



SUNDAY EVENING

AT BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

Title: Fight the Good Fight

Passage: 1 Timothy 1:18-20

Speaker: Pastor Dan Preston

Introduction: When the first major battle of the Civil War was fought at Bull Run, many politicians and socialites from Washington, D.C., treated it like a picnic. Certain the battle would be quick and painless, they packed baskets and watched from the hills—until the smoke, chaos, and terror of real war sent them running for their lives, leaving their comforts behind. They had mistaken a war for entertainment. In much the same way, many Christians treat the Christian life as something casual and comfortable, when Scripture tells us plainly: we are in a war. That is why Paul writes to Timothy with a clear command: “Fight the good fight”—not a petty or carnal fight, but a holy warfare for truth, holiness, and souls.

I. Our Charge from the Commander (Verse 18)

A. The Personal Nature of the Charge

Every believer is a soldier. Every one of us has been enlisted the moment we were saved.

“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” (2 Timothy 2:3)

B. The Confirmation of the Call



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If God has saved you, gifted you, and placed you in a body of believers, He has given you a calling.

Are we content to be spectators on the hillside, watching the battle from a distance? Or are we willing to stand in our place in the ranks of God's army?

God did not save you to sit; He saved you to serve and to stand.

II. The Nature of the Good Warfare (Verse 18)

A. The War We Are In

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world..."
(Ephesians 6:12)

There is an invisible war between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness.

"...charge some that they teach no other doctrine." (1 Timothy 1:3)

It is not unloving to oppose those lies; it is unloving not to.

B. The Bad Fights We Must Avoid

"Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying..." (1 Timothy 1:4)

"But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes." (2 Timothy 2:23)

If the goal is to prove that we are right rather than that Christ is worthy, it's probably a bad fight.

We need wisdom to lay down the bad fights so we can pour our energy into the good fight.

III. The Weapons of the Good Warfare (Verse 19a)



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A. Faith - The Truth We Believe and Trust

We must hold faith. We dare not be fuzzy where God has been clear.

If we let go of truth in our minds or trust in our hearts, we are disarming ourselves in the middle of a war.

B. A Good Conscience - The Life We Live

A good conscience is a clean conscience—one that doesn't constantly condemn because sin has been confessed and forsaken; one that stays sensitive to the Spirit's conviction instead of hardened by repeated disobedience.

Fighting the good fight is not only about what we teach; it's about how we live.

IV. The Tragedy of a Shipwrecked Life (Verses 19-20)

A. How Shipwreck Happens

Shipwrecks happen when you ignore the warnings—when you sail too close to the rocks, or too far from the lighthouse.

B. The Severe Mercy of Discipline

“...unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved...” (1 Corinthians 5:5)

To be “delivered unto Satan” means to be put outside the protective fellowship of the local church.

The goal of discipline is restoration, not destruction.
Three Sobering Warnings:

1. None of us are above shipwreck.



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2. Church discipline is not unloving; it's God's design.
3. If you are drifting, turn back now.

As long as you are breathing, there is hope.

If you will repent, confess your sin, and throw yourself on the mercy of Christ, He can rescue what looks like a wreck and bring it safely into harbor.

Conclusion:

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:" (2 Timothy 4:6-7)

The goal at the end of the race is not to be remembered for size, success, or keeping everyone comfortable, but for faithfulness—having fought the good fight and kept the faith. This passage makes clear the call of God: believers are not spectators but soldiers, commanded to engage in the good warfare, to hold fast to faith and a good conscience, and to guard against spiritual shipwreck by responding to conviction. In a world that treats life like a picnic, God is raising up faithful servants who understand the reality of the battle and who will fight the good fight with humility, love, courage, and truth, so that by His grace it may be said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."



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