

The Legacy of a Leader

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Stephen and Susan Van Dop were two of our key leaders for many years at Vineyard Columbus. Stephen was a pastor on our staff for nearly a quarter of a century. His wife Susan was a school teacher but also was deeply involved with leading various ministries in our church. She was a trained musician and led our choir for years.

Susan's mother, whose name is Jean, passed away after a long battle with cancer. Jean was 86. Before Jean died, all of her kids and their spouses gathered around her bed and as she was dying over the last couple of days of her life, they read scripture to her; they sang hymns; they read Psalms. Jean would open her eyes when they sang hymns that she had sung as a little girl. But the whole family is a believing family. Susan's dad was a pastor for 35 years and then he taught preaching at a seminary for the last 7-8 years. He died the day after he wrapped up his last seminary preaching class.

Susan's grandmother lost her own mother when she was 18. She took over raising her 10 brothers and sisters; got married and raised 5 of her own children. Susan's grandmother was reported to be one of the kindest, most godly woman that anyone in the community knew. Her house was next to the railroad tracks and during the Depression the guys who were riding the rails looking for work, the guys who used to be called "hobos" in America would get off the train and stop at her home for a meal. Somehow they had marked her home so that all the hobos knew that this was a place that a godly, kind woman lived. She passed that legacy of

kindness and godliness on to Susan's mother, Jean. And Jean passed it on to Susan and her siblings. What a legacy!

There is another person who attended one of Vineyard Columbus' plants, who a few years ago wrote a very transparent account of his own upbringing. This man wasn't raised in the home of a kind, godly woman known far and wide for her generosity. Instead, this guy was raised in the home of a violent alcoholic dad. Out of 7 kids, 3 became alcoholics including this Vineyard member. He wrote:

[SLIDE #1]

"From my first drink at age 12 to my last, I never drank for taste or pleasure. I drank to get drunk. I can choose to drink or not drink. But once I choose to take that first drink, the horse is out of the barn and is running down the field. I am an alcoholic and I will always be an alcoholic. As one Catholic priest put it, "You can turn a cucumber into a pickle, but you can't turn a pickle back into a cucumber."

The result of alcoholism has been absolutely devastating for this man. He's gone through a divorce; he lost jobs; there were car wrecks; hospitalizations; shattered dreams; and, huge hurt brought to two of his sons. He lives with lifelong regret over the devastation that he brought to his own family.

As people age, one of the things we start thinking about more and more in real terms is what kind of legacy am I leaving behind? What's going to be the effect of my life on my children and grandchildren, on the people who knew me and were influenced by me, my friends, my colleagues, and my church? What am I handing off to the next generation?

As I finish up this series on finishing well, I want to talk about leaving a legacy. Let's pray.

[SLIDE #2] 2 Timothy 4:1-8 NIV

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store 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 longed for his appearing.

Let me give you some background to this text. 2 Timothy 4 contains the very last words that we still have from the Apostle Paul. Paul wrote these words while he was in prison in Rome. Most Bible scholars believe that 2 Timothy was written some time after the end of the book of Acts – that is, after Acts 28. In Acts 28 the Apostle Paul is under house arrest. But it is apparent from the account in Acts 28 that Paul enjoyed relative freedom to meet people, to connect with friends, to preach the gospel. But what appears to have happened is that Paul was released from house arrest and then sometime later, he was rearrested and put in a much more confining prison. A few years ago Marlene and I got to visit Rome and we had the opportunity to go down into that damp, dark prison cell called the “Mamertine Prison.”

[SLIDE #3] Photo of Mamertine Prison

...Which was more like a dungeon. Church tradition tells us that this dark prison cell, where you can still see mice and occasional rat running, that it was that prison cell that held the aged Apostle Paul. I can't begin to describe to you how moving it was for me to touch the very prison walls where I imagined the Apostle Paul placed his hands while he prayed for God's strength to die well for Jesus. As I stood in that prison cell, just me and Marlene by ourselves, I understood why Paul asked for his cloak to be brought to him in 2 Tim 4.13.

[SLIDE #4] 2 Timothy 4:13 NIV

When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

Even in the summer, it was really cold and damp down there.

I also had the privilege to stand at the very spot outside of ancient Rome where very reliable church tradition tells us that Apostle Paul was beheaded. It is near the third milestone of the Ostian Way. There is a little plaque and a church was constructed on the site called Saint Paul outside – the walls where the Apostle Paul was beheaded. I had the opportunity to kneel down and pray there that my life would somehow reflect a little bit of the Apostle Paul's life; that I might bear witness to Christ in some small way, like he did; that God would give me some of the Spirit that was in Paul.

What did Paul pass on? What did this great leader leave as his legacy?

[SLIDE #5] Paul passed on the Word

[SLIDE #6] 2 Timothy 4:1-2 NIV

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view

of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

There are lots of things we could pass on to others, especially to those who are in our family. We can pass on our genes. We do that by the simple act of reproduction. We can pass on our wealth through a will. We can pass on our saltshaker collection, or our collection of refrigerator magnets, or ceramic dogs that we've been collecting over the years. We can pass on our part of the family business, our recipes or our Vinyl record collection. Paul passed on the Word. Before Paul died he said to young Timothy, "Preach the Word." Preach the Word!

One of the main qualities of a Christian leader, is someone who teaches the Word, and values the Word. Paul was someone who not only preached the Word but who lived under the authority of God's Word and urged others to live under the authority of God's Word.

Now, you and I know that there are a hundred other things that a pastor could pass on other than the Word of God. We can share our own ideas about God, about salvation, about Brexit, about sexuality, about marriage, about politics.

A preacher could preach the thoughts of other people. We can preach a self help book we read, whether Christian or secular. We could echo the opinions of lots of different scholars.

Paul says, “Preach the Word.” Don’t preach your own ideas. Don’t just preach the ideas of other people. Submit your thoughts and your messages to the scriptures. And make sure that when you are preaching the Word, don’t twist it. Don’t tamper with it. Don’t subtract from it or add to it.

Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:13-14...

[SLIDE #7] 2 Timothy 1:13-14 NIV

What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

Paul was about to leave the scene. He’s calling Timothy to view God’s Word as a sacred trust.

God has put on deposit, – Vineyard pastors – His Word. He has entrusted you with the Scriptures. The image that comes to my mind is of a banker, who oversees a bank in which people have placed their life savings. The great Apostle says: “Guard it! Don’t lose it. Don’t fritter it away. Don’t mess with it. Don’t add to it. Don’t subtract from it. Hold on to it and

invest it well.” Paul focuses again and again on the Word, on sound doctrine, on teaching in the Pastorals. Why so much focus on “sound doctrine, on teaching well?” Why did Paul underline these things more than anything else in his last writings – 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus?

Why was God’s Word so important to the Apostle Paul, especially when he knew that his ministry was coming to an end? Why are the Scriptures one of the best legacies that we pastors could ever pass on to other people? Here is what the prophet Isaiah said 2700 years ago.

[SLIDE #8] Isaiah 40:6-8 NIV

A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”

[SLIDE #9] What will endure?

See, everything else – your ideas, my ideas, the current opinions of all the experts, the majority opinion of the British public, the latest poll regarding what’s trending now on X, what’s hot, what everyone believes, the latest political controversy – all of that stuff will fade away. Most

of the popular ideas and fashions and fads that seem to be so dominant, everyone believes this in psychology, in politics, in family life or romance, things that people take so seriously, things that cause people to protest, to riot and to fight with each other – most of the ideas that we pass on to one another have a shelf life of a week, a month, or, if we're lucky, a few years.

Think about this with me! Almost every reigning idea in psychology or child-raising that was really dominant a generation ago are laughed at now. You look back at the old style of how psychiatry was practiced. A person would lay on a couch with a silent psychiatrist seated behind them so that they couldn't even see the psychiatrist. And they would talk about whatever popped into their heads. Free association was the rage. No one does that any more!

The reigning theories of raising children 30 years ago? Hey, children are naturally curious. They don't need to be guided in their learning at all. Parental guidance will crush your child's creativity. Let them just explore and grow up on their own, kind of the way you would raise a family of wolves. Just focus on increasing your child's self-esteem and your child will thrive. Back in the 1980's everyone said the problem is low self-esteem; raise self-esteem and everything else will take care of itself.

Then we discovered that the people who had the highest self-esteem in the US were criminals! They believed themselves to be absolutely special and demanded to be respected by everyone.

American students have huge self-esteem when it comes to our confidence in our math abilities. Korean and Singaporean students believe they are not very good in math. Koreans and Singaporeans rank 1st and 2nd in global math tests. America ranks 31st in the world. But we have enormous self-esteem, completely out of sync with our actual abilities.

I remember back in the 1980's everyone said Japan is just going to run the world. The world is turning into Japan Inc. And then Japan hit a decade-long recession. So many popular theories over the last 100 years had a shelf life not too much longer than a quart of milk. You trot that idea out a month later, a year later, a decade later and you smell it and say, "Oh my goodness, that idea has gone really bad."

It is absolutely the case in church life, that so many – not all – but so many of the contemporary theologies and approaches to church growth and church organization that seem so cutting-edge five years ago, ten years ago, thirty years ago are dismissed today. What we need is wisdom that lasts. We need thoughts that won't go sour a month from now, or a year from now: We need ways of doing life that will work a generation from now, two generations from now, ten generations from now. We need to hand on ways of living that will help our kids and grandkids to flourish until Jesus returns.

Paul passed on God's Word. What else did Paul pass on?

[SLIDE #10] Paul passed on a model

[SLIDE #11] 2 Timothy 4:6-7 NIV

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

If you study Paul's leadership method, Paul continually pointed to his example.

[SLIDE #12] 1 Corinthians 11:1 NIV

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Discipleship in the ancient world was not primarily communicating ideas for someone else to think about. It was communicating a life for someone else to imitate. Disciples of someone imitated the way their teacher did something.

There is a famous story that my dear friend, and one of my favorite preachers in the whole world, Don Williams, often told. About a century after Jesus, there was a famous Jewish rabbi named Rabbi Akiba. He had one of his disciples, who imitated him in everything. This disciple even followed Rabbi Akiba into the bathroom. Someone heard of this and they were shocked.

How could you do this? He answered, “Oh, I learned three valuable lessons for my life.” Now, I have no idea what those lessons were and I would encourage you not to speculate.

But the ancients had wisdom regarding what leadership was. Leadership is primarily modeling! Paul constantly pointed to his example. He said: I acted as a mother towards you. I acted as a father towards you. I acted as an elder, as a bishop, as a pastor towards you. Paul understood that the most fundamental thing about a leader was to model what you want! Leadership is primarily modeling – do what I’m doing! Monkey see, monkey do. If you are a pastor, a small group leader, a women’s group leader, a men’s group leader, a support and recovery group leader, a children’s ministry leader, a worship leader, a parent, any place you’re getting close to people – what you are primarily passing on is your model.

So if you teach that it is important to pray, do you pray? If you teach your church that giving is important, pastor do you tithe? If you say truth is important, do you tell the truth even when it hurts, even when by telling the truth you will be embarrassed, even feel ashamed. Do you still tell the truth?

Nothing has more influence on us than a model. “I remember what mom used to do in this situation. I remember what dad always said. I remember what my old pastor reminded us about over and over again.” Monkey see, monkey do!

When I think about what is most important to pass on, I think about what David Brooks who is a NY Times columnist wrote in his book titled, The Road to Character. In his book, David distinguishes between resume virtues and eulogy virtues.

[SLIDE #13]

Resume Virtues vs. Eulogy Virtues

[SLIDE #14]

We Should Want to Pass on Eulogy Virtues

Resume virtues are pretty obvious. They're the kinds of things a person puts on their resume when they're seeking a job. They're a list of a person's academic accomplishments, awards they've received, leadership positions they've held, professional achievements. Eulogy virtues are totally different. Eulogy virtues are spiritual, they're personal. They're the kinds of things you would want friends and family to talk about at your funeral. "She was kind and generous. She spent time listening to me." "There's hardly a day that goes by that I don't think about what he would do if he was leading in my situation." No one at your funeral is going to talk about how many frequent-flyer miles you had, or what your grade point average was, or how

big your bank account was, or your golf score. At your funeral and mine, people will talk about the kind of people we were. What we did for them.

A year ago I had the privilege of attending the funeral of Don Williams, a long time pastor in the Vineyard. I can tell you there are few things that are more encouraging to me and to my Christian walk than attending the funeral of a man or a woman who lived a great Christian life. I always come away so inspired. I want to re-double my efforts at following Jesus. I come away saying, "I want to be like that!" I want 1/10 of the things that were said about him to be true of me!

Paul passed on the Word, Paul passed on a model, and Paul passed on a torch to the next generation.

[SLIDE #15] Paul passed on a torch to the next generation

Look at me with 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

[SLIDE #16] 2 Timothy 2:1-2 NIV

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

The Bible is a book about the continuing story of God's work in the world. One generation is called to train up the next generation. The Church is always one generation away from extinction. The torch always has to be handed on! Leaders always have to be on the lookout for their successors.

The father of modern management is a man named Peter Drucker.

[SLIDE #17] Photo of Peter Drucker

Drucker once said,

[SLIDE #18] "There is no success without a successor." – Peter Drucker

In other words, it's up to today's leaders to develop the next generation! Otherwise, previously great businesses or denominations or churches are just one hit wonders. They last a generation and then they disappear when their founding leader retires or dies.

Success is incredibly hard to sustain! We see this in sports all the time. Most teams win one title, maybe two. But then injuries and age catches up with them. To win year after year like Manchester City or Chelsea is incredibly hard to do. Sustained success is the mark of an extraordinary organization.

It's not just sports teams and businesses that have struggled to succeed past the first generation of leaders. We frequently see that in churches. How many of you are familiar with the story of Robert Schuller and the Crystal Cathedral in Anaheim, California?

[SLIDE #19] Photo of Robert Schuller

Schuller was an incredible success story. He launched his church right next to Disneyland in Southern California. He was a friend of John Wimber's. He hosted an incredibly popular TV ministry called "The Hour of Power". In 1980, he hired the famous architect Phillip Johnson to build the Crystal Cathedral. It had over 10,000 panes of glass and 3,000 seats. Schuller said it was the first church auditorium that was designed to function as a television studio.

In the late 1980's, Schuller built a \$250 million Family Life Center. When he turned 69, he announced that he was going to turn his ministry over to his son. Then he announced that he was going to continue to be the pastor of the church and yanked his son from "The Hour of Power" TV program. Things started to spiral down. Eventually, the entire ministry ended up declaring bankruptcy. They were hundreds of millions of dollars in debt. The Crystal Cathedral was sold to the Roman Catholic Church. And this incredibly successful ministry stopped after one generation. The torch was not successfully passed.

Every leader is an interim leader! Every business owner is an interim business owner. Every pastor is an interim pastor. No one lasts forever. We're all just one more link in the chain. The chain will either be cut with us or it will continue. Let me ask you a few questions. Are you intentional in raising up a successor? Do you have a succession plan? How's that plan going? Since no leader continues forever, the book Next suggests that

[SLIDE #20] It's Never Too Early to Start Succession Planning

Experts say...

[SLIDE #21]

The best succession planning is gradual, thoughtful, intentional and one with lots of information shared along the way.

Passing the torch is something we had to constantly think about at Vineyard Columbus. We wanted to create a church that was incredibly intentional about developing our own leaders and sending them out.

This intentional focus upon developing leaders came out of a Word that the Lord spoke to me more than 30 years ago. Our church was growing rapidly at the time. We had a huge crowd, but we didn't have a church. There were lots of people coming on Sunday, but the church felt like it was a mile wide and an inch deep. I remember being down on my knees one day, crying out to the Lord. I said to the Lord, "You have this promise in your Word that the harvest is white but the laborers are few. Pray to the Lord of the harvest to fling out workers into the harvest field." And I said, "Lord, that's what I'm doing. I'm praying you would raise up workers at Vineyard Columbus. I'm praying that you would give us leaders!" And while I was on my knees praying, the Holy Spirit spoke to me so clearly and He said, "Rich, you will not be able to reap where you haven't sown."

That word from the Holy Spirit nearly knocked me over. It was like a spear thrust in my chest. I sat on the floor against the wall. I thought, "that's right!" Almost all the leaders we had in the

early days of Vineyard Columbus had been saved in some other church and developed somewhere else – at some Bible school, or seminary, or some other church system. Then we would scoop them in and “Vineyard-ize” them. We’d acquaint them with our values and our practices and then send them on their way. But as I thought about it, I thought, “we have no leadership development system. We have no intentional way of developing our own leaders internally.” The more I thought about that, the more convicted I became that I needed to give myself to leadership development. So we started VLI (Vineyard Leadership Institute) and then later helped with Vineyard Institute.

But I’m persuaded as I look back over the past 30 years and especially the last few years of my own life, that the approach we take to leadership training at this time in history has to be increasingly personal, and increasingly hands-on and face to face.

This was Jesus’ method. He spent his final years on Earth preparing the 12 to carry on His mission. In order to pass on the torch to His disciples, Jesus taught them, He trained them, He modeled life for them, He lived with them. Jesus demonstrated there is no success without successors, and you can’t have successors without hands-on personal investment.

The Bible speaks a great deal about what we call mentoring – passing on experiences and values from one generation to another. We find mentoring relationships among Old Testament

prophets. Eli mentored Samuel. Elijah mentored Elisha. Moses mentored Joshua.

In the New Testament, we find leaders mentoring. Jesus mentored the 12 apostles. Barnabas mentored Paul. Paul mentored Timothy. Part of the hunger that exists among young people to be mentored is that most of the ways we train today have nothing to do with personal relationship. Most of our learning environments these days are entirely impersonal. We rely on online videos, classrooms, podcasts and books. All of that is good if we're talking about conveying information. But if we are talking about personal formation, shaping another life – that involves relationship!

In church history, there are so many wonderful examples of individuals being developed through an internship or an apprenticeship. The great church father, Ambrose, trained Augustine in leadership. Martin Luther had an apprentice, a man named Phillip Melancthon, who was the author of the famous Lutheran Confessions.

A century and a half ago, people didn't just go to seminary or Bible college in America to become pastors. They would often move into the home of an older, experienced pastor and they learned from that pastor spiritual disciplines. They were able to watch the pastor study and pray. The older pastor taught the younger intern how to preach and how to lead a congregation. The great Charles Spurgeon in England habitually trained young men to become

pastors and then sent them out.

That's what I've tried to do over the past 30 years. I've had the privilege of having a number of interns who I've been able to raise up for pastoral ministry. Many of our church planters and current pastors trained under me and then were sent out. I've had intern after intern over the decades.

What if we in the Vineyard encouraged churches who could afford it to regularly have a couple of interns on staff? The reason that I decided to personally attach an intern to me was that I knew leading a church was so much more than acquiring a set of skills or knowing some information. It is that, but it's about your marriage, it's about weathering storms in your family, it's about dealing with challenging people in church, it's about handling dozens of complaints. It's about learning to be a personal witness in your neighborhood. It's about how to think about modern science and politics and immigration and a thousand other things. It's about developing habits of study and prayer. I knew there was no way apart from tons of personal time that I could form in another human being the things that I believe are essential qualities for mature, healthy, long-term pastoral ministry. I needed to hang out with somebody and talk to them about whatever! The biblical model of discipleship and leadership formation is not the sort of thing that can be pulled off in 30 minutes a week with a formal curriculum. It's life on life, iron sharpening iron!

Since I handed the church off 3 years ago, I started a residency program where individuals could come to our church for 21 months, work at the church, rotate through our various ministries and serve on Sunday mornings. I spent 5 hours a week with them for 21 months. We read dozens of books together and talk about a thousand things – how to deepen your devotions, what to do with your money, how to build a racially diverse church, how to hire and fire, how to preach. There is no success without a successor!

So are you personally and intentionally investing in a few younger people's lives?

Last thing in leaving a legacy – I've talked about passing on God's Word, passing on a model, passing on the torch to the next generation. I want to finish with some of Paul's closing words in 2 Timothy 4.

[SLIDE #22] Paul passed on hope!

Look with me again at verses 6-8:

[SLIDE #23] 2 Timothy 4:6-8 NIV

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in

store 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 longed for his appearing.

Paul uses two really vivid images to portray his coming death. One is taken from the image of sacrifice; the other is probably taken from the image of boats. He said his life is about to be poured out like a drink offering; his blood is about to be poured out. It literally was. Paul also says the time of my departure has come. It is a picture of the loosening of ropes when you push a boat away from the dock. The anchor is lifted. The ropes are untied. He is about to set sail.

So what is Paul's hope in death? Let's read again in verse 8:

[SLIDE #24] 2 Timothy 4:8 NIV

Now there is in store 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 longed for his appearing.

He expects that he is going to receive the sentence of death from the Emperor Nero. Nero is going to declare him guilty and condemn him to death. But he has this hope that there is going to be a total reversal of Nero's verdict. The Lord, the righteous Judge, is going to vindicate him. And when he stands not before Nero's court, but when he stands in the courtroom of heaven

before his heavenly Judge, the Lord is going to say to him, “Innocent” and will crown him with eternal life.

And even when Paul feels so alone in prison, he still has this hope! He says this in verses 16-17:

[SLIDE #25] 2 Timothy 4:16-17 NIV

At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion’s mouth.

The Christians all around me may have fled for their lives; people may pretend they don’t know me. But the Lord stood by my side and gave me strength. Everyone else took off, but God never leaves me.

Let me close with a couple of thoughts. Tragically, so many people end their lives hopeless. They have nothing to look forward to. All they have is declining strength and declining health, and then into the dark void of who knows what; the dark tunnel of death. Paul invested in his relationship with Jesus when he was young. And now in old age when he is cold and alone and in prison, he has this rock solid relationship with Christ that is carrying him through the very

dark days of the end of his life. Paul spent decades building his life in the secret places of his soul, below the water line. Now when no one other than God was there, Paul still had a life.

I often use the prayers in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer to help me in my prayers. One of the prayers that I often pray is the prayer from the Book of Common Prayer.

[SLIDE #26]

In all our time of tribulation; in all our time of wealth; in the hour of death and in the day of judgment, good Lord deliver us.

I want to know Jesus so well now in good times when I'm healthy, when I'm well, when my life is working. I want to know him so well that I want to invest in my relationship with him now so that I'm prepared for whatever may happen in the future. I know I'm going to lose strength. I know I'm going to lose health. I'm going to lose loved ones. And ultimately, know I'm going to lose my own life in this world. And when those things happen, which inevitably they will for you and for me, we still have this hope. The Lord will still be by our side!

Paul passed on hope. Whatever happens, as the song says, "Give me Jesus. Just give me Jesus. You can have this whole world, but give me Jesus." That's what Paul ultimately bequeathed to us: He gave us a solid foundation for hope - Jesus! Amen. Let's pray!