

## Shepherds & Servants 17

Pursue Righteousness

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Memory Verses: 1 Timothy 6:11

### MANUSCRIPT

#### Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

We are coming to an end of our time in 1 Timothy. We've seen a lot of what is required of Spiritual Shepherds and Sacrificial Servants specifically. And we've also seen what is required of all believers in general.

There is a key quality that defines a believer's lifestyle. Rather than pursuing pleasure, or popularity, or prosperity like the world, they pursue righteousness in the likeness of Christ. Anyone can claim to be a Christian but the proof is most likely in the pudding. Do they live a life where pursuing the righteousness of Christ is at the forefront or are they clearly pursuing some other avenue. Those who are in Christ have been changed by Christ. **2 Corinthians 5:17** tell us that we are new creations in Christ. **Galatians 5:22-23** tells us what the spirit of that new life will look like. **James 1:22** reminds us that we can't just hear the word but must actually put it into practice. And **Romans 12:1** reminds us that as true believers we have had our minds transformed to pursue God's will.

The bottom line is this: **if we haven't been changed we haven't been saved**. And the changed pursue righteousness! Elders and Deacons pursue righteousness. Covenant Partners pursue righteousness. The church pursues righteousness. Let's examine our main passage for this morning in **1 Timothy 6:11-16**. This morning we are going to see several ways we must pursue righteousness and through it all we will recognize that... **In pursuing righteousness we keep the testimony of Christ unstained!**

#### Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to recognize here is that... **We Have Positional Righteousness Through Christ's Unstained Godliness**. Let's look again at **vs.11**. **In pursuing righteousness we are to pursue godliness**. Godliness is an interesting word. It's a word that shows us our need to be like God and yet we all know that, no matter how hard we try to, we will never be able to, at least not in this lifetime. No matter how far we grow in our sanctification, our glorification will not be on this side of eternity. So, to truly be godly, to pursue godliness, means to pursue that which makes you as godly as you can be, namely salvation in Christ.

And in Christ we are given justification. A term which simply means that we are no longer looked upon in our sin as unrighteous. If we

have accepted salvation in Christ through faith and repentance of our sin, we are now covered by the blood of Christ and when God looks at you he doesn't see your sin, he sees Christ's blood and declares you righteous as Christ is righteous. Christ's righteousness gives us positional righteousness. Positionally you are godly. **Positionally you are righteous**. Not because of what you've done or who you are but because of what He's done and who He is! This is why, as **vs.12** says, we "take hold of the eternal life we were called to." We take hold of our positional righteousness because God has desired to give it to us. He has called us to it!

Why is God able to give salvation... even to us who don't deserve it? This passage tells us. Look at **vs.15** First, he is blessed. He is blessed beyond all others in the whole universe. He is full of blessing, majesty, and greatness. Secondly, He is sovereign. Meaning, He is fully in control of all things. All actions in this world are because of his providence. Third, He is the master of everything as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Moving along into **vs.16**, fourth we see that he alone has immortality. He has always been and will always be. Fifth, he is holy, set apart, fully other. This is described by the phrase, "He dwells in unapproachable light." Sixth, he has an eternal dominion in Heaven. Why does Paul mention all of this? Simple. **When we are given justification, and the righteousness of Christ, through salvation, we are brought into alignment with the image of God**. We clearly are none of these things, and yet we are able to somehow sit positionally in it!

And how is all of this possible? Because, as **vs.13** tells us, Christ stood unstained in his confession, and eventually remained unstained in his sacrifice. And as **vs.14** tells us, one day our positional righteousness will be made fully perfect when Christ comes again to claim His own.

So what is our response to this? What is our response to the fact that we have positional righteousness in Christ and are aligned with the fullness of God and thus have eternal salvation? **Verse 16**, honor! We give God honor through the way we live our lives. As **vs.12** says, "take hold" of righteous living. As **vs.14** says, "keep the commandment unstained!" Meaning, live in a way that the new covenant in Christ is proven true. As our main point states, **In pursuing righteousness we keep the testimony of Christ unstained**.

The second thing we need to recognize is that... **We Pursue Practical Righteousness Through Christ's Example of Unstained Goodness**. So we sit in positional righteousness, and our response to that gift is to pursue practical righteousness. Again, let's look at **vs.12-14**. Paul charges us to maintain a good witness by keeping the commandment unstained. Again, the commandment here is the new covenant in Christ. The testimony of Christ is vitally determined by our walk. **The reputation of THE faith is highly determined by our faith lived out!**

How can we live out a true faith that reflects who Christ is? Simple, we mimic the way Christ lived. Our passage shows us what that looks like starting in **vs.11**. First, flee the love of money. The things we must flee are the things we talked about last week, a love of money. Of course Jesus did this throughout his whole life. In **Matthew 4** when Jesus was tempted with all the kingdoms of the world he told the Devil to take a hike. When approached by the Rich Young Ruler, Jesus told him to sell everything and follow him. Clearly Jesus was not interested in chasing the riches of this world and neither should we.

Secondly, in pursuing righteousness we must pursue faith! Again, Jesus is the greatest example. Everything he did was based upon his faith in his father. Considering that Jesus has all power and did not need to depend on anything, makes this all the more important. Jesus, who needed no faith, had the most real faith and modeled it everyday. He would pray constantly, he would seek God's will consistently. Even as he approached death, in the garden, he said these famous words. "Let this cup pass from me, but yet not my will but your will be done." Therefore, in the likeness of Christ we must, as **vs.12** says "fight the good fight of the faith." We fight on our knees. We fight in dependence on Christ. We must pursue faith.

Thirdly, in pursuing righteousness we must pursue love! Again, Jesus is the only example worthy of turning to in this regard. First, according to **vs.13**, he created us. Secondly, he died for us. And lastly, in **vs.14**, he is coming back for us to take us to eternal glory! Again, not because of anything we've done, but simply because he has chosen us in unconditional love. Of course we aren't able to love others in this fashion, but we can sacrificially love others by meeting their needs, caring for their burdens, and interceding in prayer for them. Love is selfless.

Fourthly, in pursuing righteousness we must pursue gentleness. Gentleness means being slow to anger. It means being kind and gracious. It means being merciful. It means being wise in hard decisions. Of course, Jesus is our example. Look at **vs.13**, in how he humbled himself in the presence of Pilate.

The bottom line is clear. We pursue righteous living in following the example of Christ. We flee the love of money, we pursue a deeper faith, we pursue a greater love, we pursue a humble gentleness so that we can bring Christ glory and draw people to Him! And we do this, according to **vs. 14** until Christ's return. In pursuing righteous living we don't get to take a break from pursuing righteousness, we don't take vacations from keeping the commandment unstained. This is a life long pursuit for the sake of Christ's glory! This is how we honor him! **In pursuing righteousness we keep the testimony of Christ unstained.**

**Righteousness Is Testified In The Presence of Many Witnesses.** Your confession is only as good as your positional righteousness in Christ exhibited by your practical righteousness for Christ. You can say you are a Christian all day, but that doesn't make you a Christian. You can say you love Jesus, but if your life doesn't promote a love for Christ you are actually trouncing upon his good name. Your confession is only as good as the way you live your life!

Why? Because you are being watched. According to **vs.12**, you are being watched by a group of witnesses. Everywhere you go, everything you do, is being evaluated. Is your witness to them that of faith, love, and gentleness, or is it the opposite. Is your confession a lie or does it point to the truth of Christ?

### Application

Some practical things to consider when it comes to your testimony. First, does your confession point to the salvation of Christ first or your works first? Meaning, is your confession all about how good you are or about how good God is? Second, is your confession of Christ's salvation accompanied by a testimony of righteous acts? Third, is your confession of Christ's salvation accompanied by a life unstained by sin or selfishness? Again, your testimony reflects upon Christ. Does it reflect poorly? If so, something has to change. **In pursuing righteousness we keep the testimony of Christ unstained.**

### Conclusion

In conclusion let me ask you three things? Do you know that you have been saved by the atoning blood of Christ by repenting of your sins and placing your trust in him as your Lord? Does your life exhibit this through godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness? If you never told someone you were a Christian, would there be enough evidence to prove you were one? Is your testimony truly righteous? Meaning, does your life of righteousness lineup with your confession of Christ? **In pursuing righteousness we keep the testimony of Christ unstained.**

The last thing we need to recognize is that... **Our Confession of**