

## THE VERB TENSES OF LIFE

### Introduction

- 1) When we discuss the days of our lives, we speak in three *verb tenses*: past, present, future
- 2) We live in the *present*, anticipate the *future*, and recall the *past*
- 3) These three verb tenses describe life at any moment – we are always in present, the young speak often of the future, and the older like to recall the past
- 4) **2 Timothy 4:6-8** – as his life neared its end, Paul reflected upon his life in the present, past, and future tense – we need to consider our own lives in view of his sobering words

### I) **The Present Tense (v. 6)** *“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand”*

- A) Paul’s life was constantly given in sacrificial service to God; and our lives should be a constant sacrificial offering to God each present moment (Rom. 12:1-2)
- B) With each passing moment comes the constant prospect of departure (Jas. 4:14)
- C) We must take advantage of opportunities right now (Eph. 5:16)
  - 1) The present is all the time we are assured of – the past is gone and the future unsure; walk now in faithfulness to God (Eph. 4:1; 5:8-10)
  - 2) Do not put off until tomorrow what needs to be done today (Jn. 9:4; 2 Cor. 6:2)

### II) **The Past Tense (v. 7)** *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith”*

- A) The past recalls our memories, experiences, growth, etc.
- B) We need to live so that our past will bring to remembrance a life of service to God
  - 1) **Fighting the good fight** – courageous in the battle against evil; not regret that someone fell into error because we did not speak the truth and expose error
  - 2) **Finishing the race** – persevering to the finish line; not regret that we quit because we lacked the faith and desire to get to the end
  - 3) **Keeping the faith** – steadfast in the revealed truth of God; not regret that we compromised the truth to save someone’s feelings or to please our family
- C) The past can bring regrets – Paul had regrets (1 Tim. 1:15)
  - 1) But God had mercy (1 Tim. 1:16); we must repent of our sins
  - 2) Not live in past, but press on now to leave behind a faithful legacy – many will be reading the pages of our lives for years to come

### III) **The Future Tense (v. 8)** *“Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing”*

- A) Paul anticipated his earthly future as short, but kept his eyes on an eternal future – that “Day” and the “crown of righteousness” (cf. crown of life – Rev. 2:10)
- B) This is our future also – “and not to me only but to *all* who have loved His appearing”
  - 1) “Loved” = desire, longing (Titus 2:13)
  - 2) “Appearing” = second coming (Paul speaks as though after the fact)
- C) How could Paul be sure of his future? How can we? **Faith in God’s promises** (2 Tim. 1:12; Titus 1:2; 2 Pet. 3:12-13)
- D) Which future do you speak of most often – earthly or heavenly?

### Conclusion

How would you describe your life in the **present, past, and future tense**?

Be careful that you do not recall a regretful past, an apathetic present, or an unsure future (cf. Jer. 8:20)  
Live for God in such a way as to recall a faithful past, a present service, and an eternal reward!