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HOUSEFIRES

*"We are God's house if we keep our courage and remain confident in our hope in Christ."
Hebrews 3:6*

1 Timothy, Week 11

Author Paul the Apostle

Recipient Timothy - Young in years, powerful in ministry

Subject Paul closes his letter to Timothy by encouraging him to fight the good fight of faith and work towards the ultimate reward of seeing Jesus.

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1 Timothy 6:11-21

21 But you, Timothy, are a man of God; so run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses. 13 And I charge you before God, who gives life to all, and before Christ Jesus, who gave a good testimony before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you obey this command without wavering. Then no one can find fault with you from now until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. 15 For, at just the right time Christ will be revealed from heaven by the blessed and only almighty God, the King of all kings and Lord of all lords. 16 He alone can never die, and he lives in light so brilliant that no human can approach him. No human eye has ever seen him, nor ever will. All honor and power to him forever! Amen. 17 Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. 18 Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. 19 By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life. 20 Timothy, guard what God has entrusted to you. Avoid godless, foolish discussions with those who oppose you with their so-called knowledge. 21 Some people have wandered from the faith by following such foolishness.

Real Talk

Draw on our own experiences and feelings as we connect personally with the Bible

Pride and misplaced trust are two pitfalls the wealthy can experience. There is no place for pride in the heart of the believer. The attitude of every believer should mirror Jesus' attitude who, "took the humble position of a slave... (and) humbled himself in obedience to God" (Philippians 2:7-8). Likewise, misplaced trust can shipwreck a believer's faith. Our "uncertain riches" are just one calamity away from being completely consumed, while God alone stands as trustworthy and eternal. Though dangerous, wealth does not have to be feared! Proverbs 10:22 reassures us that, "The blessing of the Lord makes a person rich, and He adds no sorrow with it." Paul's remedy to the dangers of wealth is to be generous and rich in good works. As we make God first in our lives and seek him diligently, applying scriptural principles to our stewarding of money, we will not fall in the trap of pride and misplaced trust in regard to money. *What are some ways we might observe pride or misplaced trust in others? How can we use those observations to also assess our own hearts?*

What's In It For Me?

Discuss ways to apply the scriptures to our lives

In verse 14, we read of Paul's description of Christ's 2nd coming, also called His return, revealing, or appearing. In His return, Jesus will reveal His full glory unlike anything that anyone had seen before (you can read an attempt of a description in Revelation 4). But Paul says something curious in vs 16: "No human eye has ever seen him, nor ever will." What does Paul mean? Wasn't Jesus seen by many in His earthly ministry, and even after His resurrection? Let's compare this idea with light. We can only see when a light shines, and are seeing the light by looking at what it shines upon. We could also look straight at the bulb and burn our eyes. Even more intensely, we could look directly at the sun and go blind. Even then, we are millions of miles away from it! There are measures of light, but it is all light. Jesus reveals Himself at the measure we are prepared and able to behold. The full glory of Christ will take all of eternity to see, and even then, we will never behold all of His fullness!

The beauty of heaven will be to forever look upon Jesus and see His light in ever increasing measure. What is the most recent thing you have learned about Jesus that lights up your spirit?

Digging Deeper

Consider the bigger picture and how the reading fits in with the rest of The Bible

Paul instructed Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith”. In the original Greek language, the word for fight is “agon”(ah-GONE). The broader meaning of the word is “to struggle”, “to compete for a prize”, “to contend with an adversary”, “fight”, “labor fervently”, and “strive”. How does Paul’s order to Timothy to “fight” fit in with Paul’s other instructions to love? Paul describes love in 1 Corinthians 13 as kind, patient, not rude, not demanding, and not irritable. And what about Jesus’ instruction to rest in Matthew 11:28? “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”. How, then, does one fight, love, and rest at the same time? Let’s dig deeper by looking at what this “good fight of faith” is.

Paul uses a similar word in Ephesians 6:12, saying “we don’t wrestle against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities...” Many believers mix this up. They fight against people, ideas, and situations. But those are areas of the “flesh” where Jesus is calling us to rest and trust in Him, and the people we think we need to fight are actually the ones we are called to love (yes, even our enemies)! Some Christians may also ignore the spiritual battle, claiming that Jesus has already won, so there is no need to fight! This is ignorant and simply false. There are still spiritual forces of darkness at work that we are called by God to war against. In conclusion, we are called to love people, trust for the outcome, and fight those spiritual forces at work against us. *What are some ways we can fight the spiritual battle we are called to fight?*

Devotional

Meditations from the heart of Joel Maillet, Lead Pastor of Salvation City Church

“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust.” 1 Timothy 6:20
Guard. Fight. Run. Wrestle. Our faith is an active faith, not a passive one. Your confession of faith gave you the assurance of paradise with Him for all of eternity, but at the same time, you also signed up for war. Both are true at the same time! The Christian life requires action with the hope of eternal rest with God. Staying faithful to God requires a four letter word that many hate: WORK. Philippians 2:12 commands us to “work out your faith with fear and trembling”. Our works don’t earn salvation, but they do prove the authenticity of it. James 2:17 says “Faith without works is dead”. Our works are the fruits produced by our salvation. Otherwise, we only produce “spiritual laziness”.

“I don’t feel like praying.” “It’s just one Sunday.” “I don’t know enough Bible to share the Gospel.” These are all signs that the enemy has you in a spiritual coma. Your faith is weak because you are not exercising it! Exercise doesn’t just happen. It requires setting your alarm, buying some equipment, committing the time, and preparing mentally for the strain you are about to put on your body. Many work to make physical “gains”, but God is looking for men and women who will put in the work for spiritual “gains”! God wants to form you into a giant of the faith; someone immovable and full of the power of God, the wisdom of God, and the love of God. But it takes work.

In another letter to Timothy, Paul commands him to “endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.” There’s another active word we all love: endure. Enduring is not sitting at home sulking when things don’t go your way. It is getting up and facing every new opposition with faith that God will carry you through by His strength. Don’t allow the enemy to discourage or intimidate you. If you have fallen off the wagon, GET UP. God’s strength is right there to access if you would just have the faith to stand.

Prayer: “Lord, show me the areas where I am weak in my faith, then show me the works that are necessary to increase it. I refuse to slip into spiritual laziness. I come against the tactics of the enemy used to lull me into inaction; fear, distraction, shame... I surrender those weaknesses to You, God, and I ask for Your strength to fight. Amen”