

1 Timothy 6

- Tonight we wrap up Paul's first letter to Timothy as we enter the letter's final chapter
 - In Chapter 5 Paul gave Timothy direction on how to handle difficult political issues in the body of Christ:
 - How to handle caring for widows without letting charity become an opportunity for abuse
 - How to show proper respect and honor to the elders of the church so long as they are serving well
 - But also how to correct elders despite Timothy's young age
 - Paul asked Timothy to be fair-minded, unbiased and deliberate in applying these rules
 - In particular, Paul warned Timothy not to elevate leaders too quickly
 - Evidently the problems found in Ephesus were due, in part, to poor leaders and false teachers who gained authority
 - These men were causing havoc among impressionable Christians in Ephesus, leading Paul to write to his protégé
 - Paul knew the difficulties Timothy faced as a young, inexperienced pastor in a pagan city tackling these problems
 - So Paul encouraged Timothy to be strong and trust in the calling and anointing of the Spirit
 - He even suggested Timothy drink a little, for medicinal purposes
- So now we move forward to Paul's final instructions in this letter, which he presents in a similar fashion
 - Paul just taught Timothy concerning two groups in the church that stood at opposite ends of the social spectrum
 - Elders and widows were the greatest and least honored in the church
 - Paul used these extremes to emphasize that all deserve honor

- And yet all are expected to act in keeping with Christ's commands
- Therefore, Timothy wasn't to show bias in leading the church
 - He couldn't let his sympathy for widows lead him to extend charity when it wasn't justified
 - Nor could he allow misbehaving elders to escape proper judgment
- Now Paul applies a similar contrast, but this time he's looking at opposite ends of the economic spectrum
 - He gives instructions to Timothy for the rich and the poor
 - Paul begins in vs.1-16 by addressing issues of misbehavior among the poor in the church

1Tim. 6:1 All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against.

1Tim. 6:2 Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.

- In the first half of this chapter, Paul addresses the situation of the poor in the church
 - But at first glance you may not realize this is Paul's focus, since Paul speaks to "all who are under the yoke as slaves"
 - But look down the page to v.17 in this chapter
 - You will clearly see find Paul moving to address the rich in the church in the second half of the chapter
 - This is Paul's contrast in chapter 6: poor vs. rich
 - Paul addresses the poor as slaves because in the first century Roman Empire, that's what often happened to the very poor
 - Slavery in Paul's day was almost always indentured servitude
 - A man who fell on hard times and couldn't support himself or his family would be forced to sell himself into slavery

- His slavery was voluntary, in the sense that no one compelled him to become a slave
- His own debts forced his hand so that slavery was his last hope
- So a desperately poor man would sell himself to a master willing to take him on
 - The master would arrange to pay the man's debts and provide room and board to the man and his family
 - In return, the man and his family became slaves in the master's household or business for a period of time
 - The man and his family were not merely employees
 - They voluntarily gave up their liberty and therefore had few rights under law
 - They could be beaten or even killed for disobedience
 - A faithful slave was generally treated well
 - He and his family had food and board and were assured employment
 - Over time the slave worked to repay their debt to the master
 - In cases where they served faithfully and fully, the master might grant the servant freedom once the debt is repaid through labor
 - But freedom wasn't guaranteed...a cruel or greedy master might never grant it
 - In other cases, a slave might prefer to remain in service to a kind master and so commits to being a slave for life (a "bondservant")
 - Slavery of this kind was very common in Paul's day
 - It's estimated that there were around 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire
 - They represented the lowest financial class within Roman society
 - They are similar to the "working poor" today: hard-working people enslaved to debt and without many options in life
- When Christianity began to sweep through the Roman Empire in the first century, the faith reached into all levels of society, including slaves

- Men and women who were indentured servants in Ephesus heard the call of freedom in Christ, believed the word and became part of the Church
 - With a new identity in Christ, the question naturally followed what did their faith mean for their status as slaves?
 - And to that question, the Bible gives the same answer as to any other group: seek to honor Christ
- In v.1 Paul describes these people as those “under the yoke as slaves”
 - The phrase describes someone under a burden
 - It’s a veiled reference to the financial burdens that placed the person in slavery in the first place
 - Paul’s reminding his audience they are slaves for reasons of their own making
 - They incurred debt or other financial burden, which necessitated their slavery
- Therefore, their new-found relationship with Christ did not change their obligation
 - Just as if a person today with significant credit card debt or college loans comes to faith in Christ
 - We could say the person is under a yoke of indebtedness
 - Nevertheless, we don’t assume he may use his faith as reason to walk away from his financial obligations
 - Our freedom in Christ is spiritual, not financial
- Therefore, Paul tells the poor (slaves) in the church to regard their master as worthy of all honor
 - Notice Paul doesn’t say that all masters are deserving of all honor
 - On the contrary, many masters weren’t worthy of any honor
 - Many were unkind, deceptive or neglectful of their slaves
 - Nevertheless, Paul says consider them worthy of honor (even if they aren’t truly worthy)

- He's calling the Christian slave to honor his master in the same way all Christians are called to honor Christ: through excellence
- No matter what our station in life, we are called to excel in human terms to reflect honor upon the Lord
- As Jesus commanded:

Matt. 5:16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- So, a slave glorified Christ by being a good slave
 - And the worse treatment a slave endured at the hands of his master, the more opportunity he had to glorify Christ by showing his master honor
 - The world thinks in an opposite way
 - The world assumes that only worthy masters deserve honor
 - But when Christians slaves honored their unworthy masters, they brought praise upon the name of Christ, Paul says
- Furthermore, Paul tells slaves to not show disrespect to masters who were believers
 - This was a particularly difficult problem in the early church
 - Often a master would come to faith and by his influence many of the slaves in his household would also believe
 - Thereafter, the believing slaves began to expect their believing master to favor them on account of their shared faith
 - Perhaps they expected freedom or easier work
 - Perhaps they assumed they could neglect their duties without fear of retribution
 - Paul corrects this misconception in v.2
 - He orders believing slaves to serve their believing master "all the more"
 - The slaves should be even more hardworking and obedient knowing that the recipient of their labor is a fellow Christian

- Knowing we are serving a fellow member of the body should motivate us to be better at our work, not to take liberties
- Remember, the slave was usually made so by a financial agreement, not by force
 - So they had no reason to expect their master to forgo his reasonable service under the agreement
 - No more than you might expect your banker to forgive your mortgage merely because you both attend the same church
- Today, this kind of indentured servant relationship is much rarer, though it still exists in some cultures
 - Nevertheless, we do find other situations that closely match the one Paul is addressing
 - Beside the comparison to paying off debt I mentioned already, we have other ways in which Paul's advice applies
 - For example, if we work for a harsh boss, we should regard him or her as worthy of honor for the same reason: to honor Christ
 - Remember, Christ himself submitted to undeserved harsh treatment to bring you and me into Heaven
 - So how can we complain if the Lord asks us to endure a little harsh treatment at work or school?
 - Or if we work for a believing boss, we can't let our shared faith become opportunity to be less reliable or honorable in our work
 - On the contrary we must strive all the more to bless a fellow believer
 - Similarly, those in military service or under other constraints should not assume their faith gives cause to avoid their responsibilities
 - On the contrary, we are to be more faithful, more committed because of our faith
- Paul ends v.2 repeating his command to Timothy to teach and preach these principles in the church in Ephesus
 - He reiterates this command because it's evident that the church in Ephesus was struggling with a rebellion of believing slaves

- We know Ephesus would have many slaves within the city
- It was a very rich, prosperous city, which means it attracted many poor, looking to work in service to the wealthy
- It was very much a city of the “haves” and the “have-nots”
- And as Paul and Timothy worked to bring the Gospel to the city, many slaves entered the faith along with some of the wealthy
 - According to Paul’s first letter to Corinth, the Lord intentionally drew poor believers into His church
 - In fact, Paul told Corinth that “not many” were noble or mighty in the church, instead most were of lesser status
 - Knowing the Lord works in similar ways, it’s reasonable to assume that the church in Ephesus shared a similar demographic
- And all these slaves (poor) entering the church had led some to think they could shed their shackles and expect the church to fund their lifestyle
 - Much like the younger widows from Chapter 5, these felt that faith was a means to escaping slavery and poverty
 - It was the ancient version of the prosperity gospel that deceives the church today
 - The slaves argued that God wants us to be free and wealthy
- This false doctrine has always been around the church
 - It confuses physical and financial gains for spiritual gains
 - False teachers point to verses in scripture that teach Christ promises us riches and freedom
 - Then they twist the intended meaning to say that God promised us earthly riches and earthly freedom
 - When in reality the Bible is speaking of heavenly, eternal riches and freedom from sin and condemnation
 - The tactics of false teachers may have changed over the centuries, but the underlying deception hasn’t

- So Paul tells Timothy how to deal with these “prosperity” teachers

1Tim. 6:3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, **1Tim. 6:4** he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, **1Tim. 6:5** and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

- Paul says if anyone advocates a different doctrine regarding slavery and poverty, they are acting against common sense, the commands of Jesus and the godliness
 - First, they are acting against sound words
 - Literally, the words in Greek mean a healthy message
 - Today we might say common sense
 - An understanding that is self-evidently proper and sensible
 - To teach that slaves should expect masters to release them because of faith was self-evident nonsense
 - Similarly, any teaching that states God plans to make every believer rich is also self-evident nonsense
 - We only need look around the world at the church to see this isn't true
 - Millions if not billions of believers are not rich
 - And it's never been that way in all the history of the church
 - Therefore, we should reject the message on that basis alone
- Furthermore, someone who advocates prosperity or the elimination of poverty is not agreeing with the words of Jesus Christ, the One they claim to represent
 - First, Jesus said we will always have the poor as recorded in Matthew, Mark and John
 - He meant that we cannot solve the problem of poverty for it is a condition God Himself permits, and for good reasons

- Therefore, Jesus' words concerning poverty don't indicate that the Lord desires to eliminate it, in the world or in the Church
- In fact, Jesus spoke more about money than any other single topic in all the Gospels
 - And in all that He said, He consistently argued for less attention and desire for wealth, not more
 - Consider a few of His statements

[Matt. 19:23](#) And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

[Mark 4:18](#) "And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word,

[Mark 4:19](#) but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

[Luke 6:22](#) "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

[Luke 6:23](#) "Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.

[Luke 6:24](#) "But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full.

[Luke 12:19](#) 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'"

[Luke 12:20](#) "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?'

[Luke 12:21](#) "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

- So when we hear men advocating for the church to adopt an expectation of riches or freedom as they so desire, they are contradicting Christ
- Finally, they are not speaking a doctrine that conforms to godliness
 - In other words, if we acted in keeping with their teaching, the body of Christ becomes less godly, not more godly
 - This is a simple and important test to apply to any teaching you hear
 - Ask yourself, does this teaching lead to greater godliness or less?

- In this case, it's easy to see how any doctrine contrary to Paul's teaching would increase ungodliness
 - The poor (slaves) would become less interested in serving their masters honorably
 - Instead, they would begin to abandon their duties in an expectation that the Lord was "freeing" them from their circumstances
- Furthermore, they would adopt a greedy, materialistic heart seeking things of this world
 - Obviously, we all have a degree of "want" which we must fight to control
 - But any teaching that gives license to that wanting is wrong and leads us further into ungodliness
- Remember these tests as you receive instruction
 - Does it pass a common sense test?
 - Does it agree with Jesus' own teaching?
 - Does it promote godliness?
- Evidently, certain men in Ephesus were teaching a false view of poverty, and Paul says in v.4 these men were conceited and understood nothing
 - The Greek word for conceited can also be translated proud
 - Pride is seeking to be praised, respected, & honored above what's proper
 - These vain, proud men were seeking to draw a crowd
 - And nothing gains an adoring audience better than a message that God is prepared to make you rich
 - It's a fleshly message delivered by a conceited messenger to prideful hearts
 - Secondly, Paul says such men understand nothing
 - He means they have nothing of value to offer on this matter
 - It's like taking medical advice from your postman

- Because a teacher who advocates for something self-evidently wrong and obviously contradictory to scripture proves he is willfully deceptive
 - They are not merely mistaken or confused
 - They are purposely deceiving an audience for personal benefit
- Paul says they have a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words
 - The Greek word translated morbid interest means an unhealthy desire
 - In other words, they do not have others' best interests at heart
 - Instead they have only their own interests in mind
 - Notice Paul says they are filled with envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction
 - Clearly these men have an ungodly interest in controversy, Paul says, because it draws attention
 - Like the way a fight on the school playground draws an audience: they seek the sensational and provocative
 - They raise evil suspicions against those who oppose them
 - They use abusive language to silence critics and shock their audience
 - And they are filled with the same envy they work to inspire in their audience
- Finally, Paul says these teachers seek to create friction between men of depraved minds who are deprived of the truth
 - They remind me of a story my father told me about his days in the U.S. Navy
 - He was a naval officer stationed on an aircraft carrier in the South Pacific, and his roommate was a Marine officer
 - When the ship docked in a foreign port, they would go ashore to visit bars in the city
 - After drinking a few beers, the Marine would intentionally pick a fight with a stranger in the bar

- Once they had the entire bar embroiled in a fist fight, my dad and the Marine would crawl out on their hands and knees
- Only to visit another bar and start the process over again
- That's an example of conceited men with a morbid interest in disputes creating friction between men depraved and deprived of the truth
 - Why would anyone do such a thing?
 - Because of the thrill of it
 - Because it feeds the pride and ego
 - Because it's the natural outworking of ungodly hearts
- And because they see godliness as a means to gain, Paul says
 - Godliness is used sarcastically here
 - Obviously, these men are far from godly, as Paul explained
 - But they seek the appearance of godliness to gain a following and profit personally
- In my father's case, he profited by avoiding paying his bar tab as he escaped the bar during the confusion of the fight
 - In the case of the teachers in Ephesus, they probably extracted money from their followers in much the same way that prosperity heretics do today
 - They encouraged their followers to show their appreciation for their message of riches with donations of support
 - As long as money has existed, evil men have sought ways to take it away from gullible people
- To contradict this wrong teaching, Paul then explains the proper perspective on wealth for the poor in the church

1Tim. 6:6 But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

1Tim. 6:7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

1Tim. 6:8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

- We're still in the section of this chapter addressed to the slaves (or poor), but obviously Paul's advice would apply to all people
 - Remember, in Paul's day there was very little "middle class"
 - The majority of people were day laborers, soldiers or slaves
 - A few were small business owners or bureaucrats with a middle-class lifestyle
 - And even fewer were wealthy and privileged
 - And there was little opportunity for increasing one's economic place within Roman society
- So, Paul's advice is appropriate for anyone who isn't occupying the top echelon of society (like you and me)
 - For us, godliness can be means to a great gain
 - In this case, Paul has dropped his sarcasm and is speaking literally
 - If we pursue godliness according to God's word with true hearts and honest intentions, there is great gain
- Of course, that gain is first and foremost spiritual
 - We will gain the blessings of spiritual maturity which is freedom from sin and its consequences
 - Imagine the joy to be found in a life where we aren't victims of our own sin:
 - Where our desires are aligned with God's heart, and our time is filled in serving Him as He has called us to do.
 - That is truly great gain
 - But secondly, the Bible teaches that our pursuit of godliness here (on Earth), gives opportunity for great blessing in the Kingdom
 - That blessing far exceeds anything we gain here
 - The question is would we like to receive materials blessings here or in the kingdom?
 - Any student of scripture would know how to answer that question properly

- And even common sense tells us that pursuing earthly wealth is folly
 - In v.6, Paul presents a saying of his day (and our day as well)
 - We have brought nothing into this world, and we take nothing out
 - This profound truth argues against spending all our time and energy building earthly wealth
- For it will fail us in the most important moment of life
 - The moment we face the Creator at death, we come as we entered the world
 - With nothing but ourselves
 - So the question is how can we come to that moment with the most in hand?
 - Only by bringing spiritual things, for nothing physical will accompany us into that moment
- The key to gaining that eternal focus is to find contentment, Paul says
 - Contentment is a funny word, really
 - It means recognizing what you have as sufficient for your needs
 - The word is funny because it is not related to the magnitude of our wealth nor the degree of our need
 - A person can have many possessions and lack contentment or have no possessions and still be content in what he has
 - Likewise, a man can live in need of nothing yet lack contentment, while another has great need yet remains content
 - Which means contentment isn't the result of what we acquire; it's the consequence of how we train our heart
 - That's why Paul says elsewhere that he *learned* to be content

Phil. 4:11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

- Contentment is a learned outlook on life's circumstances that understands God's will for our life

- Contentment results from not seeking an impossible goal, which is sufficient wealth
- Instead, we seek godliness
- Therefore, we see trials, tests, deprivations and the like merely as tools in God's hands to mold us into a mature follower of Christ
 - With contentment, we are free to profit spiritually from what God is doing in our lives
 - That gain can be great, indeed
 - On the other hand, if we're busy chasing after the things of the world or bemoaning our circumstances, we will miss the opportunity to gain
 - The lesson here is that those who pursue wealth instead of godliness gained neither
 - While those pursuing godliness instead of wealth gain both
- Obviously, we all have needs, so we can't completely ignore a pursuit of material things
 - Well, obviously God knows this too, and so He defines what the minimum is
 - Paul says in v.8 that if we have food and covering, we have the minimum for contentment
 - The Greek word for covering simply means clothing
 - So food and clothing are minimums
 - Paul's saying that if we lack food and clothing, then naturally we are not expected to be content
 - God does not ask that we be content without food
 - And certainly, we need not be content without clothing
 - Ladies, that isn't biblical support for shopping sprees at the outlet mall...
 - Paul's speaking about someone who lacks the ability to cover their nakedness
 - But if we have these things, then contentment is possible

- Does that standard surprise you?
- Maybe you might have expected the minimum to include shelter? Employment? Medical care? The latest iPhone?
- The Lord isn't saying we can't have these other things
 - He's saying that we must learn contentment even without them
 - Because if we learn contentment we find less motivation to seek for even more
 - And by setting aside the pursuit of more, we leave time and energy to pursue godliness instead, which is always the better pursuit
 - As Jesus said:

[Matt. 6:31](#) "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'"

[Matt. 6:32](#) "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

[Matt. 6:33](#) "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

- Notice that Jesus also emphasized that food and clothing are the bare minimums
 - God will provide those for His children
 - But everything else we may receive is icing on the proverbial cake
 - Meanwhile, we spend our time seeking for His kingdom and His righteousness
 - Which means seeking godliness while serving Christ
- If we fail to move in this direction, we risk a disastrous end to our life, as Paul warns

[1Tim. 6:9](#) But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

[1Tim. 6:10](#) For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

- The opposite of contentment is wanting to get rich
 - Desire for riches is a seductive mistress that pulls us into an embrace that's hard to escape once we've become entangled
 - That desire prepares us to jump at any chance we see
 - And so we fall into temptation or the snares set by the enemy
 - Perhaps we take opportunity to steal or defraud
 - Or as was the case in Ephesus, slaves succumb to false teaching telling them they can leave their master or abscond on their commitments
 - These are foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin
 - This leads Paul to issue one of the most quoted (and often misquoted) verses in the Bible
 - He says the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil
 - Sometimes Paul's thought is truncated to simply "money is the root of all evil"
 - Obviously, the context is a discussion of loving money instead of finding contentment
 - And it's that desire, that love, that leads to the problems
 - Money in the hands of the content and godly is a power and a positive tool
 - So money itself isn't evil
 - Like anything else in the world, it can be put to use in godly or ungodly ways
 - But when the desire for it eclipses our desire to be content, it leads men into ruin
- Paul emphasizes the truth of his statement by reminding his audience that many in the church have fallen in this way
 - Their longing for money caused them to wander away from the faith
 - The word wander invokes an image of a child led off a forest path by a butterfly

- They chase something they desire, oblivious to the dangers involved
- Before long, they find themselves lost and unable to find their way back
- Christians who wander away from walking with Christ will inevitably suffer as a result
 - Paul says they pierce themselves with many griefs
 - In keeping with my forest path analogy, piercing suggests that wandering child caught in a thorn bush
- But in light of Paul speaking about the poor slaves in the church, he may have been alluding to literal piercings
 - Disobedient slaves could be disciplined in a variety of ways including physical discipline of course
 - So Paul may be suggesting that those slaves who have wandered off following the false teachers of their day have suffered piercings
 - And in that sense, they pierced themselves by loving money more than Christ
- Before turning to instruct the rich, Paul warns Timothy not to follow in the footsteps of these greedy slaves

1Tim. 6:11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

1Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

- Timothy must flee from such teaching and its effects in the church
 - Have nothing to do with it, Paul tells Timothy
 - This instruction suggests that Timothy was poor himself
 - And as such, he may have been vulnerable to such teaching were he not counseled properly to avoid it
 - In place of pursuing money, Paul calls his protégé to pursue six spiritual goals

- Righteousness, which is the pursuit of Christ's righteousness found in His word by His grace
- Devoting ourselves to knowing Christ more so we can walk more closely with Him
- This leads to the second goal, godliness
 - Godliness is the life of obedience made possible by putting away sin at every opportunity
 - A pursuit of righteousness leads us into a pursuit of godliness
 - Just pursuing these two steps are a life-long challenge by themselves
- Next Paul says seek faith and love
 - Faith is a pursuit of the life of the body of Christ, as in THE faith
 - From a pursuit of righteousness and godliness comes a natural desire to share those pursuits with others in the community of faith
 - And then within that community, we pursue love, both from and for others in the family of God
- Finally, we seek perseverance and gentleness
 - We seek to persevere in our life of following Christ among our brothers and sisters
 - When our flesh, the world or the enemy stumbles us, we get back up and continue
 - And when others fall in their walk, we respond in gentleness remembering we all have weaknesses
 - Together these are pursuits that bring eternal gain, the kind that cannot perish
- And as pastor in the church, Paul asks Timothy to "fight the good fight"
 - The fight Paul's describing was the fight inside every believer
 - So often we are ready to fight against those we see as enemies of the Church

- Yet meanwhile we're unwilling to fight sin and temptation in our own lives
- Yet that's precisely the fight Paul was calling Timothy to wage
- It's a fight against the flesh and the schemes of the enemy which conspire to pull us off course
 - It will always be a fight because the flesh is powerful and ever-present in each of us
 - Our sinful flesh never rests, it never gives up trying to corrupt our walk
 - So when we decide to take a holiday from pursuing godliness, we give the enemy opportunity to gain yardage
- Paul calls this fight the good fight because it yields good outcomes
 - The fight against sin produces godliness, which brings blessing
 - And the fight against false teachers helps prevent others from wandering off the path to godliness
- This is taking hold of the eternal life, Paul says
 - Timothy was called into faith in front of many witnesses, Paul says
 - So now Paul is asking Timothy to live up to (or take hold of) this faith he professed publicly
- He's appealing to Timothy's honor to act according to his profession and not to let others down
 - This is a strong appeal to every pastor everywhere
 - Don't let down those who look up to you and are depending on you
 - Take hold of your eternal life, make it your life now
- Paul ends this section with a beautiful doxology

1Tim. 6:13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate,
1Tim. 6:14 that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

[1Tim. 6:15](#) which He will bring about at the proper time – He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,
[1Tim. 6:16](#) who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

- A charge is a formal exhortation under the authority of a higher power
 - Paul charges Timothy according to the Father and Son to keep a good confession
 - Notice Paul's description of each member of the Godhead
 - The Father is the one who gives life to all things
 - While Christ is the One who made the good confession before His death
 - Paul is reminding Timothy that if he is tempted to chase after earthly things, remember that the Father gives true life to all things
 - That is, Timothy can stand firm in his walk of faith knowing that God will grant him true life
 - And he should follow Christ's example to keep his confession unstained by the world even in the face of persecution
 - Which is why Paul calls Timothy to keep his testimony unstained until the appearing of Christ
 - You can't run well and then fail in the end
 - The test is a life of testimony
 - Not a sinless life, not a life without failings
 - But a life that never gives up trying to please Christ, seeking godliness rather than the world's pleasures
 - Paul ends praising the Father who is the King above all: Who alone possesses the eternal life we seek and Who dwells in unapproachable light
 - This is further proof that no man has entered the presence of the Father, not even those who have entered the throne room
 - The only member of the Godhead ever to be seen is Christ

- With that Paul moves to instructions to the final group in this letter: the rich

1Tim. 6:17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

1Tim. 6:18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,

1Tim. 6:19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

- Paul tells Timothy to instruct those rich Christians on how to see their riches
 - And quite pointedly Paul refers to them as “rich in this present world”
 - The statement reminds the rich that their riches won’t necessarily follow them into eternity
 - In fact, it suggests that they won’t, unless the rich adopt the right attitude concerning their wealth
 - This truth is in keeping with Jesus’ words I read earlier
 - The problem with wealth is the way it influences our hearts
 - A rich Christian will have a stern test in life
 - Will they live in such a way that they protect their wealth or will they share it?
 - Protecting it in a miserly way may bring condemnation
 - Ironically, the richer a Christian is today, the more likely they will give cause for God to deny them wealth in the kingdom because of their love of their money
 - So Paul reminds the wealthy not to take their position of wealth for granted
 - They may soon find themselves in the kingdom on the opposite end of the economic spectrum
- To avoid that fate, Paul tells them not to act in the conceited, prideful way of the false teachers
 - They must retain humility and a disaffection for their own wealth

- They aren't required to give it all away or live as if they don't possess it
- But they must see it as a tool, something given to them to the benefit of the kingdom
- Not as a private reserve to be hoarded and used selfishly
- In this way, wealth is a severe test of any heart
- Furthermore, they may not place their hope in their riches
 - Even a believer can make this mistake
 - Though they are saved by grace through a true faith in Jesus Christ, nevertheless they live as if their hope is in their wealth
 - They make every decision in life based on how it impacts their wealth or the use of it
- This is placing hope in the uncertainties of wealth
 - There is a reason we say "easy come, easy go"
 - One day we may wake up to find we've become wealthy and are in need of nothing
 - If on that day we begin to fix our hope for the future on that wealth, then what will we do when the wealth is gone
 - The world is filled with stories of wealth made and lost, and none of those ever thought they would lose their wealth until it happened
- The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, Paul says
 - He supplies us richly with all good things
 - So place your hope in the One who supplies, not in the supply He may give you
 - For if you come to worship the provision instead of the provider, you can expect Him to remove that provision to make the point
- So what are the rich to do with their riches?
 - Paul says in v. 18 Timothy should first instruct the rich to be rich in good works

- If you have plenty of money, then use the freedom it offers to spend your time serving the body of Christ
- Don't let wealth make you aloof, unapproachable
- Instead, be known as a servant to the needy
- Secondly, be generous and ready to share
 - Isn't it obvious that if God has given someone an excess of wealth, that person should share it liberally?
 - And not just with the church through tax-deductible donations
 - But with others in the body of Christ directly, as gifts, preferably without drawing attention to yourself
 - Do these things as service to Christ and in a thankful heart for what you've received
- A rich person who lives in these ways, seeking to please Christ, will be storing up for themselves treasure for the future, even as they take hold of life indeed
 - Again, the one who seeks to gain his life here will lose it, as Jesus said
 - But the one willing to lose it, will gain life eternal
 - The rich person who hoards wealth, will know regret when they see the result counted in their eternal blessings
 - While the rich person who is generous, sharing and rich in good work will store up a treasure that cannot perish
 - This lifestyle requires a life of faith: willing to fix hope in the promises of God over the false security offered in material wealth
 - It's a test that many can't pass
 - It's a reason to wish not to be rich
 - But for those Christians with wealth, it's a tremendous opportunity to glorify Christ
 - Which Paul says will result in the rich Christian taking hold of life indeed
 - He means that the Christian who embraces this principle will discover what it truly means to live for Christ

- Whatever joy you may find with fancy houses and big cars, yachts, vacation homes, gold and silver...it isn't truly joy
- It's an imitation that disappoints
- Taking hold of life, indeed of meaning and joy, is found in knowing Christ, pursuing Christ, serving Christ
 - Put everything you have to work in that regard
 - Setting your eyes on eternity
- With that Paul ends the letter with a benediction and final charge

[1Tim. 6:20](#) O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge" – [1Tim. 6:21](#) which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.
Grace be with you.

- This is one of only two Pauline letters that don't end with a final greeting
 - It stays "all business" to the very end
 - Still, Paul adds an endearing, personal touch by saying "O Timothy"
 - Clearly Paul was concerned about the pressures Timothy faced
 - He dearly wants Timothy to succeed and to avoid the traps around him
 - To do that, Paul gives Timothy two final pieces of advice
 - First, guard what has been entrusted to him
 - Guard the flock, guard his spiritual gift, guard his testimony
 - Guarding implies vigilance, that is Timothy has to stay alert, aware of the threats
 - Secondly, he must avoid getting sucked into the empty chatter and opposing arguments of the false teachers
 - Remember, these false teachers were not merely ignorant or uninformed
 - They were willfully misleading others

- So there was no point in engaging them in a debate
- Instead, Timothy must just avoid them altogether
- Unfortunately, many apologetic teachers overlook this advice
 - They become embroiled in unhelpful debates with men who are not sincerely seeking the truth
 - I follow Paul's principle and so does our ministry
 - We will not engage in debates nor will we answer challenges from those who demonstrate an unteachable heart, or who ignore scripture
- Those who fail in this regard may find themselves entrapped by the very false doctrines they attempted to refute
 - Which is why Paul says some who have professed the truth have thus gone astray
 - This was Paul's concern for Timothy, which explains his strong charge to guard himself
 - And by God's grace, Timothy stood in this way