

**Paul's Epitaph**

- Paul reflects somberly on of his life and ministry from prison, possibly facing his execution.
- It is somber, but not negative. His obedience in life gives him peace as he faces death.

**Poured Out (v6)**

- This image is one of offering a drink sacrifice as in the OT (Gen. 35:14) or in the Roman custom of pouring out wine for the gods at the end of a meal.
- In the words of William Barclay: *"[Paul] did not think of himself as going to be executed; he thought of himself as going to offer his life to God. Ever since his conversion, he had offered everything to God – his money, his scholarship, his time, the vigor of his body, the acuteness of his mind, the devotion of his heart. Only life itself was left to offer, and gladly he was going to lay it down."*
- Paul is not boasting, he is offering encouragement for the hard days ahead that Timothy would face.

**Faithfulness (v7)**

- Paul speaks of his life like a foot race or a fight, familiar themes in his writing.
- He is encouraging Timothy to focus on the goal, to fight distractions (see Phil. 3:13-14).
- The key to running the race well is faithfulness.
- In those days, to enter the games one had to vow that they had trained for ten months, that they wouldn't cheat, and they would stick to the code of conduct.
- Christian living requires hard work, sticking to a code of conduct, and staying spiritually "fit." (see 1 Cor. 9:25-27)

**The Prize (v8)**

- Paul likens the prize with that of the laurel crown given to those who won at the games.
- The difference is, the prize for the faithful is eternal. It never fades away.
- Paul is not concerned about the judgment of humans, he is concerned about the Judge—Jesus Christ.
- It's easy to misunderstand this and think Paul earned his prize through all his good missionary work.
- But the prize is for *all* who eagerly await the Lord and serve Him.

**Discussion Questions**

- How are aspects of your life a gift of thanks to God (see Rom. 12:1)? Are they?
- What metaphor would you use to describe your life journey, why?
- What temptations keep us from keeping "fit" spiritually?
- Have you ever had a friend or mentor who kept their "eyes on the prize?" How'd they do it?