

**April 16**

**Scriptures:** Read 2 Timothy 4

**Key Verse:** “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”  
(2 Timothy 4:7)

## **Overview**

When someone dies, we usually manage to say something good about him. Sometimes we really have to stretch to find something positive, but it’s a rare eulogy indeed that doesn’t end on an upbeat. And, if we were to look at these eulogies from the point of view of the departed, we might see them totally embarrassed by all the plaudits. In fact, many people about to die will say that if they had it to do all over again, they’d do a lot of things differently.

How refreshing, then, to see an old apostle look back and say, “I did a good job. I’m pleased with my performance. I’m happy with my life.” That’s essentially what Paul says in the key verse.

He uses athletic imagery. Like a boxer, he’s fought “a good fight”. Like a runner, he’s “finished the race” — probably a marathon and steeplechase combined! In the context of athletic games, he has “kept the faith” or “kept [his] pledge to keep the rules”. He was true to the faith in terms of both obeying it and communicating it. And you can be sure “the faith”, as an objective reality, took precedence over his personal experience of faith as a subjective reality. He had his ups and downs, but “the faith” never wavered. Paul was true to the faith, because the faith was true to him. Indeed, Jesus, “the righteous judge”, had proven to be all He said He would be.

“Fighting” meant involvement, with all its cuts and bruises. “Finishing” meant commitment — follow-through, with all its good and bad times. “Keeping” meant faithfulness, with all its cost. In every sense of the word, Paul was a “mature” Christian. He had a hope, and he stuck to his goal. Now he is about to pass the relay baton on to younger men.

## **Prayer**

Father, as we read of Paul’s “good fight”, the desire to “run the race” and “fight the good fight” burns afresh in our own hearts. Your Word has renewed us, and it calls us once again to press on to what lies ahead.