

1 TIMOTHY 6:11-16

(Reading: Joh.18:28-40; 2 Tim.1:3-14; 1 Tim.6:1-6:16)

Laying It On The Line!

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ...

Paul's letter to Timothy shows how an older and wiser brother in the faith guides his young colleague in Christ.

He knows his fellow leader in the church.

And right throughout this letter he hits on exactly those areas Timothy needs direction with.

Now, we know this letter as part of the inspired Word of God.

No wonder it's so spot on for Timothy.

But exactly because it was divinely right for him, it's also for us today.

It's what this letter is all about that especially comes to a head in the text this afternoon.

Because we're now moving into Paul's conclusion to Timothy.

Here he joins together all the key points he's written of and really puts it to us.

The apostle is laying it on the line!

How can we know this?

Which way are we really sure he's so serious?

Well, what we meet in the verses 11 and 12 are three imperatives.

There are three words which in the original Greek are direct commands.

They're not optional extras.

In the words of a first aspect to the text this morning, **THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE COMMANDED TO DO.**

So, which are those three imperatives?

Well, two are back to back in verse 11.

Those two are 'flee' and 'pursue'.

While they might not seem exactly next to each other in our English versions, in the original Greek they are.

And that is to especially show how they talking about opposite things.

For what could fleeing refer to but what Paul has addressed in the verses 3 till 10?

The areas of concern there were this needless arguing and the love of money.

And what do those things show?

You think about that.

What's wrong with always having to be right?
And what's not right about having money as the centre of your life?

It's all about me, isn't it?
Those verses vividly describe people so full of themselves and their things they've got no room for anyone else - especially God!

The verses 1 and 2 before them, about how slaves relate to their masters, tells the same.
They were told to put their masters first.

You see, it's not about you.
It's not about getting whatever you can out of someone else.

You have to run away from all that materialism, self-indulgence, deception and pretence.
You have to get away from this world!
Flee from it!

The second imperative is similar.
But it's positive instead of negative.
For "pursue" is about the way that we have to run.
This is where our focus and energy and resources are going.
That's where "righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness" come into the picture.
Because they're painting God's picture.
Then Jesus Christ is truly alive in us.
For what else are these qualities than the fruit of His Spirit?

Mind you, they're not all the fruit.
And there's a couple not in the fruit found in Galatians 5 verses 22 and 23.

These are particularly relevant here, though.
"Righteousness" is about doing what is morally right and pleasing to God.
What a difference to the greedy, false teachers of Ephesus!

"Godliness" is what's behind righteousness.
It's that deep, inner attitude of reverence for God that makes us do the right thing.
It's what's behind all we think and say and do, when we go God's way.

"Faith" is behind "godliness" still.
That's the holding on to God through Jesus Christ.

"Love" connects right into the heart of God.
As 1st John 4 the verses 10 and 11 says, "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.
"Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

And then there's what gives love its feet: "Endurance".

This is the Lord's own strength tested and proved in His endurance to the end.
Hebrews 12 verse 2 is clear about that.

And "gentleness" is the face of love.

It's not weakness but actually the strongest resolve to put aside anything that belongs to "me"!

All these qualities are what show someone chasing after God.

He's the man on fire for the Lord.

The third imperative confirms what a struggle this will be.

Because that command is the word "fight".

At the beginning of verse 12 the Christian life is compared to a contest.

And not just any contest.

This is a battle right through-out your whole Christian life.

It's something everyone of us should always be struggling with.

And you know what helps?

It's remembering your profession of faith.

Don't forget the day you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

This is what Paul is saying to Timothy in verse 12.

Now, the apostle isn't saying that it's the confession itself which makes or breaks their faith.

What he does want us to know, though, is that this is not something entered into lightly.

Especially in the time of Timothy.

That was one time in church history when you only made your public profession of faith if you meant it.

A bit like being openly Christian in China or a Moslem country today.

You don't do that lightly!

Quite the opposite.

You only do that if you really mean it.

That's something our church believes too.

No one gets to the point of publicly professing their faith if they haven't been learning it for long enough and said and shown that they mean it long enough.

With Timothy there's been a connection with the Church since he was born.

He was blessed to have been brought up in the covenant.

So you could say it came to him naturally.

But you wouldn't!

Professing your faith in Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord is the most unnatural thing in this world!

And professing it in a seriously bible-believing church is one way to prove this is so!

Because believe me that the most uncool thing you do!

For then not only do you go against the selfishness in society you also go against the self-centredness of much of Christianity.

That's what Timothy showed!

He who had a godly mother and grandmother stood out in his society.

Though he wasn't the strongest of men physically or psychologically he was greatly used by His Saviour and Lord.

This is what the next aspect in the text tells us about.

You see, **THIS IS THE ONE WHO GETS YOU THROUGH.**

From verse 13 through till the first part of verse 15, we see three reasons why Timothy is able to do what he's just been commanded to do.

The first two are in verse 13.

So, what are they?

Ah, you say, it's got something to do with the God who gives life to everything and to Christ Jesus who testified before Pontius Pilate.

What we see out of these two is the God who is the giver of life and the God who is the Saviour of life.

When Paul uses the expression "in the sight of" he doesn't only mean that God sees what we do.

He also means that this is actually being done by God.

And it's being done through each of the distinct Persons in the Triune Godhead.

Dear friend, the One who gets you through is the Lord!

It's because He is the Creator and He is the Redeemer that your life is in His hand and your confession will stand.

You are far from being alone.

In fact, God's every part is being used for you.

For notice that while in verse 14 Timothy is charged to keep this commandment without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, it's God who will bring about that return in His own time.

So it cannot be in his own strength and knowledge that Timothy will make it through.

He cannot be perfect doing it on his own.

He has to look to the Lord!

We see that in the example of Jesus making the good confession.

For while there have been some great saints in church history, they are all sinners, just like Timothy was and like we are.

But Christ is someone else.

His whole life and especially the time of His death was the good confession.

In John 18 verse 37 he replies to Pontius Pilate, "You are right in saying I am a king.

"In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.

"Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

Christ Jesus made it through.

And so can you!

He's in you!

And here we come to the third reason why Timothy is able to do what he's been commanded.

Because it's no one less than God's Spirit Himself - the Holy Spirit - bringing it about.

This was the One Jesus spoke of in John 14 verse 26.

As He said there, "the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you."

Oh, yes, Timothy has to do his part.

This is a command to him, just like it is a command to those he was over in Ephesus and to everyone of us.

But it's because you're doing this for God and not yourself that you'll get exactly what you need when you need it!

This is the amazing thing about Christians who have been through some of the most difficult things in life.

What they went through you wouldn't even wish upon your worst enemy!

And yet they come out of that terribly situation witnessing that God was doing it for their good.

That's the good confession!

Now, we don't have a hard life here.

Well, not yet anyway.

But we need to be all that much more aware that if we are not fighting the battle everyday, God's not winning in our lives.

As soon as we think we know enough or have done enough, it's not the Spirit breaking through.

Then the devil has got to you!

So you believers have to pay a price.
The faith you have professed comes with a cost.
And if you're not counting that cost in your life then something's gone
wrong.

There is a slogan that has become popular amongst Christians.
It is called WWJD.
Those letters stand for "What Would Jesus Do?"

It's a good challenge.
It makes us think about the right way to live.
But I think there's one better.
It is WDJS - "What Did Jesus Say?"

You see, WWJD always relates it back to me.
I have to think about what Jesus would do.
And I can change from time to time.
But WDJS puts our focus on the One who doesn't change.
THIS IS THE ONE WHO GETS YOU THROUGH.

Believer, it's looking to the Lord that lights up your path here below.
And it's looking to the Lord alone that is the only way to go.
In the words of the third aspect to this text, THIS IS THE ONLY WAY
FOR YOU.

Because notice how the text ends.
Part way through verse 15 the apostles' mood suddenly changes.
From the exhorting of Timothy he ends up with the praising of God!
He abruptly bursts into song!
And what a song!
This is some doxology!
"God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords,
who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see.
"To him be honour and might forever.
"Amen."

Well, how did Paul change to this?
What's got into him?

It's God's Spirit, of course.
As he has so much urged Timothy to look to the One who gets you through, he is
struck again in realising just how great and glorious the Lord is!

In verse 17 of the first chapter of this letter Paul also responds in praising God.
There it's when the truth strikes him about what Christ's first coming has done for
him.

Now the truth of Christ's second coming brings out another doxology, but this time it's more than the first.

Actually, the verses 15 and 16 have been described as one of the finest doxologies in Scripture.

It covers so much and yet is to the point.
The words are short and yet they are so deep.
It's truly a prayer praising God.

For look how it begins.
God is blessed.
He's the source of everything.

And God is God.
With a double and repeated emphasis - King of kings and Lord of lords - the praise acknowledges God as ruling over all.
He is supreme.

Then God is praised as the "immortal".
And here, as well as meaning the God lives forever, it's about how He is life's never-failing Fountain.
So, unlike us, He will keep on going.

And look where He lives!
It's in unapproachable light.

Hendriksen says that this light is like the sun.
We need to see by it, but we cannot look into it, because it's too intensely brilliant.

This is confirmed by describing Him next as the One "no one has seen or can see."
He is just so far above and beyond us all!
He is so stupendous!

With such a description Paul has to end saying, "To him be honour and might forever."
And so must we.
But we must not only end that way, we also have to live this way!

For we, of all people, know this is the only way.
It's what the true saints all over the world are confessing to.
And it's what we declare also as we worship and serve Him.
You have to.
Not to have this in you means your confession isn't true.

That's how we know when God has granted true revival in the past.
Because then His people returned to a simple and spiritual worship of Him.
And they were all **together** worshipping Him.

Then the highlight of their week is the public worship service.

It's when we worship God for who He truly is that we are truly His!

That's why if your private fellowship with Him doesn't leave you praising Him, there's something missing.

Then you need to go back to what you are commanded to do.

And doing that will bring you to the One who gets you through.

That will bring out of you this worship.

And with that fragrant offering and sacrifice to God you are supremely blessed.

This is what the little word at the end is all about.

The word we always use at the end of our prayers.

The word which means "It is so!" or "Let it be so!"

You know that word.

It's your word now too, because you so much agree with what the apostle is singing here.

This God is **your** God!

He's your everything.

Without Him you are absolutely nothing.

So, what can we say to this marvellous description of who He is and where He is?

It's quite simple.

"Amen!"

PRAYER:

Let's pray...

O Mighty and Marvellous King,

We bow before Your awesome majesty!

As Your servants, saved by the blood of Your Son, we are humbled before

You now.

We're looking only to You.

O please hear us.

In Your grace bless us.

So stir and keep us by Your Holy Spirit will declare day after day the good confession.

Then we will truly glorify You.

In Jesus' precious Name, we pray, Amen.