

**“BE IMITATORS OF ME  
(PAUL), AS I AM OF  
CHRIST.”**

---

**2 TIM 4:6-8; 16-18**

GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

OCTOBER 27, 2019

"Be imitators of me (Paul), as I am of Christ."

2

## **SCRIPTURE READING 2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8; 16-18**

---

**2Ti 4:6-8 ESV) "6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.**

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

"Be imitators of me (Paul), as I am of Christ."

3

---

**8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." (2Ti 4:6-8 ESV)**

"Be imitators of me (Paul), as I am of Christ."

- 4 (2Ti 4:16-18 ESV) "16 ¶ At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them!**
- 17 But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.**

"Be imitators of me (Paul), as I am of Christ."

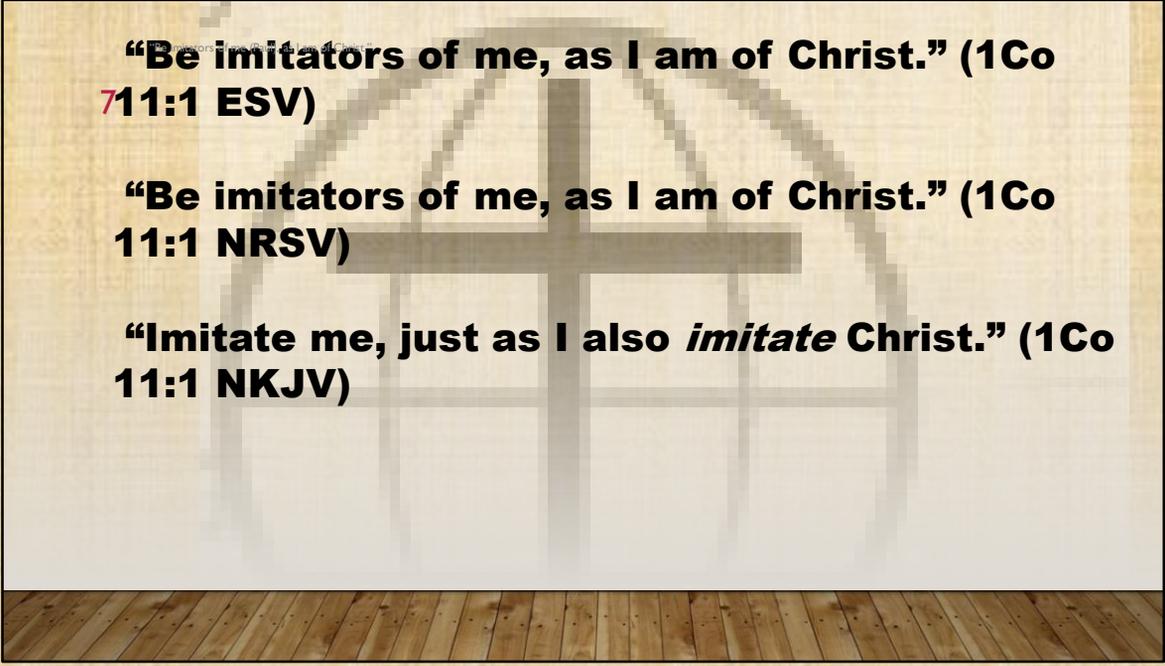
**5 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen." (2Ti 4:16-18 ESV)**

"Be imitators of me (Paul), as I am of Christ."

6

**THESE ARE GOD'S INSPIRED WORDS**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIFT OF THE APOSTLE  
PAUL TO THE CHURCH  
AMEN**



**“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” (1Co  
7:11:1 ESV)**

**“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” (1Co  
11:1 NRSV)**

**“Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.” (1Co  
11:1 NKJV)**

The apostle Paul like all the other apostles is a gift to the church. He is part of the foundation, Christ being the cornerstone.

He was called by God in a very dramatic way. Prior to his conversion, he was a zealous Pharisee passionate about destroying the church then called The Way.

When Jesus met him on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians, he asked him, **“Why are you persecuting me.”**

In that encounter with Jesus, Paul’s life was completely transformed as the Holy Spirit entered his life. He was given a very special mission to proclaim the good news of the gospel.

Here is the mission he was given through one of God’s servant:

"Be imitators of me (Paul), of those who are imitating me."  
**(Ac 9:13-16 ESV) "13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem.**

**14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name."**

"Be imitators of me (Paul), as I am of Christ."

**15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.**

**16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.'" (Ac 9:13-16 ESV)**

The apostle Paul was very faithful to his mission. It is clear as we read in the biblical book of Acts and in his epistles.

As Jesus had foretold Ananias, he suffered much in fulfilling the commission, the assignment, the charge given to him.

**His message was to be delivered to the Gentiles, to kings and to the children of Israel.**

Some received the message as they responded to Paul's message of the good news found in Jesus Christ. Like the prophets of old, his message was not generally well received by the majority.

He suffered much. He was laughed at, scorned, whipped, imprisoned, stoned and shipwrecked, among his many other trials.

Even some of the churches he worked with twisted his teaching. One example he gives in his writings is good orators tried to outdo him. They were trying to minimize both him and his teaching.

He had to deal with the division within the church.

He had to deal with people going back to legalism. In Galatia, some reverted back to trying to be justified before God through keeping the law rather than by simply accepting God's gift of grace. He had to send them a very corrective letter (epistle to the Galatians).

Some members of the church in Corinth took the Lord's supper irreverently. In that church, he had to deal with divisions and factions. The list goes on.

In all these trials, he never stopped showing concern and love for the members of those churches. He knew they were loved by God and chosen for a special purpose as firstfruits.

Not all was negative. As in today's church congregations, there were numerous positives.

He found encouragement in Christ and also in the fact that many church members remained faithful and supported him both in their prayers and with financial giving as they help to look after his physical needs.

Whatever situation he faced and encountered, he knew God was with him. He learned to live in plenty and in want. He learned to live contentedly when all his physical needs were met and when they were not.

He was very courageous never flinching from the mission.

This was his main message.

**3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,**  
**4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,**  
**5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.” (1Co 15:2-5 ESV)**

Some, among the Corinthian congregation were saying that there was no resurrection from the dead (verse 12). They were scoffing and mocking the teaching of the apostle Paul.

As we can see, as he fulfilled God's mission for him, his life was not easy. It presented many, many challenges.

With this background, it helps us appreciate and value what the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy in his last letter to him.

Paul knew that he had reached the end of his life.

The context of chapter 4 of 2 Timothy is the following:

**1 – He instructed Timothy to preach the word in and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.**

**2 – Timothy would face trouble because some would not want sound doctrine. They would accommodate teachers who would accommodate their own desires. The bible says they would have itching ears.**



God's message to the world was not popular in Paul's day. It is not popular in our day because sin blinds people. We prefer to hear that our way of behaving, reasoning and thinking is better than God's.

At the end of his life, Paul could say that he had remained faithful to his calling all of his life.

He completely realized that he was not saved by his own works but because he was saved God had assigned him works. His work was consequent to God's gift and not a way to receive God's gift.

The apostle Paul met personally with Jesus, as we read in his epistle to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 12).

We might be surprised to hear that we also hear from Jesus just like Paul but in a different way.

"Be imitators of me (Paul), as I am of Christ."

12

## HEARING GOD TODAY



Reading  
**THE BIBLE** to  
Hear God

[alifeofprayer.com](http://alifeofprayer.com)

We are hearing God today as we read his inspired word. We hear God every day when we study God's word!

13

"I have fought  
the good fight,  
I have finished  
the race,  
I have kept  
the faith."  
-2 Timothy 4:7

The apostle Paul kept the faith. We are called to imitate him as he imitated Jesus.

We are to stay faithful to God whatever befalls us, whatever happens.

Paul had a mission to share the good news of the gospel. God has given this same charge to the church. We are also to point people to Jesus. Some will accept him and some will not. We know that we do not convert anyone. God does through the work of the Holy Spirit. Still God has called us to participate in what He is doing. He has given the responsibility to his church to **"go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."** (Matt 28:18-20)

As a result of participating in God's work, he fought the good fight. He was never ashamed to be identified with the head of the church, Jesus. He knew very well that he could not do that alone. He relied on the strength and the empowerment given him by God's Holy Spirit.

As we imitate Paul as he imitated Christ, it is very evident that because of his being

united in Christ through the Holy Spirit that he loved the brethren. He loved those who were mature and he loved those who were weak.

Just like Jesus, he was able to meet people where they were. He was never free from the law of Christ. In his humility, he could love people whatever their status.



Paul's great desire was that people he met would come to realize that the only way to have eternal life is to have faith in God the Father and in Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

In our world, we meet all kinds of people.

We meet people who are confused because of the market place of all kinds of ideas. They do not know what to believe.

We meet people who plainly reject Christianity because they do not understand what Christianity is.

We meet people who think they know what Christianity is but they don't.

We meet people whose only sense of that is right and wrong is their intuition, as in the book of Judges.

We meet people who zealously belong to other religions.

We meet people who could not care less about religion.

We meet people who think that the material things of this world will satisfy them.

We meet people who are emotionally quite stable and pleasant.

We meet people who are emotional wrecks and needy.

And the list goes on.

The apostle Paul was different than Jesus but in his personality and his gifting, he imitated Jesus. That is an example for us in whatever situation we are in.

We are to imitate the apostle Paul as he imitated Jesus. That is why it is beneficial to both look at the teachings of the apostle Paul and to look at his person and behaviour.

He is an example of one who has finished the race. In Christianity, he is a star athlete if you will.

We will never be Paul. We have our strength and gifting from God. But we can imitate him as he imitated Jesus in the place where we have been placed by Jesus in his church.

"Be imitators of me (Paul), as I am of Christ."

## 15 CHALLENGES OF LIFE

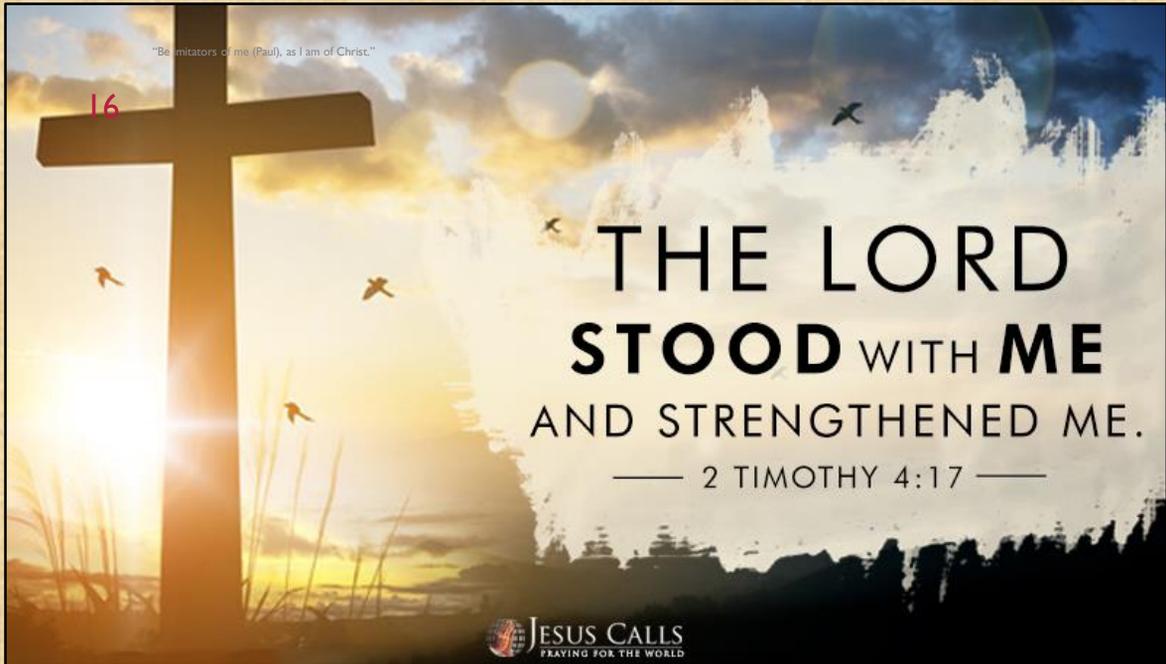
---

- **“At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them!” (2Ti 4:16 ESV)**



Even if he was deserted by fellow Christians when imprisoned in Rome, the apostle Paul had a very forgiving spirit. He was not offended easily.

Why?



The apostle Paul knew that he was not left alone. He knew he was strengthened by God.

Even if fellow believers abandoned him, he realized that this was a God-given opportunity to share the good news with the Gentiles.

As we read in the epistles, he faced terrible situations but he was rescued out of the lion's mouth. God pulled him through.

Paul was so convinced about his mission that he did not waiver in obeying God even at the risk of his life.

A good description of what he experienced can be found in 2 Corinthians chapter 11. For example, he was whipped five times when he received 39 lashes. **(Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one.** (vs. 24.)

Evidently, not all Christians are called to face the hardships that the apostle Paul faced. Paul's special calling was the same yet different from ours.

Just like Paul, we are to remember the words of Jesus which said,

"Be imitators of me (Paul), as I am of Christ."

17

**For whoever wants to save  
their life will lose it, but  
whoever loses their life for me  
and for the gospel will save it.**

MARK 8:35

***He is no fool who gives  
what he cannot keep,  
to gain what  
he cannot lose.***

- Jim Elliot

Paul's relationship we God was foremost in his mind. Nothing in this life was going to change it.

He knew very well that the momentary troubles of this life were nothing compared to the glory he would receive at the resurrection, in Christ.

"Be imitators of me (Paul), as I am of Christ."

18  
2 TIMOTHY 4:18  
THE *Lord* WILL RESCUE ME  
FROM EVERY EVIL ATTACK AND WILL BRING ME  
SAFELY TO HIS HEAVENLY KINGDOM.  
TO HIM BE GLORY  
FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

This is the confidence Paul had as he was coming near the end of his life.

He knew the sacrifice he had made as he served our Lord would be rewarded.

He knew that God would give him victory over every evil deed that he faced.

When God called him, he lived by the strength given to him by God. He was full of hope not only for himself but for others, as we read for example in Romans 11 where he talks about the hope he has for the Jewish people.

Paul is awed by God for what he had done in his life. He knew that he would be brought safely to the fullness of the kingdom of God at the return of Jesus.

He knew that all the glory belongs to God forever and ever!

I realize that we are nothing like the apostle Paul in the sense that we are not known like the apostle Paul was in the various cities of his time where he preached the gospel.

But in our circle of relationship, we can ask God to be our wisdom to participate in the

work that God is doing in this present age in the proclamation of the gospel and the wisdom, love and knowledge to introduce them to Jesus and to help them grow in their relationship with him.

There is so much more which could be said about the life of Paul as he imitated Jesus.

Like Paul who imitated Jesus, may we all live confident lives knowing that there is more to this life in this life.

May we have the same mind as Jesus who died to ransom all and to save all those who through faith would accept this incomparable gift of eternal life. May we love others as Jesus loves us.

May we all have the confidence to know, like the apostle Paul, that we are the beloved children of God safe in our Shepherd's arms.

Like the apostle Paul, let us remember that we are never alone!

Let us pray and let us praise him in song.