

Fight the Good Fight of Faith

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[0 : 00] Open your Bibles, if you would, with me to 1 Timothy chapter 6. We'll be finishing off our time this morning in this letter, as Paul kind of provides his concluding statements and his call to Timothy in terms of directives and how to lead and love this church.

1 Timothy chapter 6. If you're using your pew Bible, it's on page 993. We're going to find in this passage two verses, one in verse 14 of chapter 6, which says, Keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach.

That word for keep is the word for guard, to protect, to preserve. And then in verse 20, where he says, O Timothy, guard the good deposit.

What do you think of when you hear about guarding, protecting information? What do you hear, what do you think about when you think about preserving the identity that you might have?

Well, even this morning, as I was getting ready to print notes and to set up my computer, there was a verification process that happened in order to protect my identity.

[1 : 27] I'm on my computer and I'm logging into my email and I have to provide my password. And then the authentication notice that then comes to my phone.

And I've got to give it the right number because that number comes up. I put the number in there and then I have to hit yes to say, yes, it's me. And then I have to use my fingerprint to make sure that yes, it's me is a really yes, it's me.

And it's coming from the number that I got from a totally different device. All of the steps we go to protect identity, to protect information. I'm wondering at some point I might have to provide like a saliva sample or an eye retina scan or a DNA, you know, all of those things that may be coming at some time in the future.

We understand something about protecting information, don't we? We recognize that software companies, they use these password protections. They use these multi-layered verification statements.

Even Amazon, if you're logging into your Amazon account, it will send that notification to a different device. You have to say, yes, it's me. You can finally get in and order your stuff that you want to order.

[2 : 46] Museums keep valuable artifacts in that secure vault set away, set aside from the passer buyer to make sure that it is preserved.

And so any of you who might go to like Washington, D.C., you're looking at those special, the Declaration of Independence or whatever it is, and it's under a certain glass and it's protected in a certain way.

The lighting is just right. Or a researcher that's storing sensitive data on a secure server with limited access. And here we are, we're kind of moving into the holidays.

And I know, I know some of you ladies have those special recipes that are protected. You know, they're passed down from one generation to the other, and you're not going to let anybody know that secret recipe if they want to know it or enjoy the benefits of that recipe that you have.

They have to come over to your house. It's not going to be disseminated. Those kinds of things that we do to protect information. But here in this final bit of directives that the Apostle Paul is giving Timothy, he wants Timothy to preserve information, but not like the way we preserve our information.

[4 : 05] The way that Timothy is going to guard and protect this entrustment that he's been given, the way he's going to guard and keep the commandments is not to hold them to himself, but to disseminate them in a way that is consistent and clear and unadulterated and uncorrupted, undefiled.

That message that he's going to continue to communicate and to help compete against and provide a contrast to that message that we've been hearing about all along in 1 Timothy, that false teaching, that different doctrine, those endless genealogies, those statements that lead to division.

Timothy is going to help preserve the faith and preserve sound teaching by communicating the truth, not by holding it back, not by keeping it to himself.

So as we come to this passage this morning, recognize that all of us, because of the word of God that we have, have the distinct privilege, along with Timothy, of guarding the deposit that we've been entrusted to, of keeping the commandments.

And it doesn't mean keeping it to yourself. As a matter of fact, the best way for us to guard and to keep the commands is to share them, is to convey them from one generation to the next.

[5 : 28] To impart the gospel, the right words of God from the scriptures to the people that you love and to the people in your circles. Guard it by sharing it.

And that's what we're going to see this morning. It's a struggle that Paul will describe throughout our text today. It's a struggle for faith. A struggle to ensure that this church that is the pillar and buttress of the truth, as he describes there in chapter 3, remains true to the scriptures that it's been entrusted with.

So fight for faith. That's what we're going to see this morning in our time together. So if you're there, let me read for you verse 11 and 12, and we'll get started this morning.

We're going to see, first of all, a fight for faith personally. Notice that as I read. As for you, O man of God, flee these things.

Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

[6 : 43] Timothy, fight the good fight of faith. And this is something that you need to do for yourself personally, individually. It begins with you. If you're ever going to fight this fight of faith, and it's going to do anybody any good, first of all, you need to know what the word of God is.

You need to ensure that that word of God is transforming you and helping you to be a representative for that truth in a pure way. So fight for faith personally, Timothy.

He begins with several instructions. We're going to find throughout our time this morning, this succession of imperatives, these commands that Paul will begin to just issue out to Timothy.

These are the things I want you to do. These are the directives for your life. This is the way you're going to fight for the faith in your life and also in the lives of those that you are directed to lead.

He begins with flee from spiritual danger. Flee from spiritual danger. That's our first command this morning. Flee these things, he says.

[7:49] With this opening phrase, Paul provides this sharp contrast. He uses this contrastive word, but, that helps draw out the difference between Timothy and these teachers that he's just spoken about in verses 2 to verse 10.

This contrast that will shine its way through the life of Timothy and provide this set-apartness, this gospel life that's been transformed.

Timothy, live this way, and you do this, first of all, by fleeing these things. He begins not only with this contrastive word, but also with this unique identity.

Oh, man of God, he says. A title that only shows up twice in the New Testament, but a title that is used, this man of God, 68 times in the Old Testament.

It's used as a title for Moses, for David, for the prophets, for Elijah, for Elisha. This man of God, which was this identity for men who represented the word of God.

[9:00] Not just men who were godly, but men who were men of God. They derived their identity, their mission, their purpose. They derived it from God himself.

As men of God, they were on mission for God. They represented God. They spoke for God with the words of God. Timothy, you are such a man.

You are a man of God. You derive your identity from him, your purpose from him. And as men and women of God, there are certain commitments.

There are certain behaviors that will drive us, that will shape our lives. That is, they will help us to be the kind of person that will make us effective in this fight for the gospel.

They will help to stabilize us and will help us represent this pure word of God that has been given to us. 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17 is the only other time in the New Testament where we see this phrase, man of God.

[10:06] All scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

By the way, this is not just for men. This is for men and women. We can be men and women of God. We derive our purpose. We derive our mission.

We derive our authority from God himself and his words. We represent him by speaking his words. And thus, by speaking God's words, we represent this pure gospel.

If Timothy was to be faithful, a man of God, he needed to begin by fleeing these things. Flee is this present imperative, this command for the present day, but continuing on from day to day until he was to be with Jesus.

This ever-present reality of Timothy, be a man who flees, who runs away, who escapes, who avoids danger. This word, to flee, is the word from which we get the word fugitive, this one who is running.

[11:21] Timothy, don't linger. Don't be complacent, but run away as fast as you can. Put as much distance between yourself and the danger that exists for you spiritually.

Let running away from spiritual danger be this ongoing pattern of your life. Now, by the way, running from danger is not running from every danger because you can see from the Apostle Paul that at times he's running headlong into danger, that physical danger that he was willing to embrace for the sake of the gospel, but this spiritual danger that he avoided in his own life that would shipwreck his faith.

That's what we're talking about. What are those specific things that the Apostle Paul is referring to? This word, these things, refers to those things that are represented in chapter 6, verses 3 to verse 10.

Those things that were in the way. Those things that represented the life and character of these false teachers. We saw in verse 3 those words that don't agree with sound teaching.

Avoid those things, Timothy. Steer clear of those words that don't represent Christ faithfully. In verse 4, steer clear from those who are proud and confused.

[12:46] Steer clear from their teaching that leaves a trail of controversy and quarreling and envy and dissension and slander and constant friction among the brothers. Steer clear of those things, Timothy, those spiritual dangers.

In verse 5, steer clear of those who are preoccupied with financial gain. That they're identifying the things that are truly in their heart. What their motivations are.

What their affections are. Verse 6, steer clear of those who have no concept of contentment. They haven't learned that godliness with contentment is great gain.

In verse 9, steer clear of those who fall into temptation and lead others into temptation as well. In verse 10, steer clear of those who have wandered away from the faith.

Timothy, steer clear of danger. Steer clear of the spiritual danger that will shipwreck your own soul and will lead to a fight that is not a fight for the gospel.

[13:49] Fight the fight of faith by running away. So, if you're going to fight this fight of faith, run from spiritual dangers, Timothy. Identify them.

Separate yourself from them. Abandon yourself like a refugee from those things that will trip you up and to catch you up away from God.

But your running, Timothy, is not an aimless running. It's a purposeful running. And that's where we come to the second command. So, flee from spiritual danger but pursue spiritual life.

Pursue spiritual life. And that's where he goes next. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness. Again, this word pursue is this present imperative, this command for the everyday.

day. It's a repeated command that Paul will even share with Timothy in his second letter, 2 Timothy 2:22. He says much the same thing.

[14:55] So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

youths repeated statements to flee and pursue helps us to understand the purposefulness of our running. Not just running away from spiritual danger but running to the only source of security.

Running to God himself. In God's economy, there is only one road. And that road only has two directions. A direction to God and a direction away from God.

Where are you on that road? Are you on the road that is fleeing spiritual danger and pursuing spiritual life? Are you chasing the things that are going to help build you up in spiritual things?

The kinds of things that will demonstrate the work of the gospel in your life? These things that he points to. Righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness.

[16:04] The consistent theme throughout the New Testament is that you can't just leave a vacuum. You can't just say I'm going to stop doing bad things. That the vacuum in that empty space just exposes you to more danger.

Rather, you replace the emptiness in your life, the resistance or reluctance to sin, you replace with righteousness. You replace with holiness.

You replace with activity that helps lead you to God. Ephesians 4, 22-24, in Paul's letter to the church of Ephesus, he writes this, put off your old self which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness righteousness in holiness.

Timothy, show that there is a work of God in your life. Show the gospel has changed you from the inside out. This work of righteousness and godliness are two statements that help to demonstrate that very point.

The godliness that's happening and shaping you on the inside and showing up through righteousness on the outside. Make sure, Timothy, that you're living your life in such a way that God has placed.

[17:27] Make sure that your motivations, make sure that your pursuits are things that represent a life that is motivated by God. This work of faith and love, the second pair of words that kind of come together, this natural outflow of godliness that pours out in our responses to others.

Not only in our response to God and how we live for Him, but now how that life shows up on the outside to others. This work of faith and trusting God for everything, which we'll see as we continue along in this passage.

A work of faith that helps to secure Timothy's obedience. I trust that God's work and will for me is better. That I can grab hold of the pleasures of this life on my own or I can trust God to give me those good things in His good time and in the way that He has prescribed through His word.

I'm going to trust Him. Not to fill out my fleshly pursuits on my own, but to wait patiently for God to answer the deepest needs of my heart and to do it in a way that represents my faith in Him.

And love, this word for love is a love of volition and choice. It's a love of decision. This volition and that love that's voluntary, choosing to love.

[18:55] You will be marked by an affection for God's people. One who loves the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength and loves their neighbor as themselves. That two-dimensional kind of love that is not only love for God but expresses itself in love for people.

Timothy, demonstrate that the work of faith in your life has changed you from the inside out. This steadfastness and this gentleness, there's a perseverance about you.

There's a willingness to go the distance and a gentleness here. This word for gentleness is a rare word in the New Testament and it's a word of the normal word for gentle coupled with the word for suffering.

It's gentleness in the midst of hard things. I don't know, have you found as I have in my life that when the pressure is pressing in, when my day is long, when I'm feeling raw and I'm feeling like I'm missing out on sleep, those are the times where I'm most vulnerable and most agitated and least gentle.

You find yourself to be, is that true about yourself? There's something about the gospel that shapes the way we live. especially in the moments where we're most vulnerable. There's a gentleness about you, Timothy.

[20:17] There's a sweetness about you. There's a change, the fruit of the Spirit that is working in your life, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness in self-control.

God is helping to show up in your life and so the faith of your life is showing through in how you live. recognize, though, that this is not going to be easy.

Fleeing from spiritual danger and pursuing spiritual life is not going to be an easy thing. So, that's why he gives this next command that we find in verse 12.

Fight the good fight of faith. Fight the good fight of faith. He says, take hold of eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

This word for fight, again, is a present imperative. It's the third one in line. This competition, this fight, this struggle. The Greek word is agonizomai.

[21 : 26] Do you hear the word agony in there? This is a verb that describes fighting. This military or athletic kind of word that's used in those two areas.

The concentration and discipline and conviction that's required in that kind of struggle that grits it out when things are hard. Faith has been a major theme throughout the letter of Timothy.

It's used 21 times from start to finish. And if you add the verb, so the noun for faith and then coupled with the verbs for faith, which is the word to believe, it's used 29 times throughout this letter.

Right at the outset, Paul describes Timothy as his true son in the faith. Recognize Timothy as a man of faith, as a man of God.

Faith needs to show up in your life and it's a battle. You must struggle for faith so that it's a reality in your life. And he charges Timothy to confront the false teachers that promote speculation instead of the stewardship from God that is by faith there in chapter 1, verse 5.

[22 : 41] Paul goes on to describe his own experience of faith later on in chapter 1, verse 14. He says, And then, of Timothy's responsibility, he says in verse 19, Hold faith and a good conscience.

And if you don't, here's the consequences. By rejecting this, some have made a shipwreck of their faith. So, this ministry, Timothy, must be marked by faith.

both personally and in how you communicate faith to others. As we find in chapter 4, verse 6, he says, If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus being trained, listen, in the words of faith and the good doctrine that you have followed.

Fight the good fight of faith. It is a good fight. Not an arbitrary fight but a fight that is oriented around good things. The good things of the gospel. Faith that leads to God.

That's where true goodness comes from. That's where true godliness comes from. Have the kind of faith that points people to God. Faith that refers to this body of Christian truth.

[24 : 01] The contents of the word of God. Recognize, Timothy. All that, the instruction that's in the word and how that will help to undergird faith. And if you do this well, Timothy, Paul says in 2 Timothy 4 verses 7 and 8, I have fought the good fight.

I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. 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.

There is a reward for fighting the good fight of faith and that reward of course is this future joy we'll experience with God himself in glory.

When that fight seems more than you can bear, then Timothy, do this next thing, live for eternity. We see that in verse 12. Live for eternity. Really, I'm taking the phrase, take hold of eternal life and summarizing that as live for eternity.

This word, take hold, is another imperative, another command. Understand the destination, Timothy. Understand the whole purpose for which you exist.

[25 : 17] Take hold of this eternal life. Don't live for the here and now, Timothy. Live for what is coming or understand the accountability of the God that you serve.

Understand the great mission that you've been set for. Recognize the idea of the identity that he's given to you. There is this new reality, this new objective, this new destination, Timothy.

Keep that in mind. Keep that in view. He admonishes Timothy to get a grip. Take hold. Hang on, Timothy. Don't lose your grip.

And then he reminds him of this holding on which happens because he was called to this. This work of God in his life. You were called to this, Timothy.

Recognize the grace of God in calling you to himself. He's the one who drew you. Remember him. Press on. And then also remember the future joy of what you have to anticipate and look forward to.

[26 : 22] Take hold of eternal life. Don't live for the moment. Live for the eternity. And remember, Timothy, that this good confession.

You've been called by God and remember that good confession that you had. That confession in the presence of many witnesses. I imagine that what Paul is referring to is that that moment where Timothy was publicly confessing his faith before his home church perhaps.

Maybe it was the day that he got baptized. We don't know for sure but that good confession. And those of you who have come to faith in Christ, I wonder perhaps for you if you can remember the experience of the moment where you came to Christ yourself.

For me, it was when I was five years old. And even as a five year old, I can appreciate in my own innocent little way the sin that I brought to the table and the great mercy of God in drawing me to himself, forgiving me of sin and making me his own.

Maybe there were experiences or even feelings that you have that maybe burdens that were lifted and maybe even the presence of God in your life. I think that Paul may be referring to this good confession.

[27 : 47] Remember how fresh and new it seemed. Remember how excited you were that great and good confession that you had publicly. Don't let that disappear.

Know what that purchased for you, this future in heaven. Don't allow the hardships that you're going through to erase your memory of that good day, that good confession where you've been called to be his own.

In verse 13, the apostle Paul moves, remember your ultimate motivation. Remember your ultimate motivation, he says. In verse 13, I charge you in the presence of God who gives life to all things and of Christ Jesus who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession to keep the commandments!

The commandments unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ which he will display at the proper time. He who is blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see.

To him be glory and eternal dominion. Amen. Timothy, keep the commandments. Why? You're keeping these commandments because you know who you are living for.

[29 : 11] I'm charging you in the presence of God. Recognize that you live in the presence of God himself. God is not distant, Timothy. God is present.

God is active. God is near. God is accessible. He's not far away. He is present with you. Not like the old song from the 1990s, Bette Midler.

Maybe you have heard this song or not. From a distance, God is watching us from a distance. Ever heard that song? Well, that's not the kind of God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is a present God.

The God of the Bible is a near God. The God of the Bible is an engaged God. He's not a distant God. And so, Timothy, keep it in mind that God is near you.

He's present with you. And that should change everything about how you live. Towards the end of Paul's second letter to Timothy, he repeats this similar statement in 2 Timothy 4, verses 1 and 2, he says this, I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is the judge of the living and the dead and by his appearing and his kingdom preach the word.

[30 : 26] Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with complete patience and teaching. You see, Timothy, if you understand that God is there, you understand that the work that you do does not depend on you, it depends on God.

And if you understand that God is there, Timothy, you know that whatever circumstances that you're going through are circumstances that God is allowed to happen because of his sovereignty.

His presence is there, his power is represented, you can trust him just like Jesus trusted the Father by giving the good confession in the presence of Pontius Pilate.

In the moment where from a human standpoint, life hung in the balance, where Jesus was giving testimony before an earthly judge, Pilate, who had the sentence of death or life and Jesus was faithful and true to God himself.

He entrusted himself to him who judges justly, not Pilate, but God. Jesus gave the good confession.

[31 : 32] We find from John chapter 18, 37, Pilate asks Jesus, so, are you a king? Jesus answered, you say that I'm a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth.

Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. Jesus kept the commandments. Jesus spoke the truth. Jesus gave the good confession.

Jesus, of course, was the man of God. Keep Jesus in view, Timothy. Don't lose sight of his presence. Recognize that he's there.

Trust him. So keep those commandments, Timothy. Do it faithfully. Trust the word of God. Be faithful to the calling that you've been given and do it in a way that's unstained, that's spotless, without defect.

Do it in a way that's untarnished so you can communicate the commandments and the gospel purely and well. Preserve the gospel through your life and through your witness.

[32 : 40] Timothy, keep it pure because God is pure and thus his word is pure. And what will help Timothy as he's engaged in the various situations, this doxology that we find here towards the end of verse 15, he who is blessed and only sovereign, the king of kings, the lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see, to him be honor and eternal dominion.

Amen. Timothy, if you remember and you set your sights on God, you'll remember who is really in control. He is the blessed and only sovereign God.

He is the king of kings and lord of lords, which means no one can do anything outside of his permission. He is in control. You can trust him, Timothy. He alone dwells with immortality.

He alone is eternal. He is the unchanging God. You can trust him. He's been in existence for all of time. He dwells in unapproachable light whom no eye has seen.

God is preeminent. He is ultimate. He is supreme. Timothy, you can trust him. And everything you do is meant to bring him honor and glory because he exists in eternal dominion.

[34 : 08] So, Timothy, fight the good fight of faith for yourself personally. And then, the apostle Paul turns in verses 17 to 19 to now distribute this responsibility.

Now, Timothy, you have a responsibility for yourself, but you also have a responsibility for others. Fight for faith in others too, Timothy. He says in verse 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.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share. 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.

Timothy, help those who are wealthy to set their hope on God. Help the wealthy to set their hope on God. This should sound really familiar, by the way.

The apostle Paul has just encouraged Timothy in the same way. So, now it's transferable what Timothy is incorporating into his own life in helping him fight the fight of faith.

[35 : 22] He is now encouraging those who are rich to do the same. Keep God in focus. Understand the purpose for your riches in laying up treasures in heaven, in establishing and amplifying the witness that you have in depending on God.

Not setting your hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but setting your hopes on the certainty of God. Trusting in him because he's the one who provides richly.

Paul wants Timothy to understand that those who are wealthy have an obligation. They have an obligation to demonstrate their confidence in God.

And I want you to understand that those of us in this room, those of us living in America, are in the top 80% of the wealthiest of the wealthy in the world.

So every one of us, regardless of your station in life and regardless of the occupation that you have, this text applies to us. And it's not that we can't have wealth, but it's that we use our wealth in a way that shows our confidence in God.

[36 : 37] We're setting our hopes on him. We're using our wealth in a way that demonstrates that we believe that God is the one who provides for our needs, not ourselves.

Paul ends this letter where he began. 1 Timothy 1, verse 1, says, Paul, an apostle of Christ, Jesus, by the command of God, our Savior, and of Christ, Jesus, our hope.

Timothy, help those who are wealthy to set their hope on God, not to set their hope on the things of this life.

Charge them, Timothy, command them, and come beside the most vulnerable. And we've seen Paul describe the vulnerability of wealth in the previous section in verses 6 to 10.

He talks about godliness with contentment as great gain. He talks about the fact that we brought nothing into the world. We're not going to take anything out of the world. He says in verse 9, those who desire to be rich will fall into temptation.

[37 : 43] We open ourselves up to the temptations of this world being driven away and walking the wrong direction on the path instead of walking to God, walking away from God.

He talks about the fact that the rich fall into temptation and a snare into senseless and harmful desires. This love of money, this affection, if it drives us and consumes us, is a love that takes us away from God.

The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. It is through this craving, he says in verse 10, that some have wandered from the faith. Don't be, don't allow your wealth to steer you away from God.

Don't allow your wealth, it inclines the wealthy, it says, to do two things. First, to be haughty and then to be self-sufficient. Don't allow your wealth to do those things for you, Timothy.

Don't let wealth make you feel like you're better than the people around you. Instruct the wealthy to be humble, not to be haughty. And instruct the wealthy not to be self-sufficient, but to be dependent.

[38:55] You see, those who are wealthy, those who, who are consumed with accumulating more, they fall into various dangers where they might say, I can take care of this myself.

Or, I can save enough and be okay for the future. Or, I can be comfortable and I can predict and ensure that the future is certain.

Those are the dangers. The dangers of self-sufficiency rather than the life and hope on God. So don't set your hope on riches, Timothy.

Help them understand the significance of a life that is resting on God himself. As Jesus said to the rich young ruler in Luke 18, 24 and 25, spelling out again the dangers of wealth, he says, Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, speaking of the rich young ruler, said, how difficult is it for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.

For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. Remember, help them remember that it is God who provides for their enjoyment.

[40:11] He is the one they should be looking to to fill out the deepest needs that they have. So, help them to be those who are setting their hope on God and help them to be rich in good works.

To be rich in good works. Again, this putting off and putting on that the Apostle Paul is so faithful to give this practical instruction.

And in verses 18 and 19, he gives a series of verbs to give to these wealthy individuals to know how to safeguard their own faith and to help live in a way that's consistent with the gospel.

Notice, they are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future so that they may hold, take hold of that which is truly life.

Make sure they're doing good. Make sure they're rich in good works. Make sure they're generous. Make sure they're willing and able to share. Timothy, encourage the church to live out the gospel by showing their dependence on God and help them to understand that the resources that they've been given are resources that now they're entrusted to share, that there's a stewardship that's now that they're responsible to carry out and in their stewardship of giving in the here and now.

[41:45] They are laying up treasure for the future. Notice, they're storing up treasure that it's not, help them to understand the perspective that it's not that they're letting go of their stuff but they're laying up treasure for themselves in heaven.

They're demonstrating where their true joy is, their true certainty and hope is. Help them to take hold of that which is true life.

this word for taking hold is the same word that Paul gave to Timothy in verse 12. The same word to embrace and to understand what they're really living for.

Take hold of life, eternal life. And then finally, the apostle Paul will give some instruction to Timothy in helping to lead this church generally in verses 20 and 21 where he says, fight for faith in preserving the message.

Fight for faith in preserving the message. He says, O Timothy, guard the deposit that's entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble in contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.

[43:01] Grace be with you. Paul summarizes this entire letter in these two verses where he wants Timothy to recognize his responsibility. He has a responsibility not only to represent the truth and to be transformed by the truth but to protect the truth by sharing the truth in a way that is unadulterated, that is pure, that is dependable, that is accurate, full of integrity.

Timothy, guard this good entrustment this word for deposit is a banking term that demotes a sum that's deposited, this large sum that's been distributed and of course we understand the value of the gospel that we've been given, this good deposit of the word of God that we enjoy and we hold in our hands, this entrustment that's been given, this valuable property for safe keeping.

Make sure, Timothy, that you are guarding this good deposit. Make sure that you are communicating the gospel in a way that's faithful and dependable and clear. But in guarding this deposit, make sure that you're also avoiding the dangers.

This word also kind of carries this imperatival force, this command of avoiding those dangers. Don't allow the message to be tainted, Timothy.

Don't get caught up in the kinds of conversations that those false teachers are having. Don't get caught up in the distractions and the endless conversations, the genealogies and the kinds of discussions that would steer one away from the truth.

[44:49] Don't allow the gospel to be diluted. don't allow it to be perverted. Don't allow in your communication of the gospel for some to swerve from the faith because they're wrapped up in all the things that will lead them away from the path.

And Timothy, allow the grace of God to adorn your life. Be marked by the work of God's grace. Be driven by the work of God's grace.

grace. Let the testimony of God's grace guide your efforts. Let that testimony of God's grace inform the way that you interact with others.

God, allow this grace, which is the evidence of God's presence, to be sweetly present in your life. Allow the Holy Spirit to work mightily through you because only God will continue this work in you, Timothy.

Only God will evidence his power through you, Timothy. And only God will sustain you, Timothy. So allow his grace to carry you in the work that you're doing.

[46:03] And allow the grace of God to be present in your conversations with others. As we've been looking through this letter together, we recognize the significance of the doctrines that God has given to us.

And recognizing as we've been working our way through, that it's not just a body of doctrine, a body of knowledge that is distant and somehow external from us.

But we recognize that the things that we believe about God will shape the way we live. And so as people look at our life, they'll recognize that there's something, hopefully, something that is uniquely different from us.

That we've been changed by the gospel. It changes the way we relate to people. It changes the way we respond to problems and difficulties.

It changes the way that we interact with those who may be treating us unfairly. It's the gospel that transforms us as people.

[47:05] So that we can be men and women of God. Representatives for Him, communicating His word and seeing the gospel life of God show up in awakening hearts for faith throughout this world.

May God help us to be faithful as we fight this fight of faith for ourselves and we seek to couple ourselves with the body of Christ in fighting this fight of faith as a church so that we can be a pillar and buttress of the truth.

May God help us. Let me pray. Lord, thank You for Your work of grace in us. Thank You for calling us to salvation, helping us to be aware of our sin, recognizing we can't work our way to God on our own.

There is no righteousness that we can have of our own that will get us there. Sin has separated us from God, that all have sinned and helped us to fall short of the glory of God.

It's only through Your Son, Jesus, through His life of righteousness, through His death on the cross, paying for our sins, making a way, and then rising again to offer new life, eternal life for those who believe.

[48 : 31] God, I pray if there's anyone here today who has never placed their trust in You, that You would lead them to salvation, help them to acknowledge their sin, to confess it before You, knowing if we confess our sins that You are faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And Lord, I pray that You would help us to represent You faithfully, to embrace the mission, to take hold of eternal life, and to live out this life in a way that demonstrates a commitment and in affection for Jesus.

We pray in Your name. Amen. God bless you. Have a great week. Amen. Thank you.