

Paul

TEXT: 2 Corinthians 4:8-18; 11:24-28; 2 Timothy 4:6-8

KEY VERSE: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. — 2 Timothy 4:7,8

Paul the Apostle desired to win souls for the Kingdom of Christ and to attain the crown of righteousness. He was successful in both pursuits because he closely followed the Lord's instructions. We can also be a soul winner and receive a crown of righteousness if Paul's example becomes our pattern.

1. Paul suffered many trials and troubles, yet he termed them but "light afflictions." Name some of our light afflictions and explain how, in overcoming them, they help us to gain the crown of righteousness.

2. Why do you think God allows "afflictions" to come into the life of a Christian today?

3. In 2 Corinthians 4:8,9, a number of contrasts are listed. How can the second part of these contrasts be realized in our life on earth?

4. Verse 16 of our first text refers to the outward man's perishing. What will happen to the inward man? Explain.

5. Paul's sufferings, as mentioned in our text, reveal the extent of his faithfulness. What does it mean to be faithful?

6. Paul likened his Christian life to a good fight. Explain what he meant.

7. A crown of righteousness has been laid up for Paul and for everyone else who loves Christ's appearing. How do people who are looking for Christ's appearing conduct themselves?

8. James 1:12 mentions another crown which can be won—the crown of life. What does one have to do in order to gain this reward? How did Paul fulfill this requirement in the things which he faced?