

The applause won't matter.

What will matter is whether we were faithful to Jesus.

I want my testimony to be simple.

I want to be able to say:

I fought the good fight.

I finished the race.

I kept the faith.

And I want the people who knew me to be able to say:

"He loved Jesus."

"He loved people."

"He stayed faithful."

"He didn't give up."

"He pointed us toward Christ."

That is a legacy worth leaving.

Final Challenge

As we close this series, I want you to ask yourself three questions:

1. What am I passing down?

What are my children learning from my faith?

What are the people around me learning from the way I live?

2. Who am I investing in?

Who needs encouragement?

Who needs discipled?

Who needs someone to believe in them?

Who can I help take their next step with Jesus?

3. Am I finishing well?

Don't worry about how somebody else is running their race.

Run yours.

Don't compare your calling to somebody else's calling.

Be faithful to what God has placed in front of you.

Don't worry about being remembered by everybody.

Live in such a way that the people God has placed around you are changed because they encountered Jesus through your life.

Final Thought

We began this series talking about **a faith that works.**

And now we end by realizing that a faith that works becomes **a faith that lasts.**

A faith that lasts becomes **a faith that influences.**

And a faith that influences becomes **a faith that leaves a legacy.**

You may never know how many lives your faith will touch.

You may never see all the fruit.

You may never know who was watching when you chose to stay faithful.

But keep going.

Keep serving.

Keep believing.

Keep loving.

Keep reaching.

Keep standing.

Keep your eyes on Jesus.

And when your race is finally finished, may you be able to say the words Paul said:

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

And may the generation coming behind us be able to look at our lives and say:

“They showed us what it looks like to follow Jesus.”

That's a faith that works.

That's a faith that lasts.

And that's **a faith that leaves a legacy.**

Closing Prayer

Father,

Thank You for the faith You have given us.

Thank You for carrying us through every season, every battle, every disappointment, and every victory.

Lord, help us not just to believe in You, but to live for You.

Help us to be faithful when nobody is watching.

Help us to keep going when the road gets difficult.

Help us to invest in the people You have placed around us.

Let our homes, our church, our community, and our lives point people toward Jesus.

And when our race is finished, let us be able to say:

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

May the generation that follows us know You because we were faithful to You.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.