

FINISH STRONG!
Ecclesiastes 7:1-10

Woodland Park Church of Christ

1 July 2018

BACKDROP

- Today marks the first day of the second half of 2018.
- Always been counseled to first, finish what you start, and second, finish well (strong).
- Solomon declares that the end of a thing is better than its beginning.
- This certainly should be the case.
- Many take exception to this because they think of it terms of the termination of human life.

- Anyone can dream, “have a vision,” or start a matter.
 - However, it takes a certain character to start a task, see it through to completion, and finish on a high note --
 - Committed work/effort
 - Wise guidance: *Every purpose is established by counsel . . .*
- Proverbs 20:18**
- Self-discipline
 - Patience : Things aren't going to go well all the time; sometimes the best laid plans fail.
- **It is only here that the end of a matter is better than its beginning!**

Brief Recount of Apostle Paul's Life to Illustrate

- I. THE BEGINNING OF HIS WALK
- II. CIRCUMSTANCES & TRIALS
- III. A CHARACTER THAT ENDURES
- IV. THE ENDING (WHICH WAS FAR BETTER THAN ITS BEGINNING)

I. The Beginning – Acts 9:1-20

- Blinded on the road to Damascus. **Acts 9:3-8**
- Was a chosen vessel (instrument) for the Lord “before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel.” **Acts 9:17-18**
- After baptism, Paul immediately began to preach Christ.
Acts 9:19-20

III. Character & Attitude

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written:

“For Your sake we are killed all day long;

We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:35-39

IV. THE ENDING

*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. **II Timothy 4:6-8***

I trust we all will be able to profess at the end of our journey —

**ITS ENDING WAS BETTER
THAN ITS BEGINNING!**

Lord's Invitation Extended to All

- **Be added to the Lord's body**

Hear the gospel (**Romans 10:17**)

Believe (**Hebrews 11:6, Acts 15:7**)

Repent (**Acts 2:38**)

Confess (**Romans 10:10**)

Be baptized for the remission of sin (**Acts 2:38**).

Lord's Invitation (cont'd)

- Be reconciled unto the Lord (**I John 1:8-9**); or
- Desire prayer. (**James 5:16**).