

Authentic spirituality

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 April 2022

Preacher: David Skull

[0 : 00] of the book of 1 Timothy. And let's pray together as we come to the word of God. Let's pray. Father, thank you that you know your churches and you know your people. Thank you that you know each! I want to pray that as your word is opened up now, that you'd help me and help us all to hear really less of me but more of the Lord Jesus, to sit at his feet, to be encouraged when we need that encouragement with the gospel, to be rebuked lovingly and straightened on the right path if that's what you want. Or if we are here doubting or disbelieving, we pray that the Lord Jesus would come and bring great conviction of the reality of the truth of the gospel.

Lord, I can't achieve that. You can. This is your word. We thank you for it and thank you for this church and this precious time together. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

1 Timothy, this section has been entitled Authentic Spirituality. I guess that's because if you hear last week, the previous section in chapter 6 is all about these false teachers that Timothy was asked to counteract by staying in Ephesus. They were teaching kind of twisted things about the Lord Jesus, about the gospel. They were into controversies and it was combined with a kind of money-centered, greedy lifestyle that they were living. And Timothy's been sent to kind of affirm what is true, encourage the church and protect them really from these things that were going on. A lot of 1 Timothy, of course, is written to Timothy. It's called that. It's written in the first person to him as someone who was part of Paul's group of apostles, his missionary team, that were involved in planting the church. And Timothy was to stay there to teach and encourage and strengthen them and protect them. So it's quite hard to read 1 Timothy in some ways because it's written to him. But if you look at the very last verse of 1 Timothy chapter 6, the very last lines, what does Paul say at the very end of 1 Timothy chapter 6? Someone shouted out the very last sentence.

Grace be with you all. We've added in the all as the translation, but the word you there is plural. So although the letter is written to Timothy, Paul is expecting that the church in Ephesus is listening in and receiving this truth. And he finds it and he ends it by saying grace be with you all. So this is a message. Yes, it's about Timothy, maybe about leadership, but it's also about the whole church.

[3 : 05] God is speaking to us today through these verses. Julian Hardiman, a pastor up in Cambridge, says, you can summarize 1 Timothy when you say that local churches like Ephesus, like Calvary, need gospel-driven leaders to guard the conformity of the church, the keeping of the church to gospel truth.

Local churches need gospel-driven leaders to guard their conformity to gospel truth. We believe the truth, we live the godliness of it out. That's authentic spirituality. It's often the case, isn't it, as the leaders go, so goes the church. I know you're going through a process of looking to strengthen the leadership in the future, but it's just something to pray for, for your elders and the leaders that the Lord is raising up amongst you, that they will be men of authentic spirituality.

Because as they are, so will the church. So will the church. It can work the other way around, the way around sometimes, can't it, that the church is really boosted and encouraged by what the leaders themselves are actually transformed by the church, who have more maturity than the leader. They're praying for the leader and suddenly the leader is igniting and growing.

That can happen too as well, can't it? Anyway, in these verses, I just want to point out, in terms of authentic spirituality, four things, four ways that God is mentioned. In verse 11, you see that Timothy is referred to as God's man, the man of God. In verse 13, Paul reminds Timothy of God's presence as he charges him to stand firm with the gospel.

In verse 17, Timothy is to instruct the rich in the church to put their hope in God. So we think about God's hope. And then finally, verse 21, we're going to think about the grace of God, God's grace.

[4 : 53] We've got God's man, God's presence, God's hope and God's grace. Authentic spirituality is all about God. Isn't that obvious? The living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit at work in and

amongst his people.

Authentic spirituality. First of all, think about the man of God, verse 11. Paul commands Timothy to do certain things in contrast to these false teachers.

But he does so firstly by encouraging him and describing him as a man of God. It seems to imply that these false teachers who are creating waves in the church, they're not really men of God. they may look it, they may draw people in, but what they teach and how they live, do not show that they are men of God. Now Paul's choice of words here in calling Timothy a man of God, I think is intentional.

Timothy has a really challenging job to do. We saw that in chapter 1, verse 3, is to stay in Ephesus and urge certain people not to teach false doctrines. Well, as Paul finishes his letter to Timothy, knowing that Timothy has a tough job in the church in Ephesus, Paul wants to affirm him and urge him on in this work by describing him as God's man, someone who belongs to God, that God is with, that God is using.

[6 : 22] Now that phrase, man of God, really comes from the Old Testament. It describes some of the key leaders of Israel, people like Moses and Samuel and David and Elijah and Elisha, especially some of the prophet type figures in the Old Testament, men of God who were called to come with the word of God to the people of God.

Amazingly, Paul says, Timothy, you're a man of God too. It's an amazing thing, isn't it?

You might know that famous verse in 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 16 which refers to the man of God as well. It says, all scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

It seems in that phrase that the man of God is kind of broadened out more generally to all those who are called to use God's word in the work of the gospel. people. So in that sense you could say that we are men and women of God who have the great tool of God's work, the word of God.

But here, I think Paul is using it in that Old Testament sense just to say, Timothy, you're the man that God is using in this place to do his work.

[7 : 47] Of course, as he does that, the whole church is equipped to do that as well, aren't they? Timothy has been part of Paul's mission team. Paul the apostle has been going out, he's been planting churches, the amazing story of how the church was planted in Ephesus.

But now Timothy has been left behind while the others have moved on. But Timothy must see himself as in this crucial role for the health of the church. His role was unique.

But it's true, isn't it, that local churches need leaders who are also men of God who come with the word of God to the people of God. And as that happens faithfully week after week and in pastoral situations, so the church is built up to be people of authentic spirituality who gather around the word of God in the presence of God every week.

Paul is telling Timothy it is not a mistake that you are in this city of Ephesus. Jesus, you are the right man in the right place to do the right work even though things will be challenging for you.

It's true for your elders, your leaders here at Calvary or for me or for Julian or for others that will be raised up to plant churches and to lead churches in this city. It is not a mistake that the Lord has called us here at this time to do this work to encourage and strengthen the churches, to defend them against false teaching and to lead them along godly paths as they seek to be witnesses for Jesus.

[9 : 22] There is a work for all of his leaders and for every single church member to do in God's plans and in God's purposes. The book of Ephesians tells us that God has prepared good works in advance for us to do.

Church member, you are that man or woman of God for that work that God has called you to do as well. That's the whole point of being a church.

There is a work for us to do in the body and for the gospel. Well, with that encouraging description calling him the man of God Paul commands Timothy to do four things in contrast to those false teachers.

Can you see what those things are in verse 11? He tells him to flee, he tells him to pursue, he tells him to fight, verse 12, and he tells him to grasp or take hold of something.

So Paul commands Timothy to do four things as a man of God. First of all, he's to flee. He's to flee those things in the previous verses, the false doctrines, the unsound teaching and the greedy

lifestyle of those false teachers who were making waves in the church in Ephesus.

[10:34] And particularly, look at verses 9 and 10. This is what he's to flee from. He says, those who want to get rich, who have the desire for wealth, fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered away from the faith and have pierced themselves with many griefs.

Timothy is to flee from the dodgy doctrine, but he's also to flee from the dodgy lifestyle of some of these teachers who were saying, actually, life is all about accumulating wealth.

Now, we need to be careful. Riches in itself is not a problem, but the love of money, the seeking after those things can lead you, especially a leader, to manipulate the church in order to gain personal wealth.

And it seems that the leaders were saying, look at our lifestyle, we're so wealthy and healthy, it's amazing, isn't it? You should believe the stuff that we're teaching. Paul tells Timothy, authentic spirituality and being a man of God means fleeing from that stuff.

[11:43] Fleeing from that stuff. He will go on to say what you should teach about those who are rich in the church later, so don't worry if you've got money. He's not having a go at you. We'll come to that in a minute. But there's a real danger, especially with church leaders, that they can be teaching and living a lifestyle that is contrary to the gospel.

I've really experienced that, actually, the challenge of that in coming to Brighton. We've moved from a sizable church where we're very comfortable, we're looked after, had no worries at all.

We've moved down to Brighton where, wonderfully, we're having our salary provided for a few years. It's an amazing privilege. But we've moved into something that is relatively insecure the house hasn't been sorted out.

What's going to happen after the next three to five years when actually the salary money runs out?

We've moved into insecurity. The whole country is moving into a bit of insecurity, hasn't it?

But we've really felt that. And as we've moved into that, I've had such a kind of personal temptation to say, yes, you've been called to do this work, but actually you could do something on the side.

[12:56] That would be good. It's right to go by vacation at times, doesn't it? Paul certainly did that when he needed to. But I was thinking, if I'm going to get a job that would just bring in loads of money, then actually I'd have all my problems sorted out.

I could just have a, I could buy a house rather than depending on others to provide a house. I could provide my own salary rather than depending on the Lord to provide it. In fact, if I ran with this business idea, I could be set up.

I could set the church up. I could bankroll everyone. I could drive around in a Mercedes. It would be amazing. Oh yes, Brighton, I love you. And in some ways that's been a huge challenge for me over the past six months as I've come to Brighton.

Would I trust the Lord? This is His work to be done in His way in relative weakness. Or would I seek to accomplish maybe His work in my way and try to do it with convenience and ease.

Now, there's nothing wrong with getting a job on the side, but the Lord's provided enough money for me not to do it at the moment. So will I trust Him? And I also know if I went down that business venture that I was kind of scratching my head about, it would suck my time and my energy and my heart into it and I would not be set aside for the work that God has called me to do.

[14:18] So even actually just a couple of weeks ago with Neh, I had to pray and talk about it, cry about it and say, no, I'm not going to do that. I'm going to press on with what you called me to do and trust at this moment, Lord, that you will provide everything that we need.

And reading this passage has really affirmed that because that is authentic Christian spirituality. Of course, the Lord uses means and any rich Christians here, please provide for God's people and God's work.

That's amazing, isn't it? But we've got to be people who practice what we preach and trust the Lord to help us. So, Timothy is told to flee from the unsound teaching and the greedy lifestyle of these false teachers.

Flee from it. Some of that stuff will cause you to wander from the faith, Paul has said, and it will pierce you through with many griefs. It may look like the easy path, but actually, long term, it will destroy your faith and will be destructive.

Flee, flee, flee. I wonder if the love of money has been gripping your heart recently. Maybe the insecurity of the season that we're going into as a country and you're thinking more about money than you are about your Father in Heaven who will provide for your needs.

[15 : 38] Is it out of balance? Come back to Him. Trust Him. Trust Him. Get things right in the right priority. So flee from that stuff. Secondly, though, the man of God is to pursue better things.

Pursue better things. Throw your energy and your time and your heart into things that align with the truth that you now belong to God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pursue what? Pursue righteousness and godliness. Pursue, before God, knowing that you are living the right way with respect to moral decisions, with respect to other people, that you're living a righteous, just, good life.

love. Pursue godliness. Prioritize the fact that you live before Him in your life in the context of the life of the church.

Prioritize reading His word and praying, loving Him, loving His people, being part of the local church. Prioritize these things. The world says that won't get you on very far, but the Lord Jesus says the man of God must pursue these things.

[16 : 45] Pursue righteousness and godliness. Pursue faith and love. Seek for your faith, your trust in God to grow as you serve in the local church.

We all have faith as a gift of God in order to become Christians, but there's also a growing faith in the Christian life as we trust God for the circumstances we face as churches and in our own lives. Respond in faith, trusting the promises of God, praying the promises of God, seeking the Lord to work rather than trying to take things into your own hands all the time. It's been very good for me to step out of a context where I say that I trust the Lord, but everything's alright and quite easy around me, and moving into a context where I have to trust the Lord.

And that's a good thing. A good thing. Pursue faith, pursue love, loving God's people, loving the Lord. Pursue the right response in difficult circumstances.

Pursue endurance or perseverance, he says in here. I mean, that's interesting, isn't it? I'm pursuing the fact that I am just sticking to it. That's interesting, isn't it?

[18 : 01] A lot of the Christian life is just sticking to it with joy and faith and trust. Pursue the Lord's help in facing difficult people.

People from outside who will be against you. People even in the church who can be challenging at times. Pursue endurance and gentleness.

One of the marks of a healthy church, isn't it? Of authentic spirituality when we are learning to bear with one another in love and respond with patience and gentleness to each other.

Maybe you wouldn't call yourself a Christian yet, but you've come amongst the people of God here at Calvary or met with Christians outside of this and you say, to be honest, I've been a bit difficult. But they have loved me. They have really loved me in a way that I don't quite understand or deserve. It's because it's authentic spirituality.

[19 : 05] Living out the gospel. Pursuing righteousness and godliness, faith and love, endurance and gentleness. It's not about passivity, is it? It's about fleeing some stuff and pursuing what is good and what is right.

Now, if you're in leadership in the church, you particularly have to set the example. As the leaders go, so goes the church. Don't you want to be a kind of church that someone can just walk in and spend some time amongst and say, wow, these people are good and godly.

They really do trust God and they really do love Jesus in each other. They really do just keep going when maybe other people are unkind about what they're saying about them or attacking them from outside for what they believe about morality or believe about the exclusivity of Jesus and the grace of God.

flee, pursue, thirdly, fight. This is what the man of God is to do, those who belong to God. It's very interesting, isn't it, in verse 12 that Paul goes from speaking about gentleness to telling Timothy to fight and that's the combination in the Christian life.

We're gentle in the thing that God calls us to but we're strong and we fight where God wants us to as well, not physically with other people of course but fighting the good fight of the faith.

[20 : 24] Paul says in verse 10 that some have wandered away from the faith sadly because of money and false teaching. Now fighting here could be an athletic term, it could be about struggling or agonizing in a kind of a race or a wrestling match or it could be a military term, struggling or

fighting to defend what is precious to you.

of course what is precious for the Christian alongside their family is the gospel of Jesus. Fight the good fight of the faith.

The faith. By the way, again, if you're here and you're not yet a Christian, you don't understand what all these people are all about, this thing called the faith means there is not something we've made up but something that's been delivered to us that is all about Jesus, his life, his death, his resurrection for our salvation.

We're not at liberty to kind of change it, we can apply it into our culture but we stand for this faith, this body of truth about the living God through the Lord Jesus, his life, his death, his resurrection for our salvation.

It's called the gospel and the people of God are called to defend and guard the gospel that sometimes leads us into battle.

[21 : 50] We stand firm for this truth when maybe the culture is flowing away against it and we stand firm for the godliness that flows from it in the life of the church.

It is always truth that promotes godliness. Leaders are to be on the front line of this but the whole church is called to stand firm together in this battle for the faith which is the great hope of the world, isn't it?

You remember Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus. Timothy's ministering in Ephesus but Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus says in chapter 6, Church, finally be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength put on the full armour of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil for our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, against spiritual forces in the heavens. So we are to pursue gentleness with respect to people even our enemies but we are to fight for the truth of the gospel and we are to stand firm and struggle in that battle to be gospel people in this day and age battling against the schemes of the devil and that my friends is a good fight.

It is a good fight that you must engage in together as a church. One of the ways that we fight is by praying. Back in Colossians 4, Epaphras, another one of Paul's co-workers, he describes Epaphras as a servant of Christ Jesus who greets you church in Colossae and he's always struggling, he's always fighting on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

[23 : 28] So one of the ways that we're called to fight the good fight is to struggle in prayer together as a church. Praying for the work of the gospel here, praying for each other and praying for what is going on around the city.

Time and time again, as I've been to Brighton now rather than just visiting but living here, I see that the churches generally are weak and struggling on their own but we must be called to struggle in the fight, to fight the good fight together and pray for each other for the work of the Lord.

So we will pray for you, please pray for us as we seek to make known Jesus, that we will stand firm. Paul, later in his second letter to Timothy, says, I have fought the good fight, he looks back on his life, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

The Christian life, the man of God is called to fight. Fight the good fight of the faith. The fourth thing he requires Timothy to do as a man of God is not just to fight but also to look to the future.

He says in verse 12 that Timothy is to take hold of eternal life to which he was called and about which he made a good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

[24 : 43] In other words, if you're going to flee from the stuff, pursue other stuff, if you're going to fight the good fight, you've got to have in mind that day when the journey will be over like Paul was talking about and that day in which you will come into full realisation of all that God has promised you.

Eternal life is a gift now that we have, the life of the age to come as we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ. But Paul describes it here also as a prize to be grasped at the end of the journey of the Christian life.

And Timothy is to keep going with his work in Ephesus. You and I are to keep going with the ministry that God has called us to in Brighton knowing that the end line is there, the prize is ahead of us by the grace of God and one day as he holds us and keeps us we will receive and grasp onto that prize in all of its fullness.

Life with God forever. Paul says that Timothy has begun this kind of race, this journey to get that prize. He was called to this through the gospel and by the Holy Spirit bringing him towards Jesus. but at the same time Paul reminds Timothy of that time in the past when Timothy made that public confession, that public declaration that he had become a Christian. Take hold of eternal life to which you were called and about which you have made a good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

[26 : 06] You declared your faith in Christ then he says in the past. Stick to it and one day you will receive the prize on the journey on which you began to run. Just a reminder there isn't it that when you become a Christian it is a personal thing that God does deep in your heart but it also must be affirmed publicly by the body of Christ the church.

So if you have become a Christian and have not yet declared to the people of God that Jesus is Lord that you put your faith in him then you must speak to the elders of the church and say how do I do that?

It's often by baptism that seems to be the way into the life of the church. Romans 10 tells us that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved.

One believes with the heart resulting in righteousness and one confesses with the mouth resulting in salvation and that confession is not just a personal confession to the Lord it is a confession to others that I have become a Christian and that Jesus is Lord.

Have you done that? So Paul encourages Timothy here to flee the stuff that will shipwreck his faith to pursue the stuff that is authentic spirituality the righteousness the godliness that God has called him to the growing faith the love that God has called him to and as he does these things he is to keep his eye on the prize of eternal life that he is running towards he is to keep fighting the fight to keep going what other motivation can there be to do stuff that will cause sometimes pain and suffering and trouble in this life if it were not for the truth that the best is yet to come for the Christian who puts their faith in Jesus Christ.

[28 : 00] well that's the main thing I want to say God's man God's people thank God for God's people here at Calvary but secondly Paul wants to encourage him and remind him about God's presence verses 13 to 16 God's presence let me read those verses to you Paul says in the sight of God in the presence of God who gives life to everything and of Christ Jesus who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession I charge you Timothy to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ which God will bring about in his own time.

As Paul is encouraging Timothy to stick to it he wants to remind him as he kind of solemnly charges him that he does so in the very presence of the living God and of Jesus Christ risen from the dead. He doesn't say in the sight or in the presence of the idea of God or the sight or the presence of the historical truth about Jesus when he lived 2000 years ago. He charges Timothy in the presence of God now and the sight of the risen Jesus now.

Lord Jesus of course is the great example of making that public confession that declaration.

Remember in the Gospels he did that before Pontius Pilate when Pilate asked him are you the king of the Jews?

And the Lord just said it is as you say and that led him to the cross of course. The Lord Jesus made the good confession and he stuck to it and he is in heaven and the very presence of Jesus Paul charges Timothy to stick to his good confession to his commitment to Jesus Christ.

[29 : 55] So there is a very real presence of God God the Father God the Son and indwelt by God the Holy Spirit in the world today now. We live our lives in the very presence of God.

The church gathers in the very presence of the risen Lord Jesus by his Spirit through his word. And that reminds us doesn't it that there is no point fleeing and doing other stuff.

We have to be faithful. Faithful to the God who sees and God who's present. Paul here speaks about another presence though doesn't he in verse 14 and verse 15 speaks about sticking to it until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ that God will bring about in his own time.

So there is a presence of God now by his Spirit through his words and there's an appearing a real presence of the Lord Jesus to come. One of the great motivators of the Christian is the prize ahead and the appearance and the coming of Christ.

In verse 15 Paul reminds Timothy of who this God is that he is to live out his life his ministry and his presence. Who is he?

[31 : 13] He is the blessed and only sovereign. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords who alone is immortal who lives in unapproachable light whom no one has seen or can see.

I charge you in the presence of this God says Paul this God is present as the church gathers. One of the works of the Holy Spirit is just to open us up to the truth and reality that this is God and he is here.

He is here. John Stott in his commentary kind of sums it up by saying the first few descriptions of God the blessed and only sovereign the King of kings and the Lord of lords encouraged Timothy that God is invincible whatever challenges he will face.

He is also immortal. He is also inaccessible to the sinner no matter what these false teachers say or what they pretend to do and how they live they cannot come to the very presence of God but of course you can't through the Lord Jesus Paul indicates.

He is the invisible God. He must be received by faith through the gospel through the word of God. One of the things that the church needs to rediscover is the greatness and the majesty of God and when the churches begin to rediscover the greatness and majesty of God when the men of God the people of God start to grasp that they are called to live as his loved children and live out in his presence then churches really begin to change really begin to reflect not the world but the truth of God churches that love to worship him to him be honor and eternal power forever he says amen one of the challenges for me in coming to Brighton having to start up a new church or a new work in different parts of the city do we know the presence of God according us to the work of God in this city the local church is described in Paul's letter to the Ephesians as a as a building that is being put together growing into a holy temple in the Lord in him you are also built together for God's dwelling in his spirit

[34 : 01] Paul's charge to Timothy is given in the very presence of God and in expectation of Jesus' presence and in his appearing as well so those are those are two things that we see about God authentic spirituality God's man and what he's called to flee from and pursue and fight for but secondly God's presence encouraging us to stick to it through not playing a game we are the people of God who live out our lives in the presence of God and in light of his coming but then thirdly in verse 17 we've got what Paul and Timothy is to instruct the rich members of the church about and that is that they are to put their hope in God hope in God so again Paul is not against rich Christians he's not against wealth clearly Jesus is against the love and the trust in money rather than the trust in God so what does Paul say Timothy is to say to the rich Christians verse 17 instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or proud or to set your hope on the uncertainty of wealth don't set your hope on these things but set it on

God who richly provides us with all things to enjoy riches can be a dangerous thing says Paul in the life of the church it can make a couple proud and arrogant it can give an individual who is very successful and achieved much in this world a false sense of security instead the next verse tells us that the rich like all members of the church must set their hope on God Timothy leads the way by being someone who's a man of faith and all the church members especially the rich church members must learn not to be arrogant but to be grateful for what God has given and learn to not lean on those things but to lean on God instead maybe you found during COVID or during this season where our pockets are going to be a little bit more empty that you have to lean on the Lord more rather than just assume everything will be provided in some ways that's a good thing especially if you have been wealthy in the past because it will remind you that you can't pretend to be a Christian and not live out dependence upon God the church is called whether we are wealthy or not to be people who obviously put our hope in God obviously rather than just pretence is it obvious to friends and neighbours to the community around that you hope in God is it obvious Paul Positive explains what that means in verse 18 there are dangers about being a rich Christian that you don't trust God as you should do but there are also great opportunities that God gives you if you have more wealth what are they to do rich

Christians should be eager to do what is good they should be rich in good works they should be generous and willing to share what you should be known for says Paul if you have wealth is not what the false teachers were flashing around their Mercedes Benz sorry if you've got a Mercedes I'm not against Mercedes they're not flashing around their wealth but actually what you should be known for if you're a rich Christian is how good and kind you are generous to the needs of those around you and that's how to be truly rich says Paul in the coming age you really can't take it with you you really can't but like Timothy they're called to grasp and take hold of true life eternal life by

living this generous lifestyle now so here's the encouragement to you or the challenge is it really obvious whether you have wealth or whether you have not that you are setting your hope in God that you love God the giver of all of his good gifts and that's more important to you than holding on to his gifts that is the way to be a man or a woman of God finally we get the last kind of God thing verses 20 and 21 we've thought about a number of things here but here he lands it not on human effort but on God's grace look at verse 20 I Timothy God what has been entrusted to you avoiding irreverent and empty speech and contradictions from what is falsely called knowledge so stand firm for the faith fight for it as we said by professing it some people have departed from the faith so there is a kind of clear task he's got to do he's got to pursue some stuff he's got to fight the good fight he's got to look forward to grasping it a lot of stuff he's got to do that's the warning don't depart from the faith but Paul doesn't end his letter with a warning he ends his letter with grace grace to you all grace to the church his final word is not just for Timothy but it's for the whole church and his final word is grace the free undeserved love and generosity from this

[39 : 57] God through the Lord Jesus Christ to you today so should they flee pursue fight seek to grasp that prize alone or even work really hard together it will require hard work but must they pursue righteousness and godliness and faith and love and endurance and gentleness purely by human effort no way the church belongs to God through Jesus we live in his presence we set our hope in the life and death of Jesus and his appearing that will come to us we think true riches is found in him and actually by generosity and love we will grasp that prize when it all comes before us and our strength and our enablement to do this is all from God himself nothing else other than the grace of God freely given and undeserved will keep us going to grasp that prize and God and his love although invisible to the human eye inaccessible to the sinner he gives himself to us in Christ the church is the greatest place on earth grace be with you all says

Paul God's man God's presence God's hope most importantly God's grace let's pray for you let's pray Lord in many ways we would find life much easier if we could go the way of those false teachers and just change the truth of the gospel and let it be more acceptable in our culture if we could just have a more convenient lifestyle where we have riches and pursue that now and our hope is in that and we live comfortable lives that Lord we want to say that your treasure of the gospel given to us in Jesus far outweighs that far outweighs it so we want to say sorry Lord if we've just kind of been dulled a bit and we're not fleeing where we should flee and we're not pursuing what we should pursue please forgive us that we know we're not saved by our actions but we want the grace of the Lord to motivate us joyfully to go the right direction individually as a church please teach us Lord to truly and really set our hope on you your promises to us in Jesus the living God rather than in wealth and the things of this world or anything else we may be gripping onto holding onto thank you for doing that in me Lord for releasing me from some of that but we know the battle continues in those areas we want to thank you so much for this the faith that you've given to us the truth of the gospel and we pray that this church will stand firm together joyfully for the Lord Jesus Christ more than that we pray that the enabling of all that will come by your grace your provision yourself that you give to us in the Lord Jesus Christ without this we can do nothing hallelujah thank you for your grace strengthen and build up this precious group of brothers and sisters I pray equip them for your plans and your purposes thank you that you have promised to never leave them nor forsake them dear people of God all the glory and honour goes to Jesus in his precious name we pray amen amen thank you to