

ISSUE

19.34

BULLETIN OF  
THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

August 20,  
2017

## Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

### Elders:

Pat Ledbetter  
Jeff Nunn

### Deacons:

Steve Dixon  
Ryan Ferguson  
Arend Gressley  
Ben Hight  
Blake McAlister  
Brady McAlister  
Walker McAnear  
Sam Nunn  
Lance Purcell  
Rusty Scott  
Justin Smiley  
Trevor Yontz

### Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



## Our Life in the Face of Death

By Kyle Pope

As Paul wrote one of his last epistles from prison to the young man Timothy, he demonstrated an awareness of the inevitability of his own death. Comparing his life to a drink offering being poured out, he declared, “...**the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith**” (2 Tim. 4:6b-7, NKJV).

In our own lives we are seldom able to see, as Paul did, when the time of our departure “**is at hand.**” Instead we may have to face an unforeseen traffic, airline, or work accident that takes our life. Or perhaps a previously undi-



agnosed illness comes upon us quickly. In our dangerous world an act of random violence might overtake us if we happened to be in the wrong place, at an inopportune time. Or for no apparent reason, whether young or old, natural death could take us quietly in the night when we least expected it. Could we, if death took us by surprise, say of our lives what Paul said of his own?

Notice, from the text above, three statements Paul was able to make.

**I. “I have fought the good fight.”** What does Paul mean by the *good fight*? There are many things in this life that are spoken of as a type of conflict. We face spiritual warfare as we battle temptation. Paul describes this to the church in Ephesus, explaining, **“we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places”** (Eph. 6:12). He then goes on to list, the armament needed to fight this spiritual battle, including the **“sword of the Spirit, the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness”** and **“the shield of faith”** with which we **“will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one”** (Eph. 6:16b). In addition to this, as Christians we fight against falsehood. Paul, told the Corinthians that we have **“mighty”** weapons for **“casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ”** (2 Cor. 10:5). Perhaps in this same sense, Jude urges Christians to **“contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”** (Jude 3).

If death was soon to overtake us, could we say that we have fought a **“good fight”** against temptation? In the face of death, have we withstood false doctrines and apostasy contending earnestly for the faith?

**II. “I have finished the race.”** The conquests of the Greeks and Romans brought to most of the ancient world a love of sports,





much as we find in our own world. The ruins of ancient cities, where many churches were first born, still reveal the remains of great stadiums, race courses, and arenas. The association of ancient sports with pagan religion and persecution led some in the centuries after the New Testament to teach against participating in or attending the games. Yet, in the New Testament the Christian life is often described as a type of athletic competition. The Hebrew writer, after citing the great champions of faith urged the brethren **“let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us”** (Heb. 12:1). In writing to the Corinthians, Paul compared salvation to the **“prize”** one received in the games. He urged them to **“run in such a way that you may obtain it”** (1 Cor. 9:24). When Paul met with the Ephesian elders in Miletus, having learned from the Lord that he would face **“chains and tribulations,”** Paul demonstrated the attitude which would be

echoed when at last he would face death. He declared, **“none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God”** (Acts 20:24).

If we could know that our death was at hand, could we look at our life and feel that we had **“finished the race”**? Or have we been sitting too long in the stands, not running at all? Have we stumbled, grown weary, and stopped running? Or are we running **“with endurance”** the race that is before us?

**III. “I have kept the faith.”** When Paul speaks of *keeping the faith* it is evident that saving faith is something that must be maintained and



kept active. In the examples we considered above, we saw that the gospel system of faith is something we must **“contend earnestly”** for (Jude 3) and maintain **“with endurance”** (Heb. 12:1). Jesus told the brethren in the church in Smyrna, **“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the**

**crown of life”** (Rev. 2:10). Paul told the Colossians that we must, **“continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast”** and not be **“moved away from the hope of the gospel”** (Col. 1:23). He urged the brethren in Corinth to **“stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong”** (1 Cor. 16:13).

The only way that we can look at our life in the face of death and say we have kept the faith, fought the **“good fight,”** and finished the race is if we commit ourselves to live as we ought to each day. We can never know when the time of our departure is **“at hand.”** May it be that if that day is tomorrow, a year from now, or twenty years from now, we can like Paul, look at our lives confident that we have lived it as we should.



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**We are so glad that you joined us today.  
Please come again.**

● **Let us know if you have any questions.**