

Message Four

**Fighting the Good Fight,
Finishing the Course, and Keeping the Faith
to Receive the Reward of the Heavenly Kingdom**

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 4:7-8, 18

I. “I have fought the good fight”—2 Tim. 4:7a:

- A. A proper Christian life involves fighting the good fight against Satan and his kingdom of darkness and for the interests of God’s kingdom—Eph. 6:10-19.
- B. Whenever we minister Christ to others, we find ourselves in a battle; hence, we should be soldiers fighting for God’s interests—2 Tim. 2:3-4.
- C. To fight the good fight of the faith means to fight for God’s New Testament economy; in particular, it is to fight for Christ as the embodiment of God and the church as the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 6:12; 1:4; Col. 2:9, 19.
- D. The Lord’s ministry is the sounding of the trumpet for the army to go to war; to war the good warfare is to war against the different teachings of the dissenters and to carry out God’s economy according to the apostles’ ministry—1 Cor. 14:8; 1 Tim. 1:18; Num. 10:9; Judg. 7:18.

II. “I have finished the course”—2 Tim. 4:7b:

- A. A proper Christian life involves running the course for the carrying out of God’s economy according to His eternal purpose—1 Cor. 9:24.
- B. In order to run the race, we need to put away every encumbrance, every unnecessary burden or impediment—Heb. 12:1.
- C. We run the race by looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith—v. 2.
- D. We need to run the race with endurance, suffering the opposition with endurance and never growing weary or fainting in our souls—vv. 1, 3.

III. “I have kept the faith”—2 Tim. 4:7c:

- A. A proper Christian life involves keeping the faith for participation in the divine riches in God’s economy—1 Tim. 1:19; 3:9; 4:1; 6:12; Titus 1:4; Jude 3.
- B. To keep the faith is to keep the entire New Testament economy of God—the faith concerning Christ as the embodiment of God and the mystery of God and the church as the Body of Christ and the mystery of Christ—1 Tim. 1:4.

IV. Those who fight the good fight, finish the course, and keep the faith will receive the crown of righteousness and will be saved into the heavenly kingdom”—2 Tim. 4:8, 18:

- A. The crown of righteousness is a reward that will be given to all who love the Lord’s appearing—v. 8:
 - 1. The Lord’s appearing, His coming back, is a warning, an encouragement, and an incentive to us—Matt. 24:42.
 - 2. We should love the Lord’s appearing and look forward to it with earnest expectation and joy—Titus 2:13.

3. Loving the Lord's appearing is in contrast to loving the present age, the world now before us—2 Tim. 4:10.
 4. If we love the Lord's appearing, we will take sides with Him, not with the world, and we will fight for His interests—Matt. 6:9-10; James 4:4.
- B. The overcoming believers will participate in the heavenly kingdom, the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens—2 Tim. 4:18; Matt. 7:21:
1. The overcomers will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father—13:43.
 2. In the heavenly kingdom the overcomers will drink the cup of the new covenant anew with their Lord—26:29.
 3. In the heavenly kingdom the overcomers will enter into the Lord's joy and thus gain their soul, save their soul, and enjoy the salvation of their soul — Matt. 10:39; 16:25-26; 25:21, 23; Luke 9:24; Heb. 10:39; 1 Pet. 1:5.
 4. In the heavenly kingdom the overcoming believers will reign with Christ and rule over the nations—Rev. 20:4; 2:26-27.
- C. To receive the reward of the heavenly kingdom is to have the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in a particular way; this special portion will be the prize to His faithful followers—Matt. 25:21, 23; Phil. 3:14; Rev. 17:14.