



SERVICE TIMES:

Sunday : 9:30 AM
10:30 AM
5:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

ELDERS

Todd Cox Jimmy Griffith
Travis Everett Paul White

DEACONS:

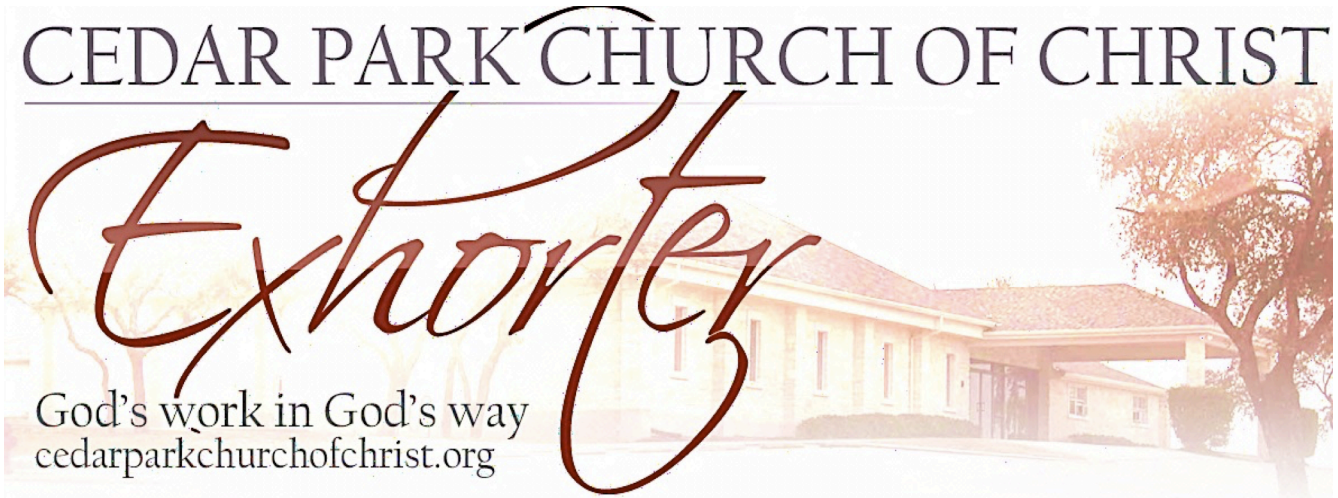
Derek Anderson Bret Cox
James Dow Patrick Gaughan
Ryan Griffith Dan Harbin
Craig Hecht Danny Meek
Skyler Meek Phil Parker
Jay Silvers Jason Stannard
Travis Starling Bryan Tacker
Steve Turquette Eric Wise

EVANGELIST

Paul White

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STAMP



April 25, 2021

Looking Forward to His Appearing

2 Tim. 4:7-8 “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.”

My daughter recently went to a party where the children played pin the tail on the donkey. Simple game to understand but difficult in practice, especially when spun around after being blindfolded. My daughter enjoyed the game, so she requested that our family play that evening. When it was my turn to display my skill at poking holes in the wall that would eventually require putty and paint, I stood roughly five feet from the wall, put the blindfold on, spun around, and then started for the target.

To possess a goal is to have a target to point ambition and effort towards. With goals we have direction. With expectation we have purpose. When there is an emptiness of meaning and purpose in life, deterioration follows, and it is unavoidable and expected. Though progress was formally present, regression reigns because there is no vision. Where there is no vision, we quickly lose our way. Paul's own goal and expectation was to wear the crown of righteousness. The hope in this future award from the righteous Judge burned in Paul's mind on a regular basis, and so it drove him to display magnificent acts of faith and countless honorable actions of

unselfishness. Paul ever yearned to be with Christ in Heaven, but for the sake of God's kingdom, he was willing to stay for a while longer. When the end was nearing, Paul made it his goal to prepare others, such as Timothy, to aim for the crown of righteousness.

Paul understood that simply setting the goal did not and does not suffice, when it comes to staying on the straight and narrow. A continuous refocusing on the goal must take place to stay on course towards the destination. Call it whatever you like: grit, diligence, persistence, or determination; this is essential for a follower of Christ but would be especially vital for a man like Timothy who came to the faith at a young age.

Jesus told his disciples that it will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. And that they must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. Paul wrote a very similar message to Timothy when encouraging him in the second letter.

“Now you (Timothy) follow my purpose and perseverance. Continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them. But evil people and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” That is a paraphrase from the letter of course, but the language holds true. Notice the imagery Paul uses. He was encouraging Timothy to continue forward while warning him of those that would regress and fall further and further off the straight and narrow path. Throughout the book, the language is active. Notice the following phrases throughout the letter:

- Kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you
- Hold onto the example of sound words
- Protect the treasure which has been entrusted to you
- Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus
- Suffer hardship with me

- Remember Jesus Christ
- Be diligent to be approved by God
- Avoid worldly and empty chatter
- Flee youthful lusts; pursue righteousness

Paul's message to Timothy still rings true today. We too can have hope and confidence in a crown of righteousness, if we will actively keep our target in focus. What are you doing to stay focused? How are you preparing, so that you finish the race strong?

When I took the blindfold off, it was immediately evident that I was nowhere near the target. The loss of both sight and focus altered my path, and by the time I could see clearly again, it was too late. My pin had been placed, and in this game of pin the tail on the donkey, there were no second chances.

Luke 16: 24-27 “And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set, so that those who want to go over from here to you will not be able, nor will any people cross over from there to us.’”

- Travis Starling



God's children never meet for the last time.

There are no traffic jams along the extra mile.