

Fight the Good Fight

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Introduction

But as for you, O man of God ... We are celebrating the Feast of St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor. There was something special about him. But what Paul says to Timothy here, he says to us all. The only other New Testament reference of “man of God” is found in **2 Timothy 3** (Read **2 Timothy 3:16-17**). “Man of God” is one way Paul refers to any mature Christian who becomes thoroughly *equipped for every good work* (**2 Timothy 3:17**). So, St. Paul is giving Timothy, and by extension us, a three-fold directive here as to how to live our lives. We are to **Run, Contend, and Embrace**. This involves all areas of our lives—morals, doctrine, and experience.

Morals

Flee

If I were to ask you which sin causes the most problems by leading to other sins, what would you say? St. Paul says it is covetousness. In **verse 10**, he says, *for the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil*. That’s the “these things” in **verse 11** he tells to flee. We are to flee from all the evils caused by the love of money. Flee the pleasures, enticements, and snares of this world. Learn to be content with whatever God has given us. After all, everything we have is a gift of God. If we are always wanting more, we are despising God’s gifts to us. We are saying, “God, You don’t give very good gifts.”

Pursue

If we are to flee, or run away from evil, especially those associated with the love of money, what are we to run toward? We are to run toward, or pursue, *righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness* (**v. 11**). In short, we are to flee evil and pursue goodness. This is how to live a holy life.

Doctrine

“The faith” that we are to **contend** for is not some ambiguous belief system. When Paul talks about **the** faith, with the definite article, which he does 27 times, he’s talking about sound doctrine. Earlier, in **chapter 6**, Paul warns about false teachers and their teachings, as well as the evils of the love of money (read **1 Timothy 6:1-5**). As we all know, the source of sound doctrine is the Bible—*sola Scriptura*, the Bible is our soul authority for life. This shows how we must be firmly grounded in what we believe and why we believe it. We’re in a fight, whether we want to be or not. The Bible is under attack from many corners, and it’s up to us to contend for it. Fights are messy. Fights are not easy. Can we stand up for the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Experience

Paul says to *take hold of the eternal life to which you were called* (**v. 12**). Didn’t we receive eternal life at our Baptism? How do we “take hold” of something we already have? Having eternal life is more than just living forever. Eternal life is about our relationship with God. It’s about knowing Him. This speaks to how we live our life, not just that we have life. Most of us don’t really think much about our

eternal life. We are too caught up in this life, with all its worries and cares, with all its joys and delights. Through the week, life is all about the things of this world. Then on Sunday, we give a nod to our eternal life with God. Case in point—there are a lot of campgrounds around Berlin Reservoir, next to Deerfield, OH, where I grew up. In the summertime, the population of Deerfield would swell from 500 to 1,400. Yet, local churches never saw an increase in attendance during those months. Why? Because when people go on vacation from work, they tend to go on vacation from God, too. Our eternal life, our life with God is just not that important to us. Paul says to take hold, seize, grab, embrace that life.

Our Reason: Our Purpose

St. Paul gives this charge in the presence of God the Father and God the Son. That is, our Creator and Redeemer. God gives life to all. What was Jesus' *testimony before Pilate* that Paul refers to here (Read **John 18:36-37**)? Jesus makes two statements here, "*My kingdom is not of this world*" and "*I have come ... to bear witness to the truth*" (**John 18:37**). If Jesus' kingdom had been of this world, His followers would have fought to keep Him safe. As it is, His kingdom is not of this world and His followers contend for the truth, because He bears witness to the truth. This is our reason for being and our purpose for fighting the good fight of the faith.

Means of Grace

We're not in this fight alone. Jesus is also our Support, as well as our Purpose. Through Word and Sacrament, He shows us what is the good that we should **pursue**, teaches us the truth for which we are to **contend**, and gives us the desire and ability to **embrace** the eternal life that is ours. He is there so we can **FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT**.

*And the peace of God,
Which passes all understanding,
Will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
