

Oct..14, 1987

Loving His Appearing 2 Tim. 4:6

Chapel

This morning I would like to call your attention to the life of the Apostle Paul. Has there ever been a man who was more devoted to the work of Christ than Paul. Paul tells us in 2 Cor. about some of the suffering he went through in order to spread the knowledge of Christ. He tells how he was shipwrecked three times, a day and a half he was in the ocean waiting to be rescued. He tells about his great travels, his great numbers of speeches here and there, how much he did for the Lord and "above all the care of all the churches."

We know from Paul's epistles how greatly interested he was in every detail of the lives of all the churches and how anxious he was to help everyone, and to draw them closer to Christ. This morning I'd like to look at what is perhaps the last of Paul's epistles. It certainly is one of the last two that he wrote. This is 2 Tim. and there I'd like to call your attention to the fourth ch. of 2 Tim., the 6th verse where he says, "I am already being poured out like a drink offering and the time has come for my departure."

After all the years of hard work. After all the great efforts he had gone through, after the successes, and after the struggles and having to grab time here and there to write a few words, and yet to succeed in writing about half of the books by number in the NT, about a third by actual length, of the entire NT. Far more than any other writer. Now Paul felt that his life was approaching its end. He said, I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith." I think of students I've known who have graduated under our teaching, who have gone out to accomplish much for the Lord, and who have been able to say as Paul did, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

Then I think of others who have gone out full of fire, full of enthusiasm, full of determination to serve the Lord. Then their faith has grown cold. They have perhaps found it difficult economically to get along. They have been attracted by the things of this world that others enjoy and they perhaps did not have access to. They have been led astray one way or another. There have not been a great number who have graduated from institutions where I've taught who of whom that has been true. But there are a few, a few sad cases.

I think it is good for every one of us to think, not merely of what we can ultimately accomplish in a year or two, and I trust all of you will accomplish much in the first year or two of your work, but have you got the determination, have you got the ability to stick through the long course of life and at the end be able to say, I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Much will depend on the habits you establish while you were here. Do you look forward sometime to taking a whole week to studying the Scripture? Or do you every day spend a certain amount of time studying it in the Greek and studying it in the Hebrew? Examining the precise meaning of the words, comparing Scripture with Scripture and learning to