

1 Timothy 6.11-16 Faithfulness Fixed on Christ

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Date: 28 June 2026

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[0:00] If you're aware of what tachypsychia is, it is a neurological phenomenon in which the body experiences a seeming speeding up of time or slowing down of time and it is a symptom of fight or flight response. Fight or flight response is a way in which the body handles stress or threat to either confront and fight or to flee and in flight. And sometimes the decision is not intentional and sometimes it is intentional and sometimes it's right. There is a right decision to make. For example, with black bears, the studies have shown that to give you the best chance of avoiding an attack of a black bear is to fight, to make yourself as aggressive as possible.

And there's other times where it's best to choose the response of flight. And sometimes the decision is more than prudent, it's critical. For example, if you were standing at the base of a cliff and you heard a loud rumble and you looked up and there's a rock slide and there's massive boulders coming down towards you, I truly genuinely do hope that you choose the flight response and that you don't choose to fight. So sometimes it's critical whether you choose fight and sometimes it's critical of whether you choose flight. And in our text today, we see the imperative to both fight and flight.

So let's take a look. Our text is going to be verses 11 to 16, but we will begin in verse 3 for context. If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself. Now godliness with contentment is great gain, but for we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things and before Christ Jesus, who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which he will manifest in his own time. He who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in inapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

Great God, we thank you for your word that we have a divine testimony, supernatural revelation, which contains what we need to know for knowledge of salvation, faith and obedience. And I pray, Lord, that you would, by your spirit, illuminate your word to us, help us to understand that which is spiritually discerned. I pray that you would use me and bless the preaching and the hearing of the word and make it effectual according to each person's need, needs to live blessedly in this life and the one which is to come. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Now we'll be focusing on verses 11 to 16.

[4:38] And what's going on in these verses is that the church is to contend for the faith while gazing on the perfections and essence of the Almighty. I'll say it again. The church is to contend for the faith while gazing on the perfections and essence of the Almighty. So we see in this text, there's flight, fight and faithfulness. There's the flight from evil, the fight of faith and the faithfulness fixed on Christ.

So first of all, the flight from evil we see in verse 11. And in 11, we can divide into two parts. The first part is the withdrawal from evils. Notice 11a, it says, but you, O man of God, flee these things. So first of all, just a quick note on who is this man of God? It says, you, O man of God. Well, the term man of God is an Old Testament allusion to the one who is set apart by God for declaring God's will to his people.

So in the Old Testament, that was through prophecy, through prophets, and then the New Testament, through the apostles, and of course now through scripture. So Timothy, not a prophet, not an apostle, but through the word of God revealed through the prophets and the apostles, contends for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

And so then that would continue with pastors today. And not just pastors, but the church. And because the church is to flee from evils, so much more ought the pastor to not be a cause of stumbling, but to flee from evils and to be exemplary in that way. But man of God, you, O man of God, flee these things.

[6:33] Now, flight is not just praying, lead me not into temptation, deliver me from the evil one, and then trying to see how close we can get to sinning, and then remaining in that sin.

But it's a flight, it's a withdrawal, it's to flee, it's to withdraw from these things, from these evils. So in the immediate context, what are these things that Timothy is here to flee from?

Well, the immediate context is a love of controversy, a love of division, and a love of money. Now, these are the pressing things in the conflict in which he's engaged in, and so perhaps he's tempted to respond likewise.

He is to confront these false teachers, and there will be conflict, there will be hostility. And they are, the false teachers, are lovers of controversy. They're lovers of division and lovers of money.

And Timothy might be tempted in some way to compromise and to be like them for the sake of just fleeing the conflict, fleeing the hostility to get away from it.

[7:41] But he is to, and sometimes these things cannot be fled in themselves. For example, controversy. We are not to go and pursue controversy around every quarter, but sometimes it is without our pursuing it, conflict is brought into the church, and it must be dealt with.

But it's to flee the love of controversy, to just have that drive, to always have to be arguing, to always have to be disputing, to flee the love of controversy, despite sometimes by the providence of God, having to confront it and deal with it.

And other times, we can flee from the temptation itself. I remember, this was quite a while ago, not in this town or nobody, nobody that any of you would know, but I remember there was a young man who God saved him, and he was just totally fired up, and he wanted everyone to hear the gospel and every opportunity that he could get.

And it was great talking to him and his zeal for the gospel. And I was talking to him one time, and he was a single man, and he said that he'd met somebody online, and he was going to go and meet up with her.

And I said, oh, where does she live? And he says, well, she's down in Toronto. I said, oh, where are you going to stay? Oh, I'll stay at her place. Does she live alone? Yeah. And I said, do you think that's wise? And he just looked at me and says, oh, I'm too strong for that.

[9:05] And I just looked at him and I said, no, you're not. And it's got nothing to do with him, and it has everything to do with our humanity. We are not in a state of glory where we are incapable of sinning, and even in a state of grace being saved, there is remaining corruption.

And we are not called to get as close to the line of sin as we can and camp out there in temptation because we do have remaining corruption, and we're not too strong for any sin.

And David, look at David and his sin. So some examples to look to. Christian in Pilgrim's Progress, when he fled the city of destruction, what did he do when he fled the city of destruction?

He cast the world behind his back as he fled, oriented towards the celestial city. Also think of Joseph in the Old Testament, when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, what did he do?

He fled immediately. He fled the situation. Or in Proverbs 7, which talks about adultery, the adulterous woman, it explains to give temptation a wide berth.

[10:20] If the sin is adultery, it's getting in her bed. It doesn't say go in her house, just don't go in her bed. It's don't even give it a wide berth. Don't even get as close as you can.

And likewise, Proverbs 5.8. Remove your way far from her and do not go near the door of her house. Notice it says to remove your way far from her, not getting as close as you can.

And whether it's adultery or the love of money or the love of controversy or the love of division or whatever temptation it may be, because we in a state of glory will always be presented with temptations, especially when there is spiritual warfare, because Christ is advancing his kingdom. We will face temptation of various kinds. And if our objective is, well, if this is the line and I'm going to get as close as I can, as long as I don't cross the line, our orientation is towards the sin. And if we want to get as close as we can to that line, then it's out of a love for the sin. Whereas our orientation should be, as Christians was, to flee the city of destruction, oriented towards the celestial city that is oriented towards eternity, getting as close to eternity as we can, as far away as destruction as we can.

[11:39] And then also in Luke 17, 32, it says, remember Lot's wife. Of course, Lot's wife is Genesis 19. And what's so significant about Lot's wife is as they fled Sodom and Gomorrah, which the world, the world Babylon is referred to as Sodom, but as they fled Sodom and Gomorrah, God's judgment, God's destruction on evil, Lot's wife looked back.

What was the significance of her looking back? It's unlike Christian who cast the world behind his back. She looked back out of fondness, out of fondness of what they were leaving behind. She did not want to flee it.

She looked back with fondness. So the reminder to remember Lot's wife is a warning to not look back at the world with fondness.

Our orientation is not towards the world and sin to see how close we can get it, but the orientation of Christians as pilgrims in a wilderness is our destination, eternity, the celestial city, the kingdom of Christ.

So flee from. Now to flee from also includes to flee to. I gave you the example of if you were on at the base of a cliff and there's a rock slide, I think it would be prudent to choose flight instead of fight.

[12:59] But let's say that where you are is on the Trans-Canada Highway on the switchbacks of the coastal mountain range. And when there's a rock slide, if you were to just turn around and run the other way, you're going to run off the edge of the road on the switchbacks and fall down a cliff and your destruction would be certain.

Here, this fleeing from is not just fleeing in any direction, but it's a fleeing to. It is a pursuit. Notice it says, But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue.

Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Now the pursuit of these things are virtues, the pursuit of virtues which a pastor is to be furnished with.

Again, as I mentioned, these are things that the church should be furnished with. So also, and more importantly, should the pastor be furnished with them. Now George Knight, in his commentary on this, he divides these virtues into three categories.

The first one, righteousness and godliness, he says, represent one's relationship with God. The second one, faith and love, are the animating principles of the Christian life.

[14:13] And the third category, patience and gentleness, are terms for the right ways of acting in relation to a hostile world. So these virtues encompass our relationship with God, principles for the Christian life, and right ways of acting in relation to a hostile world.

And hostile world, I think he rightly grasps the whole context of what's going on here with Timothy.

And I think that's important to understand as we see what else he has to say. Because what Timothy, what's going on here is Timothy has to confront false teachers.

These false teachers are probably senior to him. They would have been there before him. Paul left him there to confront them. And in Acts 20, we see that amongst themselves will rise wolves and false teachers.

And there's, it just, there's just so much conflict in it. And it would be challenging. And I don't think we want to miss the hostility that Timothy would be facing while he's having to confront these false teachers and having to, these unrepentant false teachers to put them out, to excommunicate them. And just the hostility and the difficulty involved. And in this difficulty and in this hostility, what he must have been thinking, the spiritual depression or the temptation or whatever it might be, but to stand steadfast in the faith for the cause of the advancement of the kingdom, for the cause of the gospel, there will be spiritual warfare which doesn't necessarily go, it's not seen by our senses, by our perceptions.

[15:56] So, remembering the context of the hostility that would be going on here and that what follows, how helpful it is in the midst of hostility, whether that be hostility that Christ is experiencing, hostility that Timothy is experiencing, hostility that churches today and pastors today are

experiencing, and hostility that Christians are experiencing in their life.

So, that brings us to our second point. The church militant, so I'm going to be, I'm going to use the terms church militant and church triumphant. Church militant is the church on earth and church triumphant is the church in glory.

Okay? So, the church militant on earth is to flee from evil and advance ground being oriented to eternity. So, our second point is the fight of faith.

And, in our text, we see the advancement of the faith. In this fight, and being faithful in this fight, in this battleground, it's, there's advancement, the advancement of the faith.

Look at verse 12. It says, fight, the good fight of the faith. And that fight is contending, contending for something.

[17:21] So, what is this fight that's occurring? What does this fight look like? What is this contending? Jude 3 tells us, contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

According to sound doctrine, the faith, once for all, delivered to the saints. To fight for the faith, that is, it could be said, to agonize. To fight for the faith is to agonize for the sake of sound doctrine.

So, how is this battleground advanced? By agonizing for sound doctrine. And that's the hostility that Timothy is facing. It's false teachers are trying to hinder sound doctrine and teach that which is heterodox.

Remember, what is other than what is true, what is straight, what is upright, what is orthodox. So, in the fight of faith, we also, we see the advancement of the faith, but advancement in what direction. Well, next we see the orientation of the battle in which it is advancing. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life. I think this is a very important point to dwell on.

[18:29] When he says lay hold on eternal life, he's not insinuating that Timothy is not yet saved and that he has to lay hold of eternal life because he doesn't yet have a hold on it. Nor is he saying that he has to hold tight onto eternal life and not lose it.

Rather, what's going on is that it's an exhortation, lay hold on eternal life is an exhortation to cognitively affix his gaze on eternity when the battle is raging.

In the midst of hostility, in the midst of spiritual battle, in the midst of attack against sound doctrine, cognitively affix, Timothy is to cognitively affix his gaze on eternity.

Pastors today in hostility to be faithful are to affix their gaze on eternity and Christians in the hostility of this world when seeking to be faithful are to be fixed on the things of eternity.

Again, remember Lot's wife not looking back at the world with fondness but like Christian cast the world behind his back oriented towards the celestial city that is eternity, Christ's kingdom of glory.

[19:36] Now this laying hold on of eternity and the affixing the cognitively laying hold of it, it's understanding where, who has the power of the grip on salvation.

John 10, 28, 29, who does this say has the grip on salvation? And I give them eternal life and they shall never perish.

Neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand.

I and the Father are one. Next, we see the witness for courage in this battle and this fight, the good fight of the faith.

We see the witness for courage in chapter 12, sorry, in verse 12, it says, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

[20:54] So first of all, that word called, what does called exactly mean? Well, Romans, actually, I'll get you to, keep your finger there, but flip over to Romans 8. I think this is a good text to have in front of you. Romans 8, and trying to understand called, in verse 28 of chapter 8, notice that it says, and we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called, according to his purpose.

So here we see this reference to the called, whoever the called are and how it is that they're called. And then it goes on to say, for whom? He foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first born among many brethren.

Moreover, whom he predestined, these he also called. So the called is a reference to a particular people, and that particular people are, in some way, called.

These he also called, whom he called, these he also justified. So the called, whom God calls, he also justifies, that all their sins are pardoned and Christ's righteousness is imputed to them and

received by faith alone.

So those who are called are justified, and then what happens to those whom are justified? And whom he justified, these he also glorified.

[22 : 23] So what does this calling look like? What is this process for the called? Well, the Baptist Catechism answers the question, is what is effectual calling?

And the answer that it provides is that effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, the work of God's Spirit convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, renewing our wills, persuading and enabling us to embrace Jesus Christ as freely offered in the gospel.

So those whom are the called are those who have undergone this calling, this effectual calling and have embraced Jesus Christ as freely offered in the gospel.

So we could say the called are those whom have been saved, those whom have been justified are the called. So Timothy and all those who are called are those who are saved.

Notice it says, to which you were also called, so it's important to remember like a synecdoche, everything that that represents, the called, that that represents having been convinced of your sin and misery, having been enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, having your will renewed, persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ.

[23 : 43] So the called refers to all of that and we can take that with us. So those who have been saved, whom have been called, who have been convinced of their sin and misery and all the way up to embracing the Lord Jesus Christ, is freely offered in the gospel, that encompasses those who are called, so to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Now, baptism is a public profession of an internal reality, which is affirmed by the church, the church which holds the keys of the kingdom.

So to word it again, but a little bit different, the church which holds the keys of the kingdom affirms a person's public profession of having been called, having been convinced of their sin and misery, I won't keep going through it, all the way up to having embraced the Lord Jesus Christ, so we can say they're saved.

Baptism is the church with the keys of the kingdom affirmation that what they're professing is true, that that is the reality that has occurred within them.

Now, baptism doesn't save anybody. Baptism is a sign that signifies the internal reality that the person professing it has indeed been united to Christ in his death and that their sins are nailed to the cross in Christ's death, have been buried with Christ and been raised to new life and having been raised to new life, are clothed in Christ's righteousness.

[25 : 11] That is the objective reality of what is going on internally, that baptism signifies. So, when he says, to which you were also called a Christian and have confessed public profession affirmed by the church with the keys of the kingdom, think about the realities that he's bringing to mind, which all these things represent.

And then, when there is spiritual warfare, which no doubt Timothy must have been facing because he had to contend against false doctrine. And when there is false doctrine, where there is idolatry, where there is attack on true doctrine, be sure that this isn't just for no reason, but that there is demonic forces of darkness and spiritual warfare going on, trying to hinder in some way the advancement of God's kingdom.

So, there will be hostility. So, in this hostility, just trying to imagine as a human being the emotions that would be felt and the spiritual depression that might be felt, the doubt that might be felt, with the heightenment of spiritual warfare because of the advancement of Christ's kingdom which was occurring through Timothy in confronting false doctrine and false teachers.

And he might be asking himself, or a pastor in similar hostility might be asking himself, why does everything seem so heavy? have you ever asked that question?

Have you ever thought, why does just everything seem so heavy? Everything seems to be towering over top of me, or temptation just seems to be towering on me, and I just can't seem to get over it.

[26 : 51] Then you might ask, am I even saved? Is this all spiritual warfare? Is it because I'm not even saved? Am I even saved? But that is to try to ask a question based on subjective feelings instead of objective reality.

And being the called and a good confession is not based on subjective feelings, but on the objective reality of those who are the called and whose confession has been affirmed as being credible. In other words, put it this way, think back to the foundational truths of your public profession and the church's affirmation of credibility. Not only did you see it as being objectively real, an objective reality that you have been united to Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection, but the church with the keys of the kingdom have affirmed it.

And again, baptism doesn't save anybody, but it's like a syndicate, I just lost the word, but it represents the objective reality of a person's salvation.

So think back to that foundational truth of your public profession and the church's affirmation of credibility. And ask yourself, has anything changed? Have you apostatized?

[28 : 09] Has it come out that you actually were just faking it, that you didn't actually believe it? Well, no. That hasn't changed. Has your faith changed? Well, no.

Has God changed? Well, absolutely not. So what has changed? Well, the circumstances. It's just that the circumstances have changed. baptized. So what is the objective truth of your faith that baptism signifies?

That I have been united to Christ in his death, payment of sins, satisfaction of divine justice, burial, and resurrection, raised to new life, being clothed in Christ's righteousness.

righteousness. It signifies and was publicly professed and affirmed in the presence of many witnesses. Baptism is in the presence of many witnesses.

To which you were also called and have confessed the good confession, the presence of many witnesses. And specifically also with Timothy and those whom are pastors and their ordination also by the church being duly affirmed, set apart, and publicly sent into the ministry in the presence of many witnesses.

[29 : 15] And Timothy having to confront these false teachers and finding himself in hostility and perhaps even spiritual depression and questioning why all this is happening, to recall the objective truths and not just in himself but also in the church which has affirmed it in him.

So that brings us to our third point. The church militant on earth is to be fixed on almighty God until it becomes the church triumphant, the church in glory.

So our fifth point is the faithfulness fixed on Christ. And this is in verses 13 to 16. And first we see the exemplar of faithfulness in 13.

I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate. Now first note to make notice, I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things.

God is the source of all life. Think about the implications of that. Christ making the good confession before Pontius Pilate. Pontius Pilate who authorized the crucifixion of Christ.

[30 : 25] Where did Pontius Pilate get his life from? I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things. Timothy having to contend against false teachers and finding himself in hostility against them.

Those false teachers, where do they get their life from? I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things. Whatever affliction or persecution or reviling that we as Christians in this world may face, those who persecute Christians, those who revile, or those who may cause us affliction in various ways, where do they get their life from?

I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things. I think what he's doing here is that he's saying, fix your gaze not on the creature, but on the creator who has power over these creatures.

Okay? And before Christ Jesus, who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate. I'll just refer you to John 18, 31 to 38, which explains where Christ's good confession before Pontius Pilate was that he is king, that his kingdom is not of this world, and that he bears witness to the truth.

So, Timothy, in the face of opposition to sound doctrine, is contending against senior false teachers, those who are senior to him.

[31 : 53] And there would be, no doubt, much temptation to compromise. Rather, they're telling him that he has to compromise because he's younger, or he has to compromise because he's newer, or he has to compromise because he's the new kid, or whether just because of the hostility and the spiritual warfare, and perhaps the spiritual depression he might have been feeling, and just a desire to, a temptation to get away from it.

In the face of opposition, he may have faced temptation to compromise. So what follows, then, is the charge to faithfulness. In verses 14 to 15, that you keep the commandment without spot, blameless, until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which he will manifest in his own time.

Now, both Paul, the writer of this letter, and Timothy, the recipient of the letter, are unaware of Christ's return, or unaware of the when of Christ's return, but confident in his promise that he will return, and what will happen upon Christ's return.

So Christ, the judge of all things, will vindicate his suffering people. God is the one who gives life to all things through Christ, and Christ upholds all things by the word of his power.

Christ will return, and will judge, and will vindicate his suffering people. And next we see, we see maintaining gaze on the consummation of Christ's kingdom, and the judgment and condemnation of evil.

[33 : 33] Perspective to keep in mind while we are in hostility in this world. So, the faithfulness fixed on Christ, we see the exemplar of faithfulness, the charge to faithfulness, and then the source of blessedness.

And this charge to remain faithful, remember the source of blessedness. 15b-16. He who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power.

Amen. What we see here, what we're directed towards, our gaze is being directed towards God's essence and perfections.

So, in this charge to be faithful, our gaze is to be affixed on God's perfections and essence. And this, what I just read here, is a doxology.

Dox, it's a giving of glory to God. It's an acknowledgement of God's glory. So, let's quickly work through it and see what these words mean.

[34 : 50] But it says, he who is the blessed. Matthew Poole on this, he says, blessed is the fountain of all felicity and happiness. This morning we sung, come thou fount of every blessing.

In the doxology we sing, praise God from whom all blessings flow. God is not only the source of all blessing, that all blessing comes from him as the fountain or the fountain head or the source of all blessing.

We have to ask ourselves, well, where does God get the blessing or the blessedness or the ability to bless his creatures? Where does he get it from? He is blessed.

He is the fountain. He is the source of all blessedness. All that is in God is God. God is the only being who's perfect. When I say perfections, it's his attributes.

Perfections is the completeness of it. There is no corruption of it. His perfections, his attributes. God is the only being whose attributes is his essence. So, if we could say that God's, a perfection of God is his wisdom or his power or his blessedness, God himself is power and wisdom and blessedness.

[36 : 02] So, God's blessedness is that he is self-sufficient fullness of delight and joy and that is immutable. God's blessedness is the perfection of it and it is self-sufficient.

He does not depend on anything at all to be perfectly blessed and he is the fullness of delight and joy and that does not change. He is immutable. When I say immutable, that's his unchangeableness, unchangeability, which scripture speaks about.

And that God does not change in his perfections, his attributes to the perfect degree without corruption are not corrupted. They do not change. His power is not corrupted.

His wisdom is not corrupted. His blessedness is not corrupted. His blessedness does not change and his fullness of delight and joy does not change. And he has the source, the origin, the fountainhead of all blessedness does not change.

Which means God is not in misery. If God is the fullness of blessedness without change, God is not in misery as we are.

[37 : 09] He who is the blessed and only potentate, that's a word we probably don't use every day in our conversation. Only potentate. A potentate is a sovereign ruler with great amount of power.

God is almighty God. He is the only potentate. He is the source of all power. And he has a sovereign rule over all things.

So the same as blessedness is that if the earthly kings have power to do particular things, if Pontius Pilate had power and authority to put people to death, where do they get that source of power from?

Where do they get that source of authority from? It's from God who is the source of all power. Okay, well where does God source out his power? From his very essence. God is almighty.

God is the only potentate. There's nothing over God that God has to source out his power from. So there's nothing that has more power than God.

[38 : 16] There is nothing that has any power whatsoever over God. I think there's a specific succession of what we're working through here. Blessed, only potentate. What's next? The king of kings and lord of lords.

So all authority that's held by creatures, God has authority over them. All the kings of the earth, God reigns over them.

He is king of kings. All those who are lords on the earth, all those who are masters, God is master over them. He has all authority over all creatures.

Kings and lords are not excluded, which means then that also Pontius Pilate. God reigns over Pontius Pilate. Timothy's contenders.

God reigns over Timothy's contenders, over these false teachers. And current earthly powers, guess what? God reigns over current earthly powers. And whatever hostility we may find ourselves against, God rules over them as well.

[39 : 21] And just to kind of put this into perspective of with Christ's as the exemplar of his good confession, something that's important to understand. So when Pontius, it was Pontius Pilate who authorized the crucifixion of Christ, we need to maintain the two natures united in one person with Christ.

The son of God did not convert into a man and cease to be God, but the divine nature is united to human nature in one person, both natures being maintained and retained without any mixture or conversion or confusion of it.

So when the humanity, the flesh of Christ was crucified on the cross, on the cross under Pontius Pilate, remember, I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things.

And all things are created through Christ and all things are upheld through Christ by the word of his power. The second person of the Trinity through whom all things exist are being upheld.

But yet this person of Christ was on the cross and was put to death. And if the two natures are not mixed or confused, what was going on with the divine nature while the human nature was being put to death?

[40 : 44] Well, to put it in perspective, Christ or the son of God who is eternal, who does not undergo succession of change. So the rain that falls from the sky and waters plants through Christ, the trees that grow up from the ground because of the rain is through Christ.

The carpenter who cuts down the tree and carves it into a cross is being upheld by Christ, by the word of his power.

The one who is driving the spikes through Jesus' hands on the cross, his life is being upheld by the son of God.

And every breath that he takes as he inhales before driving the spikes again with the hammer is the mercy of God while being upheld by the son of God while Christ is being crucified on the cross.

So where is the power of God in all this? God is not absent. God has not been overthrown by any power external to him. In Pontius Pilate, in Timothy's contenders, nor in any hostility that we may experience in our pilgrimage.

[42 : 04] Which means that no spiritual forces, no forces of darkness that we may face in hostility in this world has any power over God, but is God's creature.

Let's look back at God, this doxology of God's perfections and essence. It says, who alone has immortality. And I think, well, the Bible says that I have an immortal soul, though my body will die, I have an immortal soul.

But where do we get our life from? Where do we get our souls from? Well, from God. We have a beginning. God is the only one who does not have a beginning, but is from everlasting to everlasting.

Not just that he goes back and goes forward for forever, but that he is, he fills all space and time is not bound by time and is eternal. And he is immortal in himself.

His immortality is from himself. He is self-sufficient. He does not depend on anything or anyone, either for his life or for his blessedness or for his being or for his perfections or for his will or for his doing.

[43:15] He is self-sufficient fountainhead of all life. All life comes from him. Who alone has immortality dwelling in unapproachable life.

Now, what this statement does here is it's making a creator-creature distinction. God dwells in unapproachable light that no creature can approach God.

His glory is so... Moses wanted to see the glory of God and no one can, no man can see God and live.

God's glory is an unapproachable light. I think about, in Revelation, and it talks about the church, it talks about Christ walking in the midst of the lampstands.

And then it says the lampstands are the churches. Now, what's a lampstand? A lampstand brings us back to the Old Testament and the temple. And a lampstand was light that shone light on the bread.

[44:14] So there's imagery going on here that the spiritual presence of Christ is in the church. By the spiritual presence of Christ, we have light being shone by the Spirit of Christ on the bread and nourishment, which is nourishment and life for his people.

So, while no man can see God and live, and God dwells in unapproachable light, we have a glimpse of God's glory as revealed to us in his word.

Next it says, no man has seen or can see. We cannot see God. It is, by our eyesight, we cannot see God does not have a body.

God is spirit. But God can also not be represented. God is not an object. He's not a body that he can be represented.

But his glory, his essence is unapproachable light, which no man has seen or can see. God is spirit and cannot be represented or seen.

[45:20] And Romans 1.23 says, professing to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man.

The glory of God is something that we cannot even fathom, let alone try to represent it. But what's incredible is that in this life, in this state of grace being saved, we have a glimpse of God's glory through Christ in his word.

But a part of our hope of the inheritance of the saints is that in glory, we will have an intellectual sight of the glory of God, which we do not have here.

And this intellectual sight of the glory of God will put us in an awe and a wonder beyond anything that is wonderful in this life.

And with the resurrection of the bodies, we will have perfect eyesight. And with an intellectual sight by the sight of glory, we will behold the glory of God. And with perfected eyesight from our bodies being resurrected, we will have a sight of a great multitude of the redeemed who have been raised and who are themselves beholding the glory of God and praising God.

[46:36] And we will behold not only the glory of God by the light of glory, but we will behold the redeemed saints beholding the glory of God. And it will be far more wonderful than any sight we could possibly imagine.

And it goes on to say, To whom be honor and everlasting power. And this is reference to the final cause of all things, which will be accomplished according to God's everlasting almighty power.

To whom be honor and everlasting power. Whatever is experienced to Christ's crucifixion and Timothy's hostility against his contenders and our hostility today.

The final cause of all things is that to God will be honor and everlasting power. And then at the end of the doxology, it says, amen. What does amen mean? It means that we are saying this is true. It's saying, I agree. Let it be so. And that's what happens when we say, amen, we are saying, giving our agreement. Let it be so. So some concluding uses.

[47:37] I'll try to work through this quickly. But first of all, this doxology and this, this charge to Timothy and to pastors. So I'm going to put pastors on the spotlight.

This applies to me. This applies to me today. This applies to me 30 years from now, if by God's will, still preaching or any other pastor is that if a pastor's sermon doesn't show you God's excellencies and wondrous works in Christ.

So this is actually, I'm paraphrasing a quote I heard once. I don't know where, who said it or where to find it. It was a long quote. So I'm reducing it and paraphrasing it. But if a pastor's sermon doesn't show you God's excellencies and wondrous works in Christ, lock him up in his study and don't let him out until his speech rings of eternity.

And in the longer quote, there's things such as unplug his phone line. So maybe today it would be, put his, put his phone in a Faraday box, but don't let him out until his speech rings of eternity. And that's what we see in this doxology is just ringing of eternity. And the second concluding use is that God does not suffer. God is not overpowered by an alternative potentate.

[48:55] God is immutably blessed in the fullness of joy and that is not corrupted. And some, with good intentions, will try to console people who are suffering by saying that God is suffering with them.

And at first thought, maybe this brings some consolation because in my suffering, I'm not alone. God is, God is with me and God is with us in our suffering, but God does not suffer. That is God, it insinuates that God is also overpowered.

It insinuates by, that is overpowered by this agent of affliction, that God is overcome by this agent of affliction and that God is overwhelmed by this agent of affliction.

So this agent of affliction clearly has more power than God and has caused God to not be blessed, eternally and unchangeably blessed. God who is unchanging, self-sufficient, blessed and only potentate.

And he remains to be so through your trials and tribulations. And this brings us great consolation and hope that in our hostility and in our suffering, it's not that God has been overpowered, but that God remains to be blessed, unchangingly blessed and only potentate.

[50:16] And he is to whom be honor and everlasting power, which all things are working. Remember the parable of the tenants. What happens with the parable of the tenants when afterwards he says, enter into the agony of your Lord.

No, that's not what it says. He says, enter into the misery of your Lord. That's not what it says. It says, enter into the suffering of your Lord. No, that's not it either.

It says, enter into the joy of your Lord. Our hope is that God is blessed and the fullness of joy. Enter into the joy of your Lord.

And God's intention is that, this is God's intention. In our suffering, God is not only blessed and not only almighty, but he is accomplishing his purpose and his intention.

So what is his intention for us in our suffering and this hostility? Hostility. God's intention is that divine joy and God, who is the source and fountainhead of all blessedness, that divine joy through Christ would be fulfilled in his people.

[51:28] That's not always through our comfort in this life. Sometimes through our affliction and hostility. Through the, be fulfilled in his people. We have a taste of that now, but we will have a perfect fullness of joy, indefectible.

It cannot be corrupted. It cannot fade. Nobody can take it away from us. It's a perfect fullness of joy, indefectible, being blessed to all eternity in a state of glory without end.

And God is directing all things to that intention for the chief end of his own glory. Third, God preserves, governs, controls, upholds, directs, and limits all things.

Even calamities, even suffering, even hostility, even persecution. God has not been overpowered. God is not absent. But through these things, God is preserving, governing, controlling, upholding, directing, and limiting all things.

And that includes even ungodly kings, ungodly prefects, ungodly masters, even Pontius Pilate, who crucified Christ, even Timothy's contenders, the false teachers, and even the contenders, the false teachers.

[52:51] So, whatever spiritual suffering, temptation, or burdens that Timothy is experiencing is incomparable in comparison to God.

In other words, don't even try to compare it to God. It's not equal. This spiritual suffering, this temptation, whatever it may be, this suffering, it's not even equal to God to even start to try to compare it to God.

Rather, lay hold of, that is, set your gaze and assurance on the perfections and essence of the Almighty God. When in hostility and in affliction and in suffering, we may face doubt or spiritual depression or temptation, don't fix your gaze on the subjective feelings in the moment, but fix your gaze on the objective reality, on the perfections and essence of the Almighty.

Van Maastricht wrote that God governs all things by one single and eternal nod of his will, inasmuch as without that, he would not be most abounding with all perfections.

God is Almighty God in all of our sufferings and afflictions and hostility. And God's providential intention over Christ's crucifixion, God's providential intention over Timothy's battles does not exclude, God's intentions does not exclude your life.

[54 : 17] God's intentions for these things, God's providential intentions does not exclude your sorrows and your joy. Rather, he governs, directs, and limits even the vices and deficiencies of second causes that afflict your soul.

And he does so most wisely and powerfully to the honor and glory of his name, to the salvation of his own, and to the judgment of the wicked.

Finally, God's providence doesn't look any of these vices and deficiencies. Now, when I say vices and deficiencies, I mean sin. God's providence does not overlook any sin without punishment.

Either he punishes it in the sinner or he punishes it in his surety. Surety is somebody who stands in the place.

And for our salvation, that is Christ. Christ stands in the place between God's punishment and us. And in the Old Testament, whenever you see somebody standing in the breach between a holy God and a sinful people, that's pointing towards Christ.

[55 : 23] When you see a priest standing between a holy God and a sinful people and presenting the blood of bulls and goats, blood of bulls and goats didn't atone for sins. It's saying, look at the blood of Christ.

It's all pointing towards the blood of Christ. Christ standing in the breach between a holy God and a sinful people, his own people, shedding his blood for the payment of sins.

And the only way to be right before a holy God is to be united to Christ as our mediator, as the one who stands as our representative before a holy God, to have been forgiven of all of our sins by the shedding of his blood as a substitute for us and by his righteousness imputed to us, being clothed in Christ's righteousness with Christ as our mediator, with Christ as our intercessor.

And this is received by faith alone. So if you have not yet received Christ, if your sins have not yet been forgiven by being covered by the blood of Christ, if you depend on your righteousness, you need Christ to stand before a holy God.

And Christ, the benefits of Christ, the forgiveness that comes in Christ and the righteousness of Christ and the promises of the gospel are received by receiving Christ and resting on Christ for salvation.

[56 : 49] Let's pray.