



"Fighting Faithfully to the Finish" – June 2024

Thoughts to Ponder

When Paul wrote these words, he was in a prison in Rome knowing that he would soon be executed: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (II Timothy 4:7)

1. Paul summarized his life with the words: fought, finished, faithful.
 - a. When you look back on your life, what words or brief sentences would best capture the essence of your time on earth?
 - b. Will those who write your epitaph give the same summary? If not, how will their perceptions differ?

2. Few would quibble with the image of life as a battle because it never stops being a struggle.
 - a. Please recount some of your early and ongoing struggles.
 - b. When and how did you learn that life does not owe you a living?

3. Paul survived his many struggles because “the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength.” (II Timothy 4:17)
 - a. Recount some of the situations in which people you were counting on let you down. Why did they fail to meet your expectations?
 - b. Please explain how you came to believe that “only the Lord is finally and fully faithful.” If you don’t believe this, who have you found to be more trustworthy?

4. In that Roman cell, Paul saw life as a race that he had successfully finished.
 - a. When do you think the race began for Paul? What did the finish line look like for him? What guidelines governed Paul’s life?
 - b. How do you define a successful life?

5. With the words “in heaven a crown is waiting for me” (II Timothy 4:8) Paul was saying that he did not see death as an end, but as a freeing departure from this world’s constraints. Do you see death as something to be feared or to be confidently awaiting? Please explain your answer.

