

Fight the Good Fight
1 Timothy 1:18-25 (Week 05) 10/05/2025
Wage the Good Warfare

This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

¹⁸ This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, ¹⁹ holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, ²⁰ among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. (1 Timothy 1:18-20)

Introduction and Review

- Today we continue our study of **1 Timothy**.
- And at the end of Chapter 1 the apostle Paul uses military language to exhort **Timothy!**
- You see, **Paul understood**, what so few Christians today realize, **we are at war!**
- There's a **spiritual war** for **the souls of men, women & children** taking place all around us.
- Now the idea of **spiritual warfare** would have come as no surprise to **Timothy**.
- For he was the leader of the church in Ephesus,
- And he was certainly familiar with **the letter to the Ephesians**.
- Where in **chapter 6**, Paul **famously writes...**

¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:11-12)

- This describes what **Donald Barnhouse**, rightly calls the **invisible war**.
- And this war is **infinitely** more serious than **any visible human conflict**,
- Because its **consequences** are eternal, **eternal life or eternal death**.
- **And so**, Paul, knowing the high stakes of the **warfare Timothy must wage** writes...

¹⁸ This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, (1 Timothy 1:18)

- **Wage the good warfare** or as **other translations** have it, **fight the good fight**.
- This **encapsulates** Paul's call to **Timothy throughout this letter**
- And he preferences this call with **two personal appeals** for Timothy to serve...
- **First**, he appeals to Timothy as **his father...**

This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child...

- We'll get to the details of **the charge Paul is entrusting to Timothy** shortly.
- But notice that as he did in his initial greeting, Paul refers to Timothy **as his child in the faith**.
- Paul has great love and affection for Timothy; **he is like a son to him!**

- And as any **loving parent** knows, our initial inclination is to **protect our children from harm**.
- But Paul also knows that **Timothy is a soldier in God's army**.
- And so, he doesn't tell him to **avoid conflict**, he doesn't tell him to **"stay safe"**.
- He tells him to enter into battle, **to wage the good warfare**.
- **Timothy** could sing the old children's song **from Sunday school**:
- ***I may never march in the infantry, ride in the cavalry, shoot the artillery; I may never fly over the enemy, but I'm in the Lord's army, yes, sir!***
- **So, first** Paul appeals to Timothy **as his father in the faith** to report for service.
- And then Paul appeals to Timothy's gifting for and call to ministry... that it was...

in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you

- We don't know the details of this prophecy but in **Chapter 4 Paul tells Timothy...**

¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. (1 Timothy 4:14)

- Timothy received a **spiritual gift** "by prophecy" when, the elders laid hands on him.
- **Therefore**, his call to ministry was confirmed by both **the church and the Lord**.
- And so, after appealing to Timothy as his father in the faith,
- and as one who has been gifted and confirmed for ministry.
- Paul commands his son Timothy to **wage the good warfare**.
- Now some of you might be thinking, **okay good**, I don't have the gift or confirmation of a Timothy.
- **Therefore, I need not wage the good warfare**.
- I can just go about my life, **avoiding conflict**, doing as I please,
- **waiting for death or Christ's return**.
- **But that's not the case**, even though everyone doesn't receive a **gift by prophecy**.
- Everyone does receive a **gift**...
- To the church in Corinth, **in the context of Spiritual gifts**, Paul writes...

⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:7)

- And Peter adds...

¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: (1 Peter 4:10)

- All believers have been given **at least one spiritual gift**,
- and we're all called to use our gifts for the common good, **to serve one another**.
- And what that means is that **we've all received confirmation** from the LORD to use our gifts to build up HIS church.
- Therefore, we are all called **to wage the good warfare against the enemy of God's church**.

- We are called to...

¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

- And we are called to fight...

¹² ...against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:11-12)

- We like Timothy are commanded **to wage the good warfare.**
- So, as we look at our passage for today, know that it applies not just to Timothy or Pastors or Missionaries or Elders, **but to every believer!**
- We are all in the Lord's Army, YES SIR!
- **And as soldiers of the Lord, who are called to wage the good warfare,**
- we need to first understand...

1. The Meaning of Good Warfare

- We can't wage it unless we know what it is!
- **Now warfare in Timothy's day and ours involves conflict.**
- And Paul says we are to engage in **good warfare, good conflict,**
- But that implies that **there is also...**

A. Bad Warfare

- Bad conflict, some fights **are good, and some are bad.**
- And so, before we get to **the meaning of good warfare,**
- I thought we should **look first at bad warfare.**
- And in **1 & 2 Timothy** Paul instructs against certain types of conflict (this is bad warfare).
- In **Chapter 6 of 1 Timothy,** Paul describes **false teachers as having...**

⁴ ...an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, (1 Timothy 6:4)

- And in **2 Timothy** Paul warns...

²³ Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels.

²⁴ And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone... (2 Timothy 2:23-24)

- So, **bad warfare** involves foolish, ignorant controversies that lead to quarrels within the church.
- As someone has said, **Most of the wars the church wages turn out to be civil wars.**
- Throughout church history **internal quarrels and controversies** have caused a great deal of damage to **God's people and to His church.**

- **Now just to be clear**, some fights are necessary **to preserve sound doctrine**.
- **And we will get to that shortly**.
- But many if not most church conflicts turn out to **be fights over tradition**
- **or doctrine** that is not essential to the Christian faith.
- And this is certainly **bad warfare, unnecessary conflict**.
- With regards conflict over **non-essential** doctrine, Paul wrote a whole chapter to the church in Rome (**Romans 14**) against **such conflict**. – **Homework**.
- Now again, just to be clear, every biblical truth (doctrine) should be taught, discussed, believed, and practiced.
- But not every **biblical doctrine** needs to be **fought for in every situation**,
- and **no doctrine** should ever be **defended with a contentious, quarrelsome spirit**.
- And this is even more true (if that is possible) when it comes **to Church traditions**.
- Holding on to traditions of the past like they were given by God from Mount Sinai can often create bad warfare, **unnecessary quarrels and conflicts**.
- Now in the church today one of the things that generates a great deal of bad conflict is **Worship**.
- What and how we sing praises to the LORD!
- Now granted, **it's sometimes necessary** to take a **firm stand** on the content of the lyrics being sung.
- They must be Biblical, and they must be focused on worshipping God.
- But that's not usually what people fight about.
- Instead, the conflict is often over style, what instruments to use (drums can cause conflict).
- Or how high or low the volume coming out of the speakers should be.
- And maybe the biggest conflict is over what songs to sing,
- traditional hymns vs. contemporary music.
- And I understand that **we all have preferences in these areas**.
- But we must realize (like all church traditions) they are just that, **our preferences**.
- The elders have been reading a book titled "**Revitalize**."
- Biblical keys to helping your church come **alive again by Andrew Davis**.
- And in his chapter **title "Be Supple on Worship"** Davis takes a quick tour of worship throughout church history and around the world and then he writes...

From this tour..., I came to a key precept: *God likes more forms of worship than you do*. Along with that came a helpful corollary: *it is good for you to worship it forms that you do not like—but that God does*. (Andrew Davis)

- Amen, so quarrelling over **Church Traditions like worship styles**,
- or non-essential doctrine is **bad warfare**.

- And that brings us to...

B. Good Warfare

- As we've seen, there are plenty of **bad fights** that we can get involved in...
- But the **good fight** we are to wage is **much more limited**.
- Which is why Paul calls it **the (singular) good warfare**.
- As we've **seen from Ephesians**...
- This **good warfare** is against Satan and his spiritual forces of evil.
- So, we know **who we're fighting against, but as we don the armor of God**,
- What are we fighting for?
- Well, if you continue reading **Ephesians 6:13-20**,
- which we aren't going to do today, but that would be excellent homework,
- What you find is **the purpose of the armor is to protect you from the enemies' attacks**,
- so that you (**and through prayer others**) can continue to proclaim the truth of the gospel.
- And this is the same warfare that Paul is calling Timothy to wage.
- It is a Battle for The Truth – For Sound Doctrine – For the Gospel of Jesus Christ!
- If you remember, in **verses 3 of Chapter 1**, Paul urged Timothy to **oppose false doctrines**.

³ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, (1 Timothy 1:3)

- He goes on in **verses 4-7** to describe the problem with these false teachers and their different doctrine.
- Then in **verses 8-17** he makes two important and related **digressions**.
- **First**, he deals with the proper uses of the law,
- because these false teachers were using it improperly **to support their different doctrine**.
- And they were **causing bad warfare**, quarrels, controversies, vain discussions.
- **Then second**, Paul recalls **God's amazing grace in saving a wretch like Him**,
- which is **an example and clarification of the true sound doctrine of God and the gospel**.
- So, **these digressions** related to Paul's **main point** about the false teachers and their attack against sound doctrine (**the gospel of Jesus Christ**).
- And so, in **verse 18** he **returns to his main point**,
- which again is the **problem of heresy (different doctrine) in the church**.
- So, when Paul refers to...

This charge - in verse 18,

- He is referring back to **the charge he gave in verse 3**.
- That is, for Timothy to **charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine**.
- And what this implies is that Timothy (and all believers) are responsible for preserving sound doctrine.

- Therefore, **the good warfare**, what Timothy and we are to fight for is sound doctrine,
- **sound biblical truth, the teachings of Christ and the Apostles!**
- **Specifically**, it's the fight to defend **those doctrines** which are **essential to the Christian faith**.
- This includes doctrines like **the reality of the Trinity**,
- the **deity of Jesus Christ**,
- the **necessity of atonement for sin**,
- the **sufficiency of Christ's death on the cross**,
- the **efficacy of faith alone for justification**,
- and **the infallibility of Holy Scripture**.
- **Paul is saying**, such **deep theological truths** are well worth fighting for.
- His command is a reminder to never take **sound doctrine** for granted.
- The people of God have **never been able to simply to rest in the faith**.
- **They have always had to fight for it**.
- This **good warfare** began in **the Old Testament**.
- By the time **Moses came down from the mountain with the sound doctrine of the Law**,
- the children of Israel were already **worshiping the golden calf**.
- And Moses had to fight to **for the truth of God's Law, his word**.
- **Joshua** had to fight for Israel to choose between serving God and serving the gods.
- He proclaims...

15 ...choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell... (Joshua 24:15)

- **Elijah the prophet** was outnumbered **450 to 1** when he **fought the Prophets of Baal** to show who the true God was.
- Although not all God's prophets faced the same odds, **they all faced the same enemy**.
- Like **Ezekiel**, they had to oppose...

9 ...the prophets who see false visions and who give lying divinations... (Ezekiel 13:9)

- And **the good warfare** continued in the New Testament.
- Much of Jesus' teaching fought against the false works righteousness theology of the Pharisees.
- And **every New Testament epistle** includes words of condemnation (fights against) bad teaching (false doctrine) that was creeping into the churches.
- Even the short epistle of **Jude** urges the church...

3 ...to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 1:3)

- **And it didn't stop with the New Testament**.
- The history of the church is largely a story of **doctrinal warfare and confrontation**.

- **Let me hit a few highlights...**
- **First** the church had to defend **the doctrine of the Trinity**,
- Which was settled by the **Council of Nicaea in AD 325**.
- Then the church had to defend the **sovereignty of God's grace against the man-centered doctrines of Pelagius (Pa-Lay-Jus)**.
- This was settled by the Council **of Ephesus in AD 431**.
- And all the while there were arguments over **the deity of Jesus Christ**,
- which was finally settled at the council of **Chalcedon (AD 451)**
- Then in the **Middle Ages**, the way of salvation came under attack.
- And eventually, because of gross doctrinal error,
- **It was necessary for the Holy Spirit to reform the church.**
- **The reformation**, led by Martin Luther and others,
- is certainly the most famous and largest example of **good warfare** in all of **church history**.
- These men had to fight for a number of crucial doctrines...
- **Scripture** had to be defended as the **alone standard for faith and practice (sola scriptura)**.
- **Christ** had to be defended as the alone **mediator between God and man (solus Christus)**.
- **Faith** had to be defended as the alone **instrument of justification (sola fide)**.
- **Grace** had to be defended as **the alone power of God for salvation (sola gratia)**.
- And all these doctrines had to be defended in order to promote the greater glory of God,
- who alone is worthy of praise (**solus Deo Gloria**).
- **But the good fight didn't end with the reformation.**
- It continued up through **the 19th and twentieth century**.
- There was the good fight between **fundamentalism, modernism and naturalism**.
- This was a fight between **Christianity as a supernatural religion**,
- or Christianity explained **away as human experience**.
- Taking the truths of Scripture and subjecting them to **Human Reason and Current Scientific Understanding**.
- This later became the fight between **evangelicalism and liberalism**,
- which Billy Graham and others waged during the **middle part of the 20th century**,
- and **which continues today**.
- Today the fight seems to be the fight for truth itself.
- Is Biblical truth and truth in general to be seen **as objective or subjective**.
- **Do we all share the same truth or is truth relative?**
- Are we to be ruled by **objective truth** who God is and who we are...
- or by a **person's subjective feelings to the contrary**.
- The fight goes on!

- And the point of very brief look at biblical and church history is to show that there has never been a time when God's people were not in **danger of falling into error**.
- Error generated from within the church by false teachers.
- Or error generated by a Godless culture.
- In the history of the church **confirms the necessity of Paul's charge to Timothy**.
- Until Christ returns, **the people of God** will be engaged in a **continual war** against the forces of evil (led by the father of lies)...
- Who true to his nature, seeks to promote falsehood, unsound doctrine in the church of God.
- Therefore, the Christian faith always needs to be defended,
- Certainly, **against the external enemy of atheistic or pagan or any Godless culture**.
- **But even more importantly we must defend against internal attacks**.
- **Which come in the form of different false doctrines**.
- **Because** persecution from outside often ends up purifying and helping the church to advance the gospel,
- **But heresy from the inside** always harms the church **and hurts its ministry** to the world.
- Christians long for peace in the church, **and rightly so**.
- In **John Chapter 17**, Our Lord Jesus prayed.

²¹ that [those who believe in him] may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us... (John 17:21)

- Jesus prays his church will be united with the Father and Son.
- And we should all strive for this kind of unity.
- However, anyone who believes that we should surrender sound doctrine for the sake of unity,
- **Does not understand scripture, the gospel, or what it means to trust in Jesus**.
- It's not enough to say, "**Why don't we just all believe in Jesus?**"
- As soon as you say that you need to explain **who Jesus is**,
- **what he has done, what difference it makes, and how he is received**.
- And some will answer those questions incorrectly, unbiblically, using their own man-made different false doctrine.
- And like Timothy we're called to engage in fighting against these false doctrine.
- And fighting for sound biblical doctrine.
- We need to understand that the enemies of **sound doctrine** will not simply run away.
- **They must be driven away. They must be fought against**.
- **We must continue to wage the good warfare** for the Christian faith.
- Now our passage for today doesn't talk **much about how to do that**.
- We know that, for Timothy, and us it involves **using our spiritual gifts**.
- But this is really **just Paul's introduction to the good warfare**, He will add to it throughout the letter.

- But he does give a brief glance at...

2. The Weapons of Good Warfare

- Following Paul's call to **wage the good warfare** He adds...

¹⁹ holding faith and a good conscience... (1 Timothy 1:19)

- Given the **military language of warfare**, it's like he is saying to Timothy...
- To wage the good warfare, you must be armed with the weapons of faith and a good conscience.
- Now **the weapon of faith** certainly corresponds to the shield of faith found in **Ephesians 6** where **Paul writes...**

¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; (Ephesians 6:16)

- Arm yourself against the attacks of the enemy with a solid trust in Jesus Christ, the word of God, the gospel, sound doctrine.
- And along with faith arm yourself with a

good conscience.

- This corresponds to **at least two pieces** of armor from Ephesians 6.
- **The belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness...**
- for a **good conscience knows and does what is true and right.**
- In fact, **our conscience** is the **seat of our morality**.
- It's where we as individuals determine what is **true and false, right, and wrong**.
- It dictates whether the actions we take will be good or bad.
- As Jesus said in **Luke 6:45...**

⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart (his good conscience) produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil... (Luke 6:45)

- And Paul says, to wage the good warfare we must hold, or arm ourselves with these weapons of faith and a good conscience.
- And how do we do that?
- Well, as we talked about last week, faith is gift from **God's overflowing grace**.
- But like all gifts it must **be received and cultivated**, it must **hold fast to it**.
- And we do that in relationship with God, **spending time in prayer**, in the word
- and fellowshiping with God's people.
- And how do we hold fast to (arm ourselves with) a good conscience?
- By allowing the Spirit of God to use the inspired word of God to define the truth of what is good and bad, right, and wrong.
- We must hold on to, **trust in**, what is of God, **what is Godly, what is good**.

- So, as we hold faith and a good conscience, we're able to wage good warfare.
- Because our faith and good conscience will be reflected in our lives.
- Or you could say it this way.
- As we hold fast to our faith in the sound doctrine of God's word.
- Then our good conscience (that we are holding onto as well) will dictate that we wage warfare against false doctrine and for the sound doctrine of God's word.
- Our good warfare flows from our weapons of faith and good conscience.
- And both are needed.
- In fact, they're connected two other times in **1 Timothy**.
- Back in **verse 5 of Chapter 1**, Paul writes...

⁵ The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. (1 Timothy 1:5)

- And then speaking of the qualifications of a **Deacon in Chapter 3** he writes...

⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. (1 Timothy 3:9)

- The point is **faith and conscience go together**.
- They are like a bow and arrow.
- You need both to **be effective in warfare**.
- Because if you let go of your faith, and embrace **false faith (false doctrine)**
- This will impact your conscience (your understanding of good and evil, right and wrong)
- and will lead to moral failure.
- Wrong views about **God's Word lead inevitably to wrong practices**.
- **But the reverse is also true:**
- A **bad conscience** often leads to **bad doctrine**.
- Calvin went **as far as** to say that...

a bad conscience is the mother of all heresies. (John Calvin)

- People often try to justify their sins (bad behavior),
- and when they do it leads to false doctrine.
- For example, **if a Christian were to have sex before marriage**.
- **There are basically two roads to take...**
- If they're **holding to good conscience**, then they'll recognize their sin of sexually immorality...
- They will call it sin, they will confess and repent of their sin,
- They will ask God for forgiveness and the strength to remain pure moving forward.
- And thus, even in their sin, **they remain true to sound doctrine**.

- But a “Christian” who is seeking **at least externally** to hold to their faith...
- But let’s go of **their good conscience** will seek “**Biblical**” reasons to justify and continue in their sexual immorality.
- I’ve actually had **an engaged couple** say that **because they love each other,**
- **and love is the greatest commandment** that pre-marital sex as an expression of their love is not a sin.
- Clearly **their bad conscience** (and their hormones) **led them to bad doctrine.**
- And when you are living out **bad doctrine** there is no chance **you can wage a good warfare for sound doctrine.**
- And so, I think what Paul is saying to Timothy is that...

as you wage the good warfare.

- **Be certain** to hold fast to your faith in Christ (in the sound doctrine of God’s word)
- and a good conscience.
- So that as you engage in conflict over your faith (sound doctrine),
- you will act in good conscience.
- That is, your actions will match your faith, **and your warfare will be good!**
- So as soldiers of Christ we must make every effort to hold fast to (arm ourselves with) faith and good conscience, **that we might wage the good warfare!**
- But what happens when a “**Christian**” doesn’t hold fast to their faith or good conscience?
- What are...

3. The Results of Rejecting Faith & Good Conscience

- Well, we’ve seen what can happen in their lives as they seek to justify their bad doctrine or bad behavior.
- But what does this mean in the church?
- How should the church respond to those who reject faith and good conscience?
- **Well,** Paul ends his charge by getting specific and giving two tragic examples of this very thing.

¹⁹ ...holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this,

- “**this**” refer back to **faith and good conscience.**
- By rejecting **faith and good conscience...**

some have made shipwreck of their faith, ²⁰ among whom are Hymenaeus (HI-MUH-NAY-US) and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. (1 Timothy 1:19-20)

- So, these men reject, **a least in part,** their faith (sound doctrine)
- (what they formerly said they believed)
- And **they reject their good conscience** (what formerly knew to be right and wrong)

- **Which means** they stopped doing what is good (Godly) and were doing what was bad.
- And they did it purposefully.
- The word “rejecting” here involves a deliberate **conscious choice**.
- And result of this choice **was a shipwreck**.
- They took the ship of their lives and **instead of sailing it in trust and obedience to God** and the sound doctrine of Christ and His Apostles.
- They chose to sail in the direction of their **own man-made different false doctrine**.
- **And the result was a shipwreck of their faith.**
- ***And their own teaching became blasphemous.***
- That is, they were guilty of **the defamation of God’s character**.
- Now the phrase...

some have made shipwreck of their faith,

- ...is sometimes **considered evidence** that these men and other **lost their salvation**.
- **But I want you to notice** that there was still hope for **Hymenaeus and Alexander**.
- **Paul (of all people!)** knew that it was possible to **survive a shipwreck**.
- Although being lost at sea is **always dangerous**, sometimes it is possible to swim for it,
- as Paul had done at least three times himself.
- **Also**, the listed sin these men committed, blasphemy, was one of the apostle’s former sins.
- Back in **verse 13** Paul calls himself a **blasphemer**.
- So, Paul knew that it was possible to be forgiven for blasphemy,
- as well as saved from a shipwreck.
- All of this helps explain why **Paul handed Hymenaeus and Alexander**

over to Satan

- The same thing takes place in **the Corinthians Church**.
- Paul tells the leaders...

⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 5:5)

- Notice the delivery to Satan is ***for the destruction of the flesh and salvation of the spirit.***
- This idea of **delivering someone to Satan** came from the Jewish synagogues.
- and refers to the correction of sin.
- This would be what we call **Church discipline** as described by Jesus in **Matthew 18:15–20**.
- In these verses, Jesus outlines the **stages** that a Christian (who is engaging in sin) must go through.

- **Let me summarize...**
- **First, one of his Christian** brothers should correct him privately.
- But if **he** refuses to listen then **two believers** should go and plead with him to turn away from sin.
- And if **that fails**, the matter should be **brought to the attention of the elders**.
- And if, in the end, **a church member** refuses to repent they **must be put outside the church**:
- This would be what Paul means by **delivering or handing someone over to Satan**.
- **John Norman Davidson Kelly** in his commentary on 1 Timothy tells us

[Being handed over to Satan] did not simply mean that he left the Christian congregation and resumed a peaceful life in pagan society; such a man was thought to be really exposed to the malice of the Evil One, and physical disaster was fully anticipated. (John Norman Davidson Kelly)

- So, this **is a warning** about how dangerous it is to be caught outside the **church of Jesus Christ**.
- **Hymenaeus and Alexander** were exposed to **dangers** when they were handed over to Satan.
- They were **denied Christian fellowship**.
- They could **no longer be considered part of the church of Jesus Christ**.
- And for them to **return to fellowship with Christ and his church**,
- They would have had to return to the **faith (sound doctrine) and a good conscience**.
- They would have had to not only **confess and repent of their sin before God**.
- **But also, before the church!**
- And you might think, handing someone over to Satan, is pretty harsh.
- But notice that it was done for their **spiritual benefit**.
- As Augustine observed, ***Paul was trying “to correct evil men by means of the evil one.”***
- **In Corinth, the man was delivered to Satan so his spirit might be saved**.
- And **Hymenaeus and Alexander** were handed them over **so they would...**

learn not to blaspheme

- Here the word “**learn**” in the Greek is a positive word meaning **to instruct, train, and correct**.
- Paul’s hope is that **these men would** repair their damaged ship and sail it back to port.
- It was **Paul’s desire** that God would bring them back to himself.
- **Discipline** is not intended **simply** to punish sin, **but also to restore the sinner**.
- **Martin Luther** pointed out that it has **medicinal purposes**.
- It’s not intended to harm, but to heal. **When it’s used properly....**

[Church discipline] maintains the glory of God, the purity of His Church and the keeping and reclaiming of disobedient sinners. (Martin Luther)

- Now there’s always the danger that **spiritual authority** may be abused.
- **For example**, in Scotland in years past it’s reported that there were **elders** who went into the villages during worship services to round up **Sabbath-breakers for excommunication**.

- But the **contemporary church** errs in the **opposite direction**.
- Christians are **so afraid of offending anyone** that we **rarely warn anyone away from sin**.
- Church discipline needs to **be restored to its rightful and helpful** place in the church.
- It's not man's idea; it is God's idea.
- **Calvin** explained its proper function well:

Since it is in the Church that Christ holds the seat of His kingdom, outside the Church there is nothing but the dominion of Satan. Thus he who is cut off from the Church must necessarily fall for a time under Satan's tyranny, till he is reconciled to the Church and returns to Christ. (John Calvin)

- And so, for those who are leaders in the church,
- our responsibility sometimes includes putting sinners outside God's protection...
- so that they might ultimately be saved.
- And that certainly isn't easy, **but it is part of the good warfare** we are called to wage.
- **Christians must never forget that we are and will remain soldiers in the army of God.**
- Paul provides an excellent example of this; **he stayed in the army until the end of his life.**
- **He was a veteran of many campaigns.**
- And near the end, in **2 Timothy**, he writes these words to his fellow soldier and child in the faith...

⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

- These words would be wonderful to repeat at the end of any ministry, or at the end of life itself:
- **I have waged the good warfare; I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith!**
- **But what follows is even better...**

⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

- **Here** Paul speaks of the spoils of good warfare.
- As we hold fast to faith and good conscience,
- As we fight the good fight against different false doctrines.
- Doctrine that **leads people away from Christ and into Sin.**
- And as we fight **the good fight for sound doctrine.**
- Doctrine that leads people **into relationship with Christ and away from Sin.**
- It will not be easy, there will be **difficulties, conflicts, hurts, wounds.**
- When you stand up **against falsehood and for sound biblical doctrine,**
- There will be people (even in the church) who won't like you, who will reject you, who will hate you.

- **And this shouldn't surprise you because It's war! what do we expect.**
- So, as we longingly lovingly look forward to the appearing of Jesus Christ.
- When he will win this war and reward his faithful soldiers with the **crown of righteousness.**
- Let us continue to **fight the good fight,**
- Knowing as Paul wrote to the Corinthians...

17 For this light momentary affliction (this good warfare we are engaged in) is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, (2 Corinthians 4:17)

- **Would you pray with me as Sean comes to lead us in Communion.**