

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Open up your bible to 1 Timothy 6,

We are going to finish our study through this epistle that Paul wrote to his young protégé Timothy who he left as overseer in Ephesus.

And we have seen Paul provide Timothy with ways to resolve many of the issues that were going on in Ephesus.

Teach sound doctrine

How to appoint leaders in the church that are of godly character

The roles of men and women within the church

How to treat one another

This morning, Paul is going to conclude his letter to Timothy by addressing two groups on the opposite end of the social economic spectrum (slaves and the rich) and he will also exhort Timothy and the church on the importance of continuing to share the gospel that has been committed to every believer.

Let's pray...

**[1Ti 6:1-21 NKJV] 1 Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and [His] doctrine may not be blasphemed.**

So the first group here in chapter six that Paul is going to instruct Timothy on how to minister is to Christian slaves.

And I was doing a little research and found out that some historians estimate that up to 35% of all the people living in the Roman Empire during this time were slaves – I found some who estimated that half of the people were slaves.

And the two main ways that one became a slave was – either your people were conquered and therefore one became a slave or you had an outstanding debt – one might then be sold into slavery to pay off that particular debt.

I also want to make sure that you understand that many of the slaves during this time were also educated and cultured.

Some theologians even believe that Luke the physician (the writer of the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts) might have been a slave as well.

To their owners, they were considered less than human.

But when they heard the gospel message proclaiming that all people slaves or free were created in the image of God, when they heard the good news regarding salvation and freedom in Christ, it appealed to many of those that were slaves.

**[Gal 3:28 NKJV] 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

The problem for some of the Christian slaves is that they began to use their new found freedom in Christ as an excuse to defy and disobey their masters.

They didn't understand that their spiritual freedom in Christ did not alter the social position in the world – they were still slaves and they still needed to obey their master.

Turn with me to Col 3,

**[Col 3:22-24 NKJV] 22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.**

Once again, Paul echoed the same message – obey your master, do what he says, do it to the best of your ability – don't simply do the bare minimum.

And the only way one can do this is by doing it unto the Lord.

Here is the thing church, Jesus is concerned that His followers set a good example, even at being a good slave.

And this applies to every one of us.

As believers, we don't want to be the ones in the office who take the long breaks or the ones who call into work all the time or the low performing employee –

We are called to set a good example

We are to do our job as if Jesus Christ was our immediate supervisor –

**2 And those who have believing masters, let them not despise [them] because they are brethren, but rather serve [them] because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.**

Verse two applies to the slave whose master is a believer or the worker today whose boss is a believer.

And the principle here is the following –

Don't think that you can take it easy at work and kick back simply because your boss is a believer.

I read the story of a young Christian woman who left her secular job to go work for a Christian organization.

She thought it was her dream job –

After a month and a half on the job, she was ready to quit.

And she seeks advice from her pastor and she tells him how she has been disillusioned by her entire experience –

She said, “I thought it was going to be heaven on earth, instead there have been nothing but problems”

The pastor looked at her and asked, “Are you working just as hard for your Christian boss as you were for your secular boss???”

And by the expression on her face, he knew that she hadn't.

So he tells her -

“Try working harder, and show your boss real respect. Just because all of you in the office are saved doesn't mean you can do less than your best.” She took his advice and the problems cleared up.

If our master/boss is a believer, then we should be motivated to work harder knowing that we can be a blessing to another brother or another sister in Christ.

**3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, [even] the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,**

So now Paul warns Timothy regarding false teachers that are going to come along and teach something different.

Those who teach otherwise –

They could come in and teach salvation by works – instead of salvation by grace

They could teach that slaves don't have to work for their masters anymore

Anything that is contrary to what Paul has been exhorting Timothy to do –

And Paul says that their words are not wholesome – they are not “healthy” – their words provide no nutrients or health to the soul of the believers.

We have an example in chapter one when Paul pointed out that some false teachers were already teaching endless genealogies and fables instead of preaching Jesus Christ.

Another characteristic of the false teachers is that...

Their teachings do not agree with those of Jesus.

Their teachings do not promote a respect for God.

**4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions,**

False teachers are proud, and though they think they have an inside track on truth, the fact of the matter is, they know nothing!

It is the height of arrogance to reject the words of Christ – yet that is precisely what heretics do!

And once they do, they end up becoming debaters – obsessed with arguing their point.

Notice the progress the corruption of false teachers takes:

- 1) Pride leads to ignorance
- 2) Proud ignorance leads to endless arguments
- 3) Proud ignorant endless arguments lead to envy, strife, and then nasty insults and paranoia. - This is the fruit of the disputes and arguments of those who misuse God's truth.

Their presence in a church body is the source of all kinds of division and discontent; though they may appear to be experts on the Bible, they actually do damage to God's church.

Therefore, Paul warned Timothy, "From such withdraw yourself."

- 4) Once the false teacher gets to this point, unless they repent, they will fall to nothing more than speech void of any value and a darkness of mental capacity that leaves them empty of truth.

And we will see this in verse 5 -

**5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a [means of] gain. From such withdraw yourself.**

In chapter 4 Paul said that the false teachers start out knowing what they're teaching isn't right, but because it provides a convenient mask for their sin, they defy their conscience and teach it anyway.

Over time, their conscience stops bothering them.

Here in v. 5, Paul describes the end of this process of rejecting truth – they lose the ability to know truth at all – as they become destitute of the truth.

And I asked you to make a note of - **who suppose that godliness is a [means of] gain**

Because Paul here zeroes in on one of the things that these false teachers were teaching.

They would say that you should follow Jesus and follow their teachings because doing this will lead to a life of comfort and wealth.

Jesus wants you to be happy all the time

Jesus wants you to be rich

And if you are not rich – it is because you lack faith.

This is the Prosperity Gospel 2000 years ago.

Church, while not ignoring the blessings of following Jesus Christ, we must proclaim

**the need to follow Jesus because He is God**, and we owe Him everything as our

Creator.



**What is right before God, and what glorifies Him, is more important than whatever benefit we may gain.**

We need to be Christians who are more concerned with what glorifies God than with what benefits you and me.

**6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.**

In verse five, Paul used the same Greek words (godliness and gain) we find here in verse six – except; he puts a different spin on them by including the word contentment.

Real godliness is accompanied by contentment and if we have both of those, then we will be spiritually rich.

Let me explain,

True godliness means that a person trusts God to provide for everything and then learns to be content with what God has provided. (that is the key)

Turn with me to Phil 4 -

**[Phi 4:11-13 NKJV] 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**

Verse 13 is probably one of the verses that is taken out of context in the bible.

This verse is not about dunking a basketball, this verse is not about running a marathon or defeating your opponent in the ring –

Verse 13 is all about contentment.

And it is hard for us to be content because the TV, the Radio, Social Media will tell us that we would really be happy if we had the 90” flat tv screen or a new car or any material thing.

However, church – true contentment can only be met by a spiritual relationship with the God that created us.

As we draw closer to Him, He transforms our thinking by revealing the proper order regarding spiritual things and material things.

The opposite of contentment is discontent

It is itching for something that God has not given us –

**7 For we brought nothing into [this] world, [and it is] certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.**

There is an old saying –

You can't take it with you – the same thing that Paul is telling Timothy and the church here in verse 7.

However, there are people that do try.

(show pic)

Lonnie Holloway was such a man.

You see, Lonnie died at the age of 90 in South Carolina

And his dying wish was that he be buried in his beloved 1973 Pontiac Catalina with his prized gun collection loaded in the trunk.

A person's life does not consist in the abundance of their possessions.

We entered this world naked, and we end up leaving behind everything we've managed to acquire during our short lives.

Paul says in verse 8 that our only two necessities are food and clothing.

If we have food and shelter, we are to be content.

This is not a suggestion or a principle – it is a command.

Again, this doesn't mean it is wrong to have a 401k or a savings account? It's just wrong if we keep on looking at our 401k thinking that it will make us content.

**9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and [into] many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.**

**10 For the love of money is a root of all [kinds of] evil, for which some have**

strayed from the faith in their greediness, and **pierced themselves** through with many sorrows.

If our life is focused on becoming wealthy, we're setting ourselves up for trouble.

Because when we have that strong desire to be rich, we will begin to overlook other concerns and we will tend to do things that we normally wouldn't do –

Cheating, theft, embezzlement – all of these come about because of a desire to be rich.

You see, when the enemy sees greed, he suggests all kinds of ways to attain more money, and as people pursue these they end up drowning in a whirlpool of ruin.

In verse 10, I had you make a note that money is not the root of all evil – but the love of money is!!!!

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus makes it very clear that we have to choose between the love of God and the love of mammon – or worldly wealth. [Matthew 6]

We cannot serve both!

Paul re-affirms that truth here.

He had known people who had believed in Christ, but who had fallen away because of a love of money.

We have an example of this with Demas –

Demas served alongside Paul – but when we get to 2 Timothy – Paul’s last letter before he became a martyr – he writes to Timothy to tell him that Demas had forsaken him – he abandoned the ministry because of his love for the world.

The word “pierced” in v. 10 means “impaled” and Paul provides here a picture of someone who has run himself through with his own spear by placing it in the ground and then throwing himself on it.

The love of money is what brings us down.

**11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.**

Who is Paul speaking to when he says, O man of God?

He is speaking directly to young Timothy –

This is the only time in the New Testament that this title is applied to an individual – and it is applied to Timothy.

In the Old Testament it was applied to Moses, it was applied to some of the prophets – Elijah and Elisha.

So Paul knows how special the title is and applies it here to Timothy.

You see church, this is the passing of the torch.

Timothy is no longer living in Paul’s shadow.

Remember, at the beginning of the epistle, Paul calls Timothy, my son in the faith.

Timothy is still Paul's spiritual son, but he has matured into a man God wants to use in a mighty way in Ephesus.

And Paul tells Timothy to "flee" – to runaway from the error and greed that we just talked about in verses 3-10, and instead pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness

Timothy must make sure his heart stays pure, untarnished by the lie that this world can satisfy.

How is this done?

By not sinning? Of course not – because we still sin.

It's only when we give ourselves to Him thru faith in Christ that we find what we're looking for.

**12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.**

The Greek word that is used here for fight – means to enter a contest, to contend with adversaries.

We get our word agonize from this word.

The life of a Christian is a “fight” of “faith”.

It’s a life of learning to trust God at all times.

And once again we see Paul use a sports analogy – comparing the life of the believer to that of an Olympic athlete.

Turn with me to 1 Cor 9,

**[1Co 9:25-27 NKJV] 25 And everyone who competes [for the prize] is temperate in all things. Now they [do it] to obtain a perishable crown, but we [for] an imperishable [crown]. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I **fight**: **(I agonize)** not as [one who] beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring [it] into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.**

At the end of his own life, Paul declared,

**(2 Timothy 4:7 NKJV) I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**

I asked you to make a note where Paul says, confessed the good confession.

The good confession is what we tell others about Jesus Christ.

**(Matthew 10:32–33 NKJV) —32 “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.**

**13 I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and [before] Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate,**

Paul charged Timothy to confess the good confession because that is exactly what Jesus Christ did as He stood before Pilate –

He admitted the truth about Himself.

In Matt 27, Pilate asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews? And Jesus replied, “It is as you say”

In John 19:11 Jesus tells Pilate the following - “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.

**14 that you keep [this] commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing,**

This is how long Timothy was to continue to do this – and this includes everything that Paul had charged Timothy with in this letter.

Timothy was to keep serving Jesus until He returned.



**15 which He will manifest in His own time, [He who is] the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom [be] honor and everlasting power. Amen.**

Here in verses 15-16, Paul encourages Timothy and the church to continue to fight the good fight by reminding him and us who God is.

Potentate means we worship the One with supreme power over all.

He is the only ruler

He alone is immortal – Rome had emperors but they would die. The God that we worship will never die.

Dwelling in unapproachable light – meaning that His glory is so great if fully revealed would strike any human dead.

It is only through Jesus Christ that we can be accepted into His presence.

That is the God we serve.

**17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 [Let them] do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give,**

**willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.**

Paul has a few final words for those that are rich –

Again, he doesn't condemn the rich –

He simply says, use what God has given you to serve others and in doing so, you will lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven.

The wealthy must use their wealth faithfully.

God gave it to them, not so they'd use it selfishly, but to bless others.

**20 O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane [and] idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge-- 21 by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace [be] with you. Amen.**

In the beginning of the epistle, Paul tells Timothy that God had committed the gospel to Him and now we see Paul commit the gospel to Timothy.

It was Timothy's responsibility to guard what was committed to him.

And the only way to do that was to continue to preach the gospel and pass it on to the next generation.

If he deviated from it, he was going to be just like the false teachers that had infiltrated the church and therefore fail in his mission.

Church, this is God's way of protecting the truth and spreading it around the world.

We are stewards of the doctrines of faith – and God expects us to be faithful in sharing His good news until He returns.

Amen

Let's pray...

