

Fight the Good Fight
1 Timothy 6:17-20 (Week 20) 03/15/2026
Final Words

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.

¹⁷ As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. ¹⁸ They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹ thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

²⁰ O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called "knowledge," ²¹ for by professing it some have swerved from the faith. Grace be with you. (1 Timothy 6:17-21)

Introduction and Review

- Today we come to the end of our study through **Paul's first Letter to Timothy**.
- Next week **Sean**, then **Palm Sunday**, **Easter Sunday** and then we will **begin 2 Timothy**.
- Now these final words from **Paul to Timothy** are really a postscript, **A P.S.**
- The **main body** of the letter ended with a **powerful tribute to God**, concluding with...

¹⁶ ...To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. (1 Timothy 6:16)

- But it seems Paul then went **back over the letter** and realized something was missing.
- Near the close of his letter, **he had warned that...**

⁹ ...those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. (1 Timothy 6:9)

- This was not a warning against being rich, **but for anyone who desired to be rich**.
- But left by itself it might give the impression **that it's wrong for a Christian to be rich**.
- However, there is nothing wrong with having money, **in and of itself**.
- **It's not money, but...**

¹⁰ ...the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. (1 Timothy 6:10)

- The gospel is for everyone, **the rich, the poor and all those in between**.
- And this would have been important in **the Ephesian Church** where Timothy was.
- Because although there were many **poor Christians in Ephesus**,
- including a number of **slaves (doulos)** as we saw at the beginning of **Chapter 6**.
- Paul also knew that there were **committed Christians who happened to be rich**.

- **And so, before he finishes the letter, he writes...**

A Word to the Wealthy

- Beginning in **verse 17** we read...

17 As for the rich in this present age... (1 Timothy 6:17)

- Paul is going to specifically address those who **have riches (material wealth) in this life.**
- And given this is a letter **to Christians,**
- **to Timothy, the Church in Ephesus,** and the church throughout the ages.
- We can surmise that **some Christians** will be **rich in this life.**

- So, before we go on, we need to understand what **Paul means by rich.**
- The word itself, **in the Greek,** means to be **abounding in material resources.**
- The rich have more than enough, they're **not living paycheck to paycheck.**
- They probably own their own **home** and **a chariot or two.**
- They have **plenty of nice clothes.**
- They have **more than enough food to eat.**
- They have **leisure time,** for **weekend fun,** vacations, travel. **cruises.**
- They have **enough money** to not only buy **the essentials for life, but non-essentials to enjoy.**
- **TVs, stereos, cell phones, computers, dishwashers, household decorations, golf-clubs, etc....**

- Now does this sound like **anyone you know.**
- Because by this standard, **many Americans,** including most of us are rich.
- I know **we don't think of ourselves that way,**
- Because unless you are Elon Musk, **you can always find someone richer than you.**

- We often define **the rich** as those who **have more (or way more) than we do.**
- And we can even be judgmental of people **who we consider rich.**
- Have you heard the expression, **"The Filthy Rich".**

- **Last weekend,** I saw **this attitude** in my own life.
- On Saturday Christina and I went to **Knotts Berry farm** for my **Grandson David's Birthday.**
- We have **annual passes,** and do our **kids and Grandkids,** because that's what we gave them for Christmas.

- Now, you might think that this makes us rich, but we only bought **Knotts Berry Farm passes...**
- not the much more expensive **Disneyland passes,**
- **The Disney people are rich in this present age, not me.**

- Then when we **left Knotts** we stopped **for cheap dinner** at **In-N-Out.**
- And while we were **eating (outside)** a car pulled up.

It was a blue Corvette C8 Z06 – not this one but one just like it.

- The Corvette **backed into a parking spot right** by where we were eating.
- And the **license plate frame** read “**Jesus**” (on top)
- and “**The Way The Truth and the Life**” on the bottom.
- And when the **young couple** got out of the car, they were wearing sweatshirts that had,
- “**Not of this World**” and other Christian stuff written on them.
- And I thought/judged, would a **Christian** really drive a car that cost, **around \$150,000 dollars?**
- I mean my **Toyota RAV4 Hybrid only cost \$43,000** dollars.
- **They are certainly the rich in the present age, not me.**
- But then on **Sunday night** I was invited to the **young adults Bible Study** to speak to them about **reaching the Buddhist world.**
- They meet at **Ash and Abbey’s 700 square foot Apartment** in **Ontario.**
- And as we **all crowded into the living room,**
- I thought of my recently **paid off 3100 square foot home in Orangecrest.**
- And it finally dawned on me that **I am the rich in the present age.**
- Now my point is twofold, **first, Paul’s words to the wealthy apply to most of us here today.**
- We need to hear and apply them to our lives.
- **And second,** given that **Paul assumes** there are rich people in the church.
- And we **find no rebukes** for being rich or **calls to get rid of your riches.**
- These words should **put a stop to judging Christians** for their material prosperity.
- As **well as freeing Christians,** who are blessed with wealth, **from guilt.**
- In fact, **these words should free us to enjoy whatever God provides.**
- Because everything we **own comes from God...**

who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. (1 Timothy 6:17)

- God provides for the rich and the poor alike,
- **and whatever he provides is for our enjoyment.**
- However, Paul has more to say to the rich than simply “**enjoy your riches**” **PERIOD**
- Although there is nothing wrong with **our money in and of itself,**
- Paul, in these final **words to the wealthy** gives **two important commands,**
- along with one incentive for **obedience to these commands.**
- **So, first, to the rich, Paul commands...**

1. Trust not in Riches but in God

- **Verse 17** begins with a common problem for the rich,
- A problem that leads them **away from trust in God** and **to trust in self** and their money.
- Paul writes...

17 As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty,

- Some rich people are proud of what they have accumulated...

- and this makes them rather haughty, prideful, arrogant.
- They boast about what they've **acquired in this present age**.
- They **feel superior** and expect to receive special treatment.
- This is certainly **true in the world**, look all I have, **you better treat me with respect**.
- You better do what I want, you better treat me better than **those lazy poor people**.
- And **unfortunately**, this haughtiness can **creep into the church as well**.
- Men and women who believe they are **entitled to greater influence** because of their wealth.
- The larger the tithe the more **important the opinion of the tither**.
- These haughty people trust in their riches to provide them **with standing in the church**.
- But that should not be the case,
- and so, Paul charges pastor Timothy to tell the **rich people in his congregation** not to think too highly of themselves.
- To remind them **that the only reason** they're prosperous is that God has given them the means to prosper, their intellect, their drive, their family background, good circumstances all come from God.
- You may have worked hard for your wealth,
- but it is God who gave you the body and **mind to work hard with**.
- **So, charge them not to be haughty...**

nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. (1 Timothy 6:17)

- Instead of setting their hopes on (or trusting in) God,
- **the rich** can often depend on their **financial portfolio**.
- Trusting in themselves and what they've **acquired**,
- instead of trusting **God who gave it all to them**.
- As **Americans**, we all too often "**set our hopes on the uncertainty of riches...**"
- If the **economy is up and gas prices are down**,
- We tend to be happy, and **the politicians will stay in office**.
- But if the **economy is down and gas prices are up**,
- We tend to be **discontented**, even angry, **and the politicians must go**.
- This is a sure sign that our **culture bases its ultimate sense of security on money**.
- And **this false sense of security** even pervades the church.
- **Kenneth Kantzer**, who formerly served as the **editor of Christianity Today**, was once asked what he considered the greatest problem facing the contemporary church.
- He said...

It is not what you might expect me to say. It is not liberalism or neo-orthodoxy or wrong views of revelation or inspiration or other controversial points in theology. . . . The most serious problem facing today's church is materialism—materialism not as a philosophical theory, but as a way of life. (Kenneth Kantzer)

- It seems that “**The American Dream**” of making it big, living the good life, achieving financial security, has become part of what it means to be **an American Christian**.
- But as believers, **Paul says we must not...**

set their (our) hopes on the uncertainty of riches

- If we put our hope in riches, money, the stock market, the dollar,
- Then we are on **extremely shaky ground**.
- We are like the **foolish man** who built his house on the sand.

⁴⁹ ...When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great. (Luke 6:49)

- The writer of the Proverbs put it well:

⁵ When your eyes light on [wealth], it is gone, for suddenly it sprouts wings, flying like an eagle toward heaven. (Proverbs 23:5)

- Riches are here today, gone tomorrow. **They cannot be trusted.**
- And even if you continue to grow wealthy.
- Even if the economy remains stable and the stock market continues to grow.
- Even if gas prices go down, **the riches of this present age will not last.**
- Because they are of **this present age alone.**
- We’ll talk more about **the temporal nature of riches shortly.**
- But not only are riches uncertain and temporal,
- You can’t trust them to bring lasting joy, peace or contentment.
- As the Beatles sang, “**Money Can’t Buy Me Love**”
- **Or more importantly, as Solomon wrote...**

¹⁰ He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. (Ecclesiastes 5:10)

- There is no satisfaction in material wealth.
- **Therefore**, it is foolishness to “**set your hopes on it**”, to trust in riches if folly.
- The only **safe place** to set **your hopes** is...

on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. (1 Timothy 6:17)

- All we have, all we need, all we enjoy, ultimately comes from God.
- Our daily bread, our homes, all our possessions come from him, **not from our paycheck.**
- **Tuition payments** come from him, **not from a scholarship fund.**
- **Security for old age** comes from him, **not from a pension or retirement account.**
- **God gave us these things, and they can all be taken away.**
- **Therefore**, the only place **to set our hopes** (to put our confidence in) is God.

- Those **who do trust** in him are able to say,
- Lord, you have blessed me with more than I could ever deserve.
- But you could take it all away tomorrow **and I would still be full of joy**,
- for I have **everything I need in Jesus Christ**.
- I can say with the Psalmist...

⁹ For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things. (Psalms 107:9)

- **Bottom line**, in this present age, in this life...
- You can either set your hopes on God, or riches (material wealth) to bring you security and the satisfy the longings of your soul.
- You can't do both. **As Jesus said...**

²⁴ ...You cannot serve God and money. (Matthew 6:24)

- It's either one or the other. **So, which will it be?**
- **The best answer** to that question can be found in **your pockets and wallet**.
- **Because in 1864**, during the civil war, **the phrase...**

In God We Trust

- was added to **all US coins and paper currency**.
- This **motto is sound theology**, and there is no better place for it than on our Money.
- To remind us that **In God we trust**, not money, not riches.
- So, whether you consider yourself rich or not.
- No matter **how much or how little money** you have in the bank.
- Trust in God, **not the riches you have or hope to have**.
- Because **God provides everything you need and everything you enjoy!**
- And one of **the best ways to learn** how to trust God rather than money...
- is to **give our money away**,
- Which is what Paul **wants Timothy to tell the wealthy people** in his congregation to do...
- This is **Paul's second command to the rich...**

2. Do Good and Be Generous

- **Verse 18...**

¹⁸ They (the rich) are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, (1 Timothy 6:18)

- Notice the first part of this command doesn't necessarily require any money...
- You don't need to be rich (financially) to be rich in **good works**.
- This phrase **completely reverses** the values of this world.
- Everyone wants to be **rich with money**, but are you rich in good deeds?

- The trouble is that when it comes to **doing good works**, most Christians are **lower middle class**.
- We've never learned that **the way to be truly wealthy** is to give our lives away for Jesus Christ.
- As **Proverbs 11:25** tells us...

25 Whoever brings blessing will be enriched... (Proverbs 11:25)

- It is through blessing others (doing good for others) that we will be enriched.
- Not with material wealth, but with spiritual satisfaction and the joy of the Lord.
- As 2nd century theologian **Clement of Alexandria** said...

True riches are found in the giving, not in the having. (Clement of Alexandria)

- So, the first thing God wants from the rich (and everyone) is not their money.
- **What he values most of all is a servant's heart.**
- This means that it's not enough for the wealthy to **give money to charity**,
- Although, as we will see, **there is a place for that.**
- **What God demands first is active service.**
- It's **one thing to pay for someone else to feed the hungry**, to care for those in need,
- to **share their faith** or **go to the mission field**.
- It is another thing to do these things yourself.
- Rich Christians are called to do both,
- and not just try to solve everything, **by spending more money.**
- They must **get involved with their lives** as well as **their checkbooks.**
- **There are to be no idle rich in the church.**
- Every Christian is **called to active, personal involvement in doing good works.**
- In living out their faith, in proclaiming gospel with both words and deeds.
- Now some good works require money.
- So, another way that wealthy Christians can glorify God is through the wise use of their finances.
- God calls all his children...

to be generous and ready to share

- To embrace a lifestyle of **generous giving** of what God has given you.
- **The stewardship of personal wealth is an important aspect of the Christian life.**
- In the days of the early church it was **generosity, more than anything else**,
- that showed the difference **between Christianity and paganism.**
- The pagans did not care for **the poor** because the poor could give them nothing in return.
- What made **Christians different** is that they did care for the poor.
- In **Acts Chapter 4** we read that in the **Church in Jerusalem...**

4 There was not a needy person among them... (Acts 4:34)

- Not only did Christians care for their own poor, **but they also cared for the pagan poor.**
- The followers of Christ were the **ones who fed the hungry, cared for lepers,**
- and **rescued children who had been discarded and left to die.**
- By the second century, **Tertullian** was able to boast that Christians spent more on the poor in the street than **the pagans spent at the temple.**
- The result was the **rapid, worldwide expansion of the gospel.**
- Which was expedited **by generous giving.**
- Paul commends the **church in Philippi** for their generous giving to his work of spreading the gospel...

15 And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. 16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. (Philippians 4:15-16)

- I guess, **even in the 1st century church,** there was a problem with giving to missions.
- And as it was in **the 1st century,** so it is today,
- God continue **to call his people to generous giving of their financial resources** to care for the needy and **to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth.**
- **But it seems the call often goes unheeded.**
- Generous Christians could have a **great worldwide impact today.**
- **The west** has more “**rich**” **Christians** than ever before.
- But at the **same time,** many **valuable Christian ministries** lack funds.
- The problem is not too few Christians with not enough money,
- The problem is most Christians are not **Christ-like in their giving.**
- As **Richard D. Philips** wrote...

We scarcely realize what the church could accomplish in the world if we gave our money away for Jesus with the same liberality that Jesus gave his life for us. (Richard D. Philips)

- **Bottom-line,** to those who are rich in this present age...
- To those who God has provided with everything they need and everything they enjoy.
- **They/WE** must be generous; **we must share what we have with others who are in need.**
- And we must **give generously to God’s work in this world.**
- And how do we know who to give our **money to and how much to give?**
- How much to give to the church, to the poor, to missions?
- Well, let me give you the same advice that I received many years ago from one of our former Pastors, **Phil Busbee.**
- He taught, that as Christians, when it comes to giving,
- **The New Testament does specify amounts.**
- We talk about Tithing (giving a tenth) but that is **an Old Testament Law** concept.
- Instead, what we give should be **determined in relationship with God.**

- It should be determined by **knowing the principles of God's word.**
- For example...

...[Don't] set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches... (1 Timothy 6:17)

¹⁸ ...be generous and ready to share, (1 Timothy 6:18)

³⁵ ...It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)

⁷ ...God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7)

- And **having these and other principles** established by God's word.
- Knowing God wants us to give cheerfully and generously.
- We can then go to him in prayer and **ask how much LORD!**
- allowing him to speak **to our hearts** through **his word and his Spirit.**
- **Pastor Phil** then concluded with this point,
- the Tithe (along with other opportunities to give) were part of **the OT Law**,
- but the New Testament Calls us to a higher law, a law of sacrifice and generosity.
- Jesus calls us to give everything to him.
- Therefore, when it comes to giving, **the Tithe (10th 10 percent)**, is a good place to start, not an end.
- Like so many things in the Christian life **we should grow in our giving.**
- For the Christian, **generosity ought to be a way of life.**
- **Because we serve a generous God.**
- God is richer than the richest man who ever lived.
- He not only owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Ps. 50:10), he also owns the hills!
- Yet God does not hoard his treasure, as Paul puts it, he

richly provides us with everything to enjoy

- It is impossible to think of God's rich giving without thinking of his most lavish gift of all...

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

- This is the **basic law of the divine economy:**
- **The rich became poor so that the poor might become rich.**
- Those who have become rich by the grace of God **must therefore be willing to enrich others.**
- Again, **Clement of Alexandria said...**

In the end it is not the one who keeps, but the one who gives away, who is rich; and it is giving away, not possession, which renders a man happy. (Clement of Alexandria)

- So, we have two commands. **Trust not in Riches but in God, Do Good and Be Generous**

- Now these commands, **especially being generous**,
- is often hard for some wealthy people to follow.
- Remember they tend to be haughty to think it was their efforts that brought them wealth.
- And they tend to trust in their riches, so they want to hold tight to what they have.
- After all, if a rich man gives his riches away, he won't be rich anymore.
- Remember that this was why the rich young man refused to follow Jesus. **Jesus told him,**

21 ... "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." (Matthew 19:21)

- Unfortunately, the man was not ready to be so generous:

22 When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Matthew 19:22)

- As Jesus watched the rich young man slowly walk away, **he said to his disciples,**

23 ... "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 19:23)

- And even God works and **they do enter the kingdom of heaven**,
- It's still difficult for them to break with their dependency on money.
- So, in order to encourage the rich to Trust God and be generous,
- Paul appeals to their business sense; **he tells them they will be...**

3. Storing Up Treasures for the Future

- People who are generous and willing to share are

19 thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. (1 Timothy 6:19)

- **This isn't a command**; this is a fact,
- a promise of what you will receive if you **trust God, do Good and give generously.**

- And if you don't if you trust in riches and refuse to give, what are you left with?
- Even if a man spends his whole life building up a fortune, and he dies wealthy,
- He loses it all, as Paul has already written...

7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. (1 Timothy 6:7)

- One man who discovered this was **Jay Gould**, the nineteenth-century **financial genius**.
- He was worth **one hundred million dollars**, but he died in utter despair.
- His dying words were, **"I'm the most miserable devil in the world."**

- Although Gould had made plenty of **long-term investments**,
- none of them was long-term enough.
- It was not until he lay on his death bed that he realized how foolish he had been for failing to invest in **any eternal securities**.
- According to the Bible there are really **two kinds of wealth**.
- Paul **hinted at this when he referred to...**

17 ...the rich in this present age, (1 Timothy 6:17)

- This phrase suggests that there is also a coming age,
- and that being rich then and being rich **now are two entirely different matters**.
- Where **earthly treasure** is concerned, the old saying is true: **“you can’t take it with you.”**
- **You'll never see a U-Haul behind a hearse**
- When it comes to **spiritual riches**, however, **you can send it on ahead!**
- This explains why the Bible often describes **the blessings of heaven as treasures**.
- This was the **teaching of Jesus Christ, who said,**

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

- Paul was certainly thinking of Jesus’ teaching when he wrote...

19 thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. (1 Timothy 6:19)

- When Paul talks about the kind of treasure that will make a **solid foundation** for the age to come, what he has in mind **is the treasure of eternal life**.
- One thing money cannot buy (besides Love) is life itself, earthly riches have no life-giving power.
- But a man who gives his possessions away for the sake of Jesus Christ has begun to
- **take hold of that which is truly life**.
- This is the **same kind of life** that was mentioned back in **verse 12**

12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life... (1 Timothy 6:12)

- Take hold, seize what is truly life, **eternal life**.
- Our lives in this world **are but a shadow** of what’s to come, **when we experience true life**.
- And so, Jesus and Paul encourage us to focus our efforts on eternity, **to focus on heaven**,
- to take hold of true life **by building something that will last forever**.
- To amass a fortune in heavenly treasure.

- Now this is not salvation by works.
- The passage does not teach that wealth is “**a means to secure one’s salvation.**”
- **There is no way to buy your way into heaven.**
- **Money can’t buy love, life or salvation.**
- God cannot be bribed. **Eternal life is his free gift.**
- But anyone, who **having received salvation** (the free gift of God),
- And then **in gratitude responding** with good works and generosity,
- That person has already begun to **take hold of eternal life.**
- They are building a **lasting foundation, storing up treasures that will never fade.**
- And this would certainly appeal to **anyone who has good business sense.**
- **A smart investor is happy to part with their wealth,**
- provided that he **will get something better in return.**
- The Bible promises that when earthly treasure is given away in the name of Jesus Christ,
- **it is exchanged for heavenly treasure.**
- A “**good foundation for the future**” is the ultimate investment.
- Unlike earthly treasure, heavenly treasure cannot be lost.
- It is a **lucrative investment** because it **secures the infinite riches of heaven.**
- It is a **long-term investment** because it will **last for all eternity.**
- It is a **stable investment** because it is backed by the **full faith and credit of almighty God.**
- As **John Chrysostom** wisely said,

In heaven nothing is uncertain, for the foundation being firm, there is no instability, all is firm, fixed, immovable, fast, and enduring.

- So that is the word to the wealthy.
- Don’t trust in Riches, DO Trust in God.
- Do good and be generous
- **For in so doing, you are storing up treasure for the future.**
- Paul then adds on...

A FINAL Word for Timothy

- Having just written about riches and the proper use of wealth.
- He uses the language of the **financial world.**

²⁰ O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you... (1 Timothy 6:20)

- Now what does that mean.
- Well, in Paul’s day, there were no **safe-deposit boxes.**
- So, when a man went on a long journey,
- He left his most valued possessions with someone he could trust, a trustee.

- And once the valuables were given (deposited) with this trustee,
- **it was his responsibility to keep them safe.**
- So, what had Paul entrusted to Timothy?
- Well, if you've been following **along as we studied this letter,**
- You will know that **Paul had entrusted Timothy** with the sound doctrines of the Christian Faith.
- In fact, **back at the beginning of the letter he mentioned that...**

11 in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted. (1 Timothy 1:11)

- Paul had been entrusted with the Gospel, **which he received directly for Jesus.**
- And he **then passed it on to Timothy.**
- We'll see this **clearly** when we get to **2 Timothy.** Beginning in **Chapter 1 verse 14** Paul writes...

13 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. (2 Timothy 1:13-14)

- So, what Paul is saying is that Timothy **was a trustee** of the **gospel of Jesus Christ.**
- And according to **ancient legal doctrine,** a trustee was obligated to **preserve a deposit**
- **“unharmd and unchanged.”**
- Therefore, Paul is calling Timothy **to preserve the gospel,**
- Not to **harm it or change it** in any way.
- Timothy (or any pastor or Christian for that matter) is not free to make up their own theology.
- On the contrary, he must proclaim the very same message that he himself received.
- **His task is not to innovate, but to guard to preserve.**
- And what this teaches us is that **the sound doctrine of the faith,**
- passed **down from Jesus and his apostles,**
- now recorded in **the New Testament** is not to be **reinvented, re-envisioned, or reinterpreted.**
- It is to be **cherished, guarded, and defended.**
- The **Christian message (the gospel)** is not something that **Pastors or teacher** or anyone...
- works out for himself or is **entitled to add to or take away from.**
- It is **a divine revelation** which has been committed to our care,
- **and which must be passed on unchanged.**
- The world seeks some **new doctrinal idea** or some **new spiritual experience,**
- but the church must continue to offer **the same old gospel.**
- In his sermon on this text, **5th Century Pope and theologian Leo the Great** asked,
- **“What is meant by the deposit?”**

- This was the answer that he gave...

That which is committed to thee, not that which is invented by thee; that which thou hast received, not that which thou hast devised; a thing not of wit, but of learning; not of private assumption, but of public tradition; a thing brought to thee, not brought forth of thee; wherein thou must not be an author, but a keeper; not a leader but a follower. Keep the deposit. (Leo the Great)

- Part of that sacred trust is **deposited in this very letter to Timothy.**
- Paul **has reminded Timothy** of the most basic truths of the gospel.
- He has stated

¹⁵ ...that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, (1 Timothy 1:15)

- He has claimed that

⁵ ...there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all... (1 Timothy 2:5-6)

- He has revealed the great mystery of godliness, that...

[God] was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. (1 Timothy 3:16)

- Paul **was banking on Timothy** to guard **these precious doctrines of the incarnation,**
- the atonement, the redemption, the resurrection, the proclamation,
- **and the glorification of Jesus Christ.**
- And what made this task urgent was that there **were false teachers** opposing the gospel.
- Paul had reminded Timothy of the danger of

⁶ ...vain discussion, (1 Timothy 1:6)

- And he told him to...

⁷ Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. (1 Timothy 4:7)

- Now he reminds him, yet again, **part of guarding the deposit entrusted to you.**
- Part of preserving the gospel of Jesus Christ is to...

²⁰ ...Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called "knowledge," (1 Timothy 6:20)

- **Calvin** described it this way...

The high-sounding talk and the bombastic verbosity of those who are not content with the simplicity of the Gospel but turn it into profane philosophy. (John Calvin)

- What this means is that the church of Jesus Christ is **no place for the philosophy of men.**
- It's no place for **entertaining (or debating over)** novel ideas about **the faith.**
- You have your source of authority, **it is the word of God,**
- **the gospel of Jesus Christ entrusted to you,** that's what you must teach.
- Not what comes out from the latest opinion poll, or current culture,
- Or what is falsely called "knowledge".
- The result of these kinds of teaching can only be a denial of the Christian faith.
- Apparently, this was already starting to happen in Ephesus, verse 21...

21 for by professing it (this so-called knowledge) some have swerved from the faith. (1 Timothy 6:21)

- These false teachers were claiming special knowledge.
- But the doctrines they professed were opposed to the gospel.
- Even causing some to **swerve (to deviate from) the faith.**
- So, as Paul concludes this letter, he is again telling Timothy **to fight the good fight of the faith.**
- To defend the faith, to guard the gospel of Jesus Christ against these false teaches.
- And how is Timothy (and how are we) going to do that?
- Well, I think Paul's final words give us the answer.

Grace be with you. (1 Timothy 6:21)

- Grace, God's unmerited favor, be with you.
- To fight the good fight of the faith, to guard the deposit entrusted to you, will take God's favor.
- God's grace in his life will give him the power and strength and wisdom **to win the fight for the faith.**
- And the same is true for us.
- There's something interesting about Paul's final words "Grace be with YOU".
- Although he is clearly writing to Timothy, O Timothy his child in the faith.
- The word "you" in is plural rather than the singular.
- A more accurate way to translate the phrase is "**Grace be with you all.**"
- This is a reminder that **1 Timothy is not simply a private letter,**
- but a **public letter for the whole family of believers in Ephesus.**
- And **the Christian church throughout the ages.**
- And so, Bridges Church, Paul says... **As you fight the good fight of the faith.**
- **As you guard the deposit entrusted to you.**
- As you defend the faith against all the falsehood of your world.
- God's Grace (HIS unmerited favor) be with you all!
- AMEN!