

## Your Future 1 Timothy 1:12-16

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Have you taken time to \_\_\_\_\_ about what lies ahead once this life is over? We're preparing for our future \_\_\_\_\_. The Scriptures \_\_\_\_\_ us to see things as God sees them. God can see the future and has made \_\_\_\_\_ for our future on earth and in the afterlife. God gives hope and life to those who trust and \_\_\_\_\_ Him. He \_\_\_\_\_ you and wants your love and devotion. Everyone of us has a past, a present, and a future. Have you thought lately about \_\_\_\_\_ you are, why you are what you are, and \_\_\_\_\_ you're going? The apostle Paul was an amazing \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ who had confidence in his future. Do you have confidence that one day you will go to \_\_\_\_\_? **Read what Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:6-8.** Paul didn't \_\_\_\_\_ the judgment day with doubts and questions. He had confidence that it would be an \_\_\_\_\_ day. Do you?

I can't imagine any greater \_\_\_\_\_ in life than knowing I'm right with God and have a home with Him in heaven. Nor can I imagine a worse \_\_\_\_\_ than being separated from Him for an eternity. I want to stay close to God and \_\_\_\_\_ His blessing forever. Because of His grace and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we can have a future of blessing that lasts \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Our reading today comes from 1 Timothy 1:12-16.**

Everyone has a \_\_\_\_\_. If you've lived long at all, it's likely that your past is \_\_\_\_\_. Some things were loving and good, while others \_\_\_\_\_ you with regret and perhaps hurt. Our past matters because our experiences \_\_\_\_\_ our thinking in the present. Paul said he "was \_\_\_\_\_ a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor" (1 Timothy 1:12-16). He considered himself the \_\_\_\_\_ of sinners. Paul remembered being Saul of Tarsus who put people in prison, took away their homes, held the coats of those who stoned Stephen, and blasphemed the name of Christ. He felt the \_\_\_\_\_ of sin as a Christian.

As a Jew, Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, was deeply involved in his \_\_\_\_\_ spiritual life. **Read what he wrote in Philippians 3:4-6.** Paul was no ordinary Jew.

Paul could boast of his fleshly \_\_\_\_\_ with the best of them. He could say, "As to the righteousness which is in the \_\_\_\_\_, found blameless." In fact, Paul said, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all \_\_\_\_\_ conscience up to this day" (Acts 23:1). Paul was truly \_\_\_\_\_ to what he believed. But there was something more \_\_\_\_\_ to him than being a Pharisee. He said, "But whatever gain I had, I counted as \_\_\_\_\_ for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing \_\_\_\_\_ of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them \_\_\_\_\_, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of

my own that comes from the \_\_\_\_\_, but that which comes through \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:7:11).

Paul wanted Christ \_\_\_\_\_ than anything else! Jeremiah said: “Thus says the LORD, ‘Let not a wise man boast of his \_\_\_\_\_, and let not the mighty man boast of his \_\_\_\_\_, let not a rich man boast of his \_\_\_\_\_; but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and \_\_\_\_\_ me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord’” (Jeremiah 9:23-24). Paul knew Jesus Christ, the Lord. Nothing was more important than that.

Knowing Jesus made this man give up \_\_\_\_\_ to maintain that relationship. Paul gave up a lot, but what he gave up seemed to him but \_\_\_\_\_ in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ. Earlier in the book of Philippians, Paul had said, “For me to \_\_\_\_\_ is Christ, and to \_\_\_\_\_ is gain” (Philippians 1:21). Paul’s whole life was wrapped up \_\_\_\_\_ Christ, with Christ, and \_\_\_\_\_ Christ. Do you know the Lord? Do you have a close, loving, peaceful relationship with the One who created you? Is He your Lord and Savior?

**Read what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28.** Paul was not an ordinary Christian; he was fully invested in serving Christ regardless of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus told two parables in Matthew 13 that make me think of Paul’s \_\_\_\_\_ to be a Christian. The Lord said, “The kingdom of heaven is like \_\_\_\_\_ hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and \_\_\_\_\_ all that he has and buys that field” (Matthew 13:44). The kingdom of heaven is \_\_\_\_\_ everything that we possess.

That second parable is in Matthew 13:45-46. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in \_\_\_\_\_ of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and \_\_\_\_\_ all that he had and bought it.” A pearl merchant would know one pearl from another. Some people think one \_\_\_\_\_ is as good as another or one \_\_\_\_\_ is as good as another, but Jesus knew better. The kingdom of heaven is like that valuable pearl. You give up everything else to be in the \_\_\_\_\_ of heaven. Nothing else, nothing else compares.

Paul said, “For He (that is, God the Father) rescued us from the domain of darkness, and \_\_\_\_\_ us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13-14). The Lord Jesus gave Paul a righteousness that came by \_\_\_\_\_, not by works of the Law. Paul’s faith in Christ could do what the Law was \_\_\_\_\_ to do. Jesus died on the cross to \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins. By His \_\_\_\_\_, He was able to rescue us and forgive us and bring us into His kingdom, which is the church. The domain of \_\_\_\_\_ is Satan’s domain, a domain of sin and condemnation. We are now children of \_\_\_\_\_ with promise in the family of God. That’s worth giving up everything else.

Paul wanted to go to \_\_\_\_\_, to attain the resurrection. He said, “Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ to make it my own, because Christ

Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the \_\_\_\_\_ for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:12-14). Paul not only forgot what was behind, he was pressing on, stretching, straining, and reaching for the \_\_\_\_\_ of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. He was \_\_\_\_\_ on in faith and dedication to go to heaven. He wanted to go to heaven that badly. My friend, how badly do you want to go?

Paul said he wasn't \_\_\_\_\_. Nobody is perfect. Paul hadn't arrived, hadn't attained the resurrection, but he was straining forward to \_\_\_\_\_ it. He was staying faithful, keeping his heart right, keeping his life clean from sin the best that he could, and focusing on the \_\_\_\_\_. He couldn't let his past get in the \_\_\_\_\_, so he put it out of his mind. No one can \_\_\_\_\_ what they do and what happens to them. In fact, Paul mentions his past life as a persecutor \_\_\_\_\_ times. He said about himself, “For I am the \_\_\_\_\_ of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me” (1 Corinthians 15:9-10). Paul could put it behind him and \_\_\_\_\_ focusing on his sin because God had forgiven him. Paul understood the wonderful \_\_\_\_\_ of God's grace and forgiveness.

Paul didn't let God's grace prove \_\_\_\_\_. He worked \_\_\_\_\_ than all the apostles, and God's grace worked with him and through him. Some go to \_\_\_\_\_ and “get saved.” Then they \_\_\_\_\_ the church and live as if nothing ever happened. The grace of God for them was some kind of emotional \_\_\_\_\_ at church, but not in their daily lives. They could not say, “For me to \_\_\_\_\_ is Christ.” Lots of people want Jesus to be their Savior, but they aren't sure about Jesus as their \_\_\_\_\_. They want to be saved, but not \_\_\_\_\_ from their old way of life. They want the grace of Christ, but grace has to \_\_\_\_\_ in their lives. Otherwise it proves vain. That's what Paul meant. We have to take the grace of God seriously enough to \_\_\_\_\_ the old sinful things in the past and begin a life of love and \_\_\_\_\_ for the cause of Christ.

We are \_\_\_\_\_ again to serve Christ. Paul said, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good \_\_\_\_\_, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10). Do you take that gift seriously enough to understand that you were created in Christ; that is, born again for the \_\_\_\_\_ of doing good works. God planned it that way from the beginning. He saved you from the domain of darkness and gave you the forgiveness of sins so that your life would be a \_\_\_\_\_. He wanted you to be an \_\_\_\_\_ of good in an evil and corrupt world.

Has that grace proved true in you? When the Lord Jesus looks at you, does He see how His grace has made a \_\_\_\_\_? Some of you are serving \_\_\_\_\_. You love the Lord; you

help others; you attend church regularly; and give of yourself. Others, however, have not taken the grace of Christ so seriously. Some are caught up in \_\_\_\_\_; some haven't worshiped in years; and some only think of what they can \_\_\_\_\_ out of church rather than what they can \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord. Knowing Jesus is more than "getting saved"; it means taking up our crosses every \_\_\_\_\_ and living the Christian life. Knowing Christ is a relationship with the Lord, loving the Lord, praising Him, praying to Him, being an \_\_\_\_\_ part of His family, the church, keeping His commandments, giving of our time and talents, and sacrificing ourselves to reach out to a lost and dying world. I pray the grace of God has proved \_\_\_\_\_ in you and not vain. How sad it would be to have known the grace of God, but to \_\_\_\_\_ it. Don't let that happen to you.

Paul kept the future in mind. He said, "For our citizenship is in \_\_\_\_\_, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will \_\_\_\_\_ the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the \_\_\_\_\_ that He has even to subject all things to Himself" (Philippians 3:20-21). I'm proud to be an American, but I am \_\_\_\_\_ a citizen of heaven. My citizenship in heaven will \_\_\_\_\_ forever and ever and ever. My Lord is in heaven; my permanent residence will be in heaven; my inheritance is in heaven; and my heart is looking to heaven. My friend, what's on your heart? What's in your life?

Colossians 3:1-4 says, "If then you have been \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on \_\_\_\_\_. For you have \_\_\_\_\_, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in \_\_\_\_\_." Oh, I want to go and be with God when I die. I hope that you do, too. To make the transition from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved son, you must be \_\_\_\_\_ by grace.

To be saved by grace, you must \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Lord. You must \_\_\_\_\_ and change your heart and life from the old way of sin to a new way of service and righteousness. You must \_\_\_\_\_ the name of Jesus before men. You must be \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ. You do this by being immersed in water in His name. The result of your baptism is that God \_\_\_\_\_ away your sins and \_\_\_\_\_ you to His church. He takes away the \_\_\_\_\_ man of sin and gives you \_\_\_\_\_ life. It's in baptism that you're \_\_\_\_\_. Perhaps you obeyed the gospel; you were baptized, but have \_\_\_\_\_ away from the Lord and want to return to Him. You can do that today by considering the grace of God and seeing it as the hidden treasure or the pearl of great price. Let the cross of Christ touch your heart again. When your heart is open to Christ, you'll put away the sin and start embracing the good once again. Today, is the best day to get your soul right with God! Don't waste another day without God. Come to Him, today.