

1Tim 24-06-26b

Let's resume our study now, we're looking at 1st Timothy chapter 6, and Paul's exhortation to Timothy is actually God's exhortation to you and to me. We should flee things that satisfy our desires, but don't comport with actual righteousness. It sounds good, it seems good, it is satisfying in a way, but so much in the world has that kind of momentary gratification, but it doesn't last and it doesn't count on 20, it doesn't invest in eternity, it doesn't equip us for every good work, it doesn't prepare us for future opportunities in God's plan and purpose.

One of these is an occupation or preoccupation with money. If we are content with what we have, sometimes we are abased, sometimes we abound, but we leave our financial status largely up to the Lord. I have noticed that, and Patty and I smile about this, we'll end up with an infusion from some sort of unexpected direction or source or timing or whatever, and we just put it into the account and wait, because there's going to be a need, a car is going to throw a shoe or there's going to be some other equally unexpected expense, and it seems like the Lord makes advanced provision, so when we get a nice little ahead on the balance moment, we just bank it and wait and watch, and invariably.

We tend to just stay at this level that is, we're not prosperous, but we're not doing like we did when we first got married, clipping coupons and shopping sales and putting stuff in the freezer and just living paycheck to paycheck. We're comfortable, and that way we don't have to worry. We're not obsessed with what if I can't pay my bills at the end of the month, but there's nothing left over either.

We're right in that happy middle where I don't have to worry about having too much and why did God give it to me, what should I do with it, or too little, how can I owe no man anything when I don't have the wherewithal to keep up with my recurring debts. Same thing is in view here, the preoccupation with money, and we can justify it all kinds of ways. It's not like you're Ebenezer Scrooge and you just want bigger and bigger piles of gold coins, but it can become an outsized concern.

I'm worried, what if? What if this? What if that? I need to find a way to invest or to work or to take a second job or have somebody else in the family work. Maybe I need to sell things or get on eBay and make a business. I know people who, some of my piano customers, they shop all of the antique stores and find things and they know the values, then they resell them on eBay.

That's how they get by. If you did that to excess, you'd never be home. Where's your family? Where's your life apart from, I shop to sell, and I sell, and then I shop, and I'm just moving merchandise.

It's very difficult to find ways in which that is going to give you opportunities to interact

with people, to manifest the fruit of the Spirit, to bless and be blessed with spiritual gifts and with conversation and speaking the truth and sharing the journey of faith along the way. If we get preoccupied with any one area of life, and really, this love of money stands in for all kinds of things. This is such a representative example using letter, and we've seen it over and over again.

Widows are just one kind of person in need. The love of money, that's just one kind of misdirected preoccupation or obsession. It can be all kinds of things.

We can be so invested in relationship, whether it's our marriage or our family, up the chain or down the chain. It can be work. It can be preoccupation with coworkers and what are they doing and how am I comparing.

In the military, how do I compare? There's six lieutenants. Am I number one or am I number six or am I in the comfortable middle? Any number of areas where we get preoccupied with something to the preclusion of our faith so that we end up straying from the faith. Many times, we're not aware that we strayed from the faith because we're not checking.

We're not looking for the signs. Have you ever been talking? This happens to the driver. You're talking and you get very invested in an animated conversation.

You're talking, talking, talking and you suddenly look up and you don't know where you are. This typically for me is on cross-country trips with Patty. We see things and we're having this animated, interesting conversation.

All of a sudden, I look around and I think, I was supposed to take an exit back in Albuquerque and I wonder if I took it. In those great stretches of desert, you can go for 5, 10, 15 miles without seeing a road sign. In many cases, there's not cell coverage.

You can't check GPS. You're kind of, where am I? From inattention at important decision points, I need to take an exit. I picked Albuquerque for reasons that some of you who are older will understand.

So flee these things and pursue. We run away from some things and we run toward other things. And it is righteousness.

And righteousness, some of its components are godliness. This is the example, the externalities that are visible about our life. In prayer, we go into our closet to pray, like the Lord said, privately.

We don't advertise our prayers. We don't stand on the street corners making long prayers like the Pharisees. Prayer is private.

Godliness, eusebeia, emphasizes the visible part of our spiritual life. What is our

deportment, our comportment? What kind of attitude do we reflect and exhibit? Do people consider us to be positive, optimistic, cheerful, glass half full, ready to engage in whatever is going on in a positive sense, slow to wrath, slow to anger, quick to forgive, quick to forget, quick to move on? Don't dig up old bones. This is part of our eusebeia, our godliness, and it is fueled by the example of the Lord Jesus.

We saw that in the previous chapter. Great is the mystery of godliness, eusebeia. So we pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, and patience.

These kind of stick together as we saw in the first session. You find them so often together. Gentleness.

This is such a great dashboard light for the other parts of our spiritual life, being healthy. It is one of the first things we lose if we get off track. The fruit of the Spirit, right in the middle of it, you have gentleness.

Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, patience. Faith, meekness, temperance. Right in the middle is gentleness.

When we get too emphatic in a discussion and it turns into an argument, starts having more heat than light, gentleness goes away. If we begin to look askance at someone else or we take offense because they're looking askance at us, one of the first things to leave is gentleness, which is another word for moderation, kindness, a light touch, a soft answer that turns away wrath instead of a grievous word that stirs up anger. Gentleness.

We should pursue gentleness. It's almost an oxymoron. You're running after something very hard, but what you're trying to catch is this very mild, gentle approach.

Not harsh, not temperamental, not hard-edged. Gentleness. Then in verse 12, fight the good fight of faith.

Faith comes to the fore again. He just said pursue righteousness, godliness, and faith. Love, patience, and gentleness.

Fight the good fight of faith. What does this mean? Why does faith require a fight? Well, it's helpful to remember what kind of fight it is. What warfare are we engaged in? What do we wrestle against is another clue.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but principalities and powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places. Think about the full armor of God. When you put on the full armor of God and you talk about the various elements and you get to the shield, what does the shield represent? It's the shield of faith.

And what do you use it for? Shield of faith with which you quench the fiery darts of the

wicked one. Faith is used in the battle against spiritual forces of darkness, including Satan himself and his darts. Faith.

So fighting the good fight of faith doesn't mean go fight with your fellow believers because you think they're doctrinally off base or they're misguided or they're misleading and deceiving. We have a different approach toward brothers and sisters and those who are outside. And it isn't a fight.

We are never told to fight each other. What are we told to do with each other? What are the one another's? Fight one another, contend, criticize, denigrate one another. It's nowhere in the list.

We went through the entire list twice, never found any of those terms. Fighting the good fight of faith is resisting the influences in the world that are sourced in and advocated by Satan. It is the spiritual oppression.

It's the big moving pieces in the world that the world situation, the state of the nation, the economy, the social injustices, the downward trend of American integrity and character and these other big things. How do you keep from being depressed, discouraged, trodden down, give up? It's hopeless. I just want to hibernate and wait for it all to be over.

Fight the good fight of faith. Our confidence is in God. This momentary light affliction is working for us an eternal weight of glory.

We are in God's hands. He has the wall of fire. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved in these big issue areas.

In Paul's day, in Timothy's day, this would have been the oppressive measures taken by the Roman Empire, persecution of Christians, lions, human torches lining Nero's driveway. You can't take physical action against those things. You're not going to go in and be the resistance and shoot Romans when they're not looking and poison them and so on.

Fight the good fight of faith. Maintain your faith. Don't let the iniquity and the evil and the darkness of the world get you down and slow you down.

Fight the good fight of faith. Notice this is a big perspective section here. Lay hold on eternal life.

There's a contrast between that which is eternal and that which is temporal. To fight the good fight of faith, you've got to concentrate on eternity, the big picture, momentary light affliction versus eternal weight of glory. I'm not going to get distracted.

I'm not going to get invested. I'm not going to be too much in this world. I'm not going to

overthink the progress of evil in national life and in legislation and in government and on the news and overseas.

And what are people doing to buildings and who's marching and waving signs about what and what did the court decide and who's prosecuting whom? And is it political persecution? Have our intelligence services been co-opted by those in power? Is there permanent Washington with their nefarious mustache twiddling and smoky room meetings and excessively rich people are financing all kinds of bad things? What's happening to the border? What's happening in warfare abroad? Disinvest, step back, and focus on the eternal. Can you imagine, let's pick a year. I'm going to pick the year 79 of the millennial age.

They might start renumbering years. Instead of before Christ and Anno Domini, it might be YM, year of the millennium, 79. I like the number 79 for some reason.

So we're in the year. It's 79 years into the millennial kingdom. How many people are going to look back and say, you remember 2024? Remember all the presidential race and the Supreme Court this and prosecution that and war in Ukraine and war in Israel and terrorism and people with signs and all kinds of angst and hubris and nefarious dealings hither and yon.

Is anybody in the year 79 going to say, you know, back in 2024, whatever happened with that, I don't think anybody is going to care. Think back to the year 1879. What was going on in America in 1870? Well, you'd have to go drag up an old newspaper and try to figure out what were the issues? Who was even president in 1879? I don't remember.

I don't recall. What were the issues of the day? What was hitting the headlines? What was Congress occupied with? What was what were our armed forces doing? Nobody cares at this point. Why should we become entangled and invested and carried along and distracted by the flapping hands of current events? Think about eternal life.

That's what this verse means. Fight the good fight of faith, not the good fight of a political candidate or a political party or a political position or a moral issue. Oh, they reversed a court decision and now everybody can do this and can't do that.

It's up to the states or it's up to the nation and let it go. Fight the good fight of faith. What are the issues affecting believers and their grasp on who we are and why we're here representing the Lord Jesus Christ? What are the truths of God that pertain? They will have their outworking in the same way that genuine personal righteousness will accomplish genuine social justice.

And there is a need for it. We are to look out for widows and orphans, but you've got to be righteous to know how and when to do it. You can't just jump to the conclusion.

Oh, I got to find some oppressed person and unoppress them, depress them. So fight the

good fight of faith. Our influence on these other issues will be natural and unforced if we fight the fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life.

Concentrate on eternal issues, not the momentary, not the immediate, not the short term. Lay hold on eternal life to which you are also called. Paul is talking specifically about Timothy here, but guess what? Draw a line, fill in your name.

That's who is called. You are called. I am called.

We are all the called. All things work together for good to those who are the called. You were called to fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life.

You were called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. Hold that thought. But just look at these words.

You've confessed the good confession. You know what the source of both of those are? Homo Logeo. Confess your sins, faithful and just to forgive your sins.

Homo Logeo. You confessed. You homo logeo-ed the good homo logion.

So this is a good translation. You confessed the confession in the presence of many witnesses. The word for witness here is martyr.

Now I'm bringing this up for a reason, so don't tune out. You confessed the good confession in the presence of many martyrs, many, many witnesses. Now look at the next verse.

I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things and before Christ Jesus who did what? Who martyre-o-ed the good homo logion. Jesus martyred. He witnessed the good confession.

It's a turnaround of the very same words that are in the previous verse. You confessed the good confession and Jesus Christ witnessed the same good confession. So what did Jesus say to Pilate that Timothy is repeating? Because there's not two good confessions.

There's only one, right? He doesn't say good confessions or one of the good confessions. It's the good confession. There is one good confession.

Timothy confessed it in the presence of many witnesses. Jesus witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate. So in each case, you have the good confession, you have somebody speaking it, and you have somebody hearing it.

With Jesus, he spoke it and Pontius Pilate heard it. Timothy spoke it, acknowledged it, and the witnesses witnessed it. So what's going on here? What is the good confession? You have five minutes.

What is the good confession? It seems pretty important because Paul says, I urge you in the sight of God, who got the whole ball rolling, gives life to all things, and Christ Jesus, who witnessed this good confession, keep this commandment without spot, blameless, until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing. And once again, he says Christ Jesus in verse 13, and you are to keep this commandment without spot, blameless, until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which he will manifest, he will epiphany, he will cause to appear, he will show, all of these are translations, in his own time. So what is the good confession? Flip a page back, 1st Timothy 3.16, it's kind of like John 3.16, or 1st John 3.16. 3.16 is just a happy verse in so many books.

1st Timothy 3.16, this is the mystery of godliness. Manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen by angels, by messengers, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory. Now what part of that, if any, did Jesus confess before Pontius Pilate? If you turn back to Matthew chapter 27, when Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him saying, are you the king of the Jews? Jesus said to him, you say it.

He's accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. This is the Jewish governor. Matthew doesn't give any of the words that Jesus said before Pontius Pilate.

You have him before the high priest in chapter 26, you have him before the governor in chapter 27. So as you would expect, who is Paul's companion in his travels? Who would be most likely to have told Paul what Jesus said in the presence of Pilate? Luke, chapter 23 of Luke. Pilate asked him, are you the king of the Jews? He answered him and said, you say it.

Very same thing he gave Herod, the governor. You say it. That's it.

Where are Jesus' words to Pilate? I would have thought for sure Luke had them. I turn to John. We know 14, 15, 16, and 17.

Jesus is in the upper room and in the garden, praying for the disciples. He is before the high priest. He is ultimately in Pilate's court.

And in chapter 18 of John, verse 33, Pilate entered the praetorium, called Jesus and said to him, are you the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him, are you speaking for yourself about this? Or did others tell you this concerning me? Because as we know from Matthew and from Luke, that's what he told Herod and that's what he told the chief priest. High priest. So Pilate said, am I a Jew? Your own nation and chief priests have delivered you to me.

What have you done? Jesus said, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight so that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But now my kingdom is not from here.

So what did Jesus tell Pilate? What is the good confession that Jesus gives before Pilate? The confession is not, are you the king? You said it. That isn't a confession. This is a confession.

I have a kingdom, but it's not of this world. If it were, my servants would act differently than they are. My kingdom is not from here.

Are you a king? Notice all of these confessions before the chief priest, before the governor and before Pilate all center on Jesus kingship. Are you the king of the Jews? Are you any kind of king? Jesus says here in verse 37, you say rightly. I am a king for this cause.

I was born. And for this cause, I have come into the world. Here we go.

Homo logeo the homo logion. What is it? I have come into the world. This is the reason I was born that I should bear witness to the truth.

Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice has my commands and keeps them pursues godliness. All of the things we've seen in first Timothy, the goal of the instruction. Jesus said, I have come into the world.

This is the reason I was born. And we say, well, he was he came to die and bear the sins of the world. He tells Pilate, because this is the confession.

He doesn't say Paul doesn't tell Timothy the good confession that John the Baptist gave, the Lamb of God that came to take away the sin of the world. What is the confession that Timothy confessed? And Paul says Jesus confessed before Pilate. Jesus didn't talk to Pilate about bearing sins.

What did he talk about? Kingship, kingdom, and only the kingdom and kingship. And what is its foundation? What is its goal and purpose and definition? You say that I am a king. This cause, I was born for this cause.

I've come into the world that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice, listens to me, does what I say. And that's it.

Later on in the next chapter, chapter 19 of John, Jesus is before Pilate. And Jesus answers him in verse 11, you could have no power at all against me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore, the one who delivered me to you has the greater sin.

And this is the sin of the Jewish leaders who delivered him to Pilate. And Pilate says, don't you know I've got the power to crucify you? Because Jesus gives no answer in verse 19. Pilate comes into the praetorium and says to Jesus, where are you from? Jesus gives him no answer.

All Jesus tells Pilate after the great confession in chapter 18 is, there's sin here and you

couldn't crucify me except that power has been granted to you. And this, of course, we've seen in Romans 13 and other places. So what is the good confession? What is our good confession? Jesus bears witness to God's truth, the truth from the father, the father's plan, purpose, means of salvation, the goal of instruction.

We are to have love that is sourced in a pure heart, cleansed of sin, a good conscience, able to discern truth from error and right from wrong, and a genuine faith. We are motivated. We are activated.

We are impelled. The means by which we accomplish and fulfill God's truth is faith. That is why the exhortation here to instruct the brethren in these things in chapter four, and to pursue these things in chapter six, pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness.

I urge you, verse 13, in the sight of God who gives life to all things and before Christ Jesus, who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate. The confession Jesus made is only found in John, and it is the reason that he came into the world and the purpose for which he was born, which is to bear witness to the truth, to bear witness to the truth. In the same way that justice is a part of personal righteousness, salvation truth, redemption, reconciliation, propitiation, is a subset of the entirety of the truth that Jesus came to communicate.

It's not just salvation. It's not just redemption. It is not just atonement.

Bearing witness to the truth encompasses all of that and far more. But the summary of that truth is conveniently given to us earlier by Paul in the great mystery of godliness, the Lord Jesus, the embodiment of God's truth. So, Paul emphasizes this, keep this commandment without spot, blameless, until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, however long that is.

Obviously, it wasn't in the lifetime of Paul or in the lifetime of Timothy, and this exhortation and this encouragement persists down to the present day. And as long as there is a living believer on this earth prior to Christ's appearing, this is the mission. This is what we do.

Keep it without spot and blameless. That's an interesting turn of phrase, isn't it? Keep the commandment to confess the good confession, to fight the good fight and lay hold on eternal life, to keep doing that without spot and blameless. Is this the measure in mainstream churchianity? Is it the measure for many Christians who are doing wonderful things? And it scares me so badly, the picture Jesus gives in the resurrection for Israel, when they're sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and someone knocks at the door and says, hey, I'd like to come in and sit down at the table.

And they say, why won't you open the door in your name? We did all of these wonderful

things. In your name, we did these things. Those things in and of themselves may be good, but they have to be results.

They have to be the result of fighting the good fight of faith and laying hold on eternal life. If they exist without that connection to Christ, they don't count. And they become works of iniquity because the glory of Christ is not in it and of it.

It has to be part of the good confession. It has to be part of fleeing personal desires and pursuing righteousness. We would do well to review this section of 1 Timothy 6 at least once a week, and then examine ourselves and see if this is why we do what we do and how we do what we do.

It is not enough to have a shiny, whitewashed outer surface. What is on the inside? And only the word of God can cut to the very center of our hearts and judge our thoughts and intents. Looking on the outside, man looks on the outward appearance, only the Lord looks on the heart.

And the word of God is that sharp sword that will split our joints and marrow apart and judge the motivations that we have. And it becomes a matter of desire. We don't have to undergo that examination.

We don't have to subject ourselves. We can tell ourselves a wonderful story and we are satisfied with our self-evaluation. And we expect to go to the door and Jesus to open it up and say, I've got your mansion ready.

Come right in. That's your first day in heaven. That's a quote from a gospel song.

We have an expectation based on our standards instead of God's. So keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing. That is our due by date.

Anybody that's ever had to write papers, this midterm is due by this date. Your final is due by this date. Well, we have to do what we're going to do in anticipation of the Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which he will manifest in his own time.

This is something we're going to look at next time. But you can't get it from the New King James translation here. But remember when he said, I urge you before God who gives life to all things.

Then he mentions Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession. Then he says the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now he's going to go back to God who gives life to all things.

It's a symmetrical, almost chiastic structure. As you read this in anticipation of this coming Sunday, pay attention. You have to keep in mind God who gives life to all things

because it is God who is the blessed and only potentate King of Kings and Lord of Lords who alone has immortality dwelling in unapproachable light whom no man has seen or can see.

That's not the Lord Jesus. That's the Father dwelling in unapproachable light. How did we get from there? Where does it shift from Jesus to the blessed and only potentate King of Kings and Lord of Lords who alone has immortality dwelling in unapproachable light whom no man has seen or can see to whom be honor and everlasting power.

Amen. You think you're talking about the Lord Jesus. Well, doesn't he come and he's got a thing on his thigh, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

That's what we'll talk about on Sunday. We'll clarify this a bit and it makes a difference. There's a reason Paul says what he says here and it undergirds and emphasizes this exhortation, this urging in the sight of God.

This is how we should see ourselves. We do what we do in the sight of God. In the sight of God who gives life to all things and in the sight of the Lord Jesus who is going to appear and will be manifest.

But you've got a clue there in verse 15. See if you can spot it. I'll leave that for your machinations between now and Sunday.

But there's a clue in verse 15 as to where the dividing line is in talking about the Lord Jesus and talking about the Father. So with that as motivation, we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you so much for the gift of your word.

When we are in doubt, when we're confused, when we are uncertain, when we feel like we may be straying or stumbling, we have the constant bright shining light of your word to illuminate our path, to shine on our steps, to give our feet direction onto solid ground. We have your Holy Spirit to encourage us, to call us, to convict us, to set us once again on the right path, to help pick us up when we stumble. These provisions of divine power and divine presence are so precious.

We thank you for them. We thank you for the Lord Jesus and his faithfulness and his work that made it possible for us to enjoy these tremendous blessings. We thank you for him and we pray that we can properly represent him on this earth until the day that he does appear to take us to himself and present us before your throne.

And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.