

# A Message from Paul

The Apostle Paul could be described as a 'giant of faith'. Was there ever a greater follower of the Lord Jesus? He listed all that had happened to him since he embraced that way of life, including beatings, wrongful imprisonments and shipwrecks (2 Corinthians 11:22-28).

He was prepared to stand before kings and rulers, proclaiming the Gospel, and to be in chains for the hope he preached:

*And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers (Acts 26:6).*

*For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain (28:20).*

In 2 Timothy 3:14-17 he showed Timothy that there was a set way of life for men and women, outside of which there is no salvation. He stated that the Bible was given through inspiration, meaning that God had breathed out His Word, an infallible message. All who read it should realise that the mightiest of beings in the universe is speaking to us.

Therefore, how could we possibly ignore it? What is its purpose? That we might be part of the family of God, following Jesus and his example of how each Christian should live.

## Active Faith

Paul told us to go out and preach this word, just as he did, to dispel ignorance about the Gospel. He encouraged his fellow preacher, Timothy:

*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 (2 Timothy 4:2-3).*

Accepting that he was about to die a martyr's death, Paul showed his wonderful faith, when he said:

*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 (v7-8).*



Most are frightened to die, but Paul showed another view. To him, death was just a sleep with the prospect of being 'awoken', raised from the dead, by Jesus at his return. He looked forward to the reward of eternal life.

If we knew that we were to die shortly, could we give such a powerful résumé of our faith about the future ?

## The Future

Paul was looking forward to when Jesus is to return as king over all nations, and when he will bring dramatic changes to mankind's way of life. Crime, violence, war and death will disappear under his wise rule. Disease and disability will become things of the past. Sinners seeing all the wonderful changes will learn with joy the wonderful way of salvation. There will be marvellous effects everywhere. The desert will blossom with superb fragrance. Jew and Gentile will work together gladly for it will be a true brotherhood. Unemployment will be no more and famine will have disappeared. God's plan will come to its predetermined end.

Now let us listen to this message from near the end of the Bible, a prophecy of the Kingdom of God:

*I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:3-4).*

Could there be a more exhilarating message? This promise is for everyone who believes God's Words:

*He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son (v7).*



The Lord Jesus Christ concludes:

*Behold I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book... Behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every one according to his work (Revelation 22:7, 12).*

The words of the Bible were written so that we might search for and find its great truths. We are dying creatures, but offered a vital way of salvation. We can only be in God's family by faith and baptism. There is no other way. But if we follow it, we can live a life of hope and purpose, waiting for the return of Jesus and the Kingdom of God.

Here then is the supreme message of the ages, the message which Paul preached and wanted everyone to share. It is a marvellous invitation, one we can share with Paul and those other faithful believers of all ages. We can share his confidence:

*For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day (2 Timothy 1:12).*

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