

THE FINAL CHARGE TO THE CHURCH

1 Timothy 6:11-21

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October 22, 2017

Note: The following are the pastor's notes used in preaching this message. This is not a complete, word-for-word transcription of what was preached. These notes serve as a companion to the complete message, which is available by listening to the audio version. Bible quotes are primarily from ESV.

INTRODUCTION: IT ALL COMES TO THIS

Today we draw our series in 1 Timothy to a conclusion, as Paul will sign off at the end of our text in 1 Timothy 6:11-21: "Grace Be With You All." And really, if you stop to think back on this letter, it's been grace all the way through...[summarize book]...As Paul wraps up the letter, he issues his final charge.

I. A CHARGE TO THE MAN OF GOD (1 Timothy 6:11-16)

For Paul to call Timothy "man of God" is to place him in extremely lofty company (Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Elisha). He was being called to a high standard.

A. The commands to keep (1 Timothy 6:11-12)

1. Flee these

Flee is *fuego*, where we get the English term *fugitive*. Literally, run for your life from the desire to be rich (1 Timothy 6:9) and from the love of money (1 Timothy 6:10).

2. Chase these

These things to pursue are practical, not positional, in nature.

- *Righteousness* here means *to do what is right*.
- *Godliness* is the internal motive that drives our righteousness.
- The word for *faith* in a list like this usually means *faithfulness* or *trust in God*.
- *Love* is *agape* here, and is the kind of love for God that overflows in love for our neighbor.
- *Steadfastness* means *to come under*, and refers to the internal strength to bear up under trials.
- *Gentleness* means power under control.

3. Fight well

Fight is the word *agonidzomai*, where we get the word *agonize* from. The man of God is willing to agonize for various things (Colossians 1:28-29; 2:1; 4:12; 2 Timothy 4:7). Here, God's man agonizes for the faith. *The faith* refers to that body of doctrine that reflects the gospel and the Word from which its taken.

4. Hold on

Apparently Timothy had confessed the possession of this eternal life before the church, whether in his baptism testimony or ordination to ministry (cf. 2 Timothy 1:6). Your confession of eternal life in Christ can bring great assurance of your possession of it.

B. The command to keep (1 Timothy 6:13-14)

The word *charge* is being used for the first time since 1 Timothy 1:3, forming a kind of envelope that points up the emphasis of this charge. The command, by almost every commentator's position, is synonymous with the Word. So, the beginning of the letter: stop false teaching; the end of the letter: keep the Word...God is there, and He is watching to make sure Timothy keeps the Word.

1. In God's presence

a. The life-giving God

This refers to God as Creator (Genesis 1). God is a bursting-with-life God, and this Lord of life is watching, so keep the Word!

b. The life-earning Savior

In the presence also of God as Redeemer (Matthew 27:11; John 18:37). God the life-giver and the life-earner is watching, so keep the Word!

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2. **In your purity**—unstained and blameless
 3. **Until Christ's appearance**—Timothy was to remain faithful all his life, until his death or His Savior's arrival.

C. **The King of the command (1 Timothy 6:15-16)**

Because of the character of God Himself, because of His attributes, Paul bursts out into doxology. The King of the command—the King of the Word, is He...

1. **Who is blessed**

Of course He is! Look at the majesty of this God...

2. **Who is sovereign**

Literally, *monos dunastays*—one dynasty.

3. **Who is eternal**

Literally, “who alone possesses immortality.” He can never die.

4. **Who is holy**

That is, He dwells in unapproachable light. This is visible holiness—blinding purity.

5. **Who is invisible**

He dwells in visible, blinding all-light, but you can't see Him at all. God is Spirit (John 4).

6. **To whom all honor is due**

This internal respect and reverence pops up again in this letter—first widows, then elders, then bosses, but most emphatically for God Himself.

7. **To whom all power belongs**

Any strength to sustain us comes from God.

II. **A CHARGE TO THE RICH IN THIS LIFE (1 Timothy 6:17-19)**

Christian prosperity is not an oxymoron, to be sure, but there are dangers to beware of.

A. **The dangers (1 Timothy 6:17)**

1. **Beware self-exaltation!**

The word in the Greek is a compound term, combining one word for “exalt” with “one's mind.”

2. **Beware self-security!**

We are not to hope in our wealth, which is so uncertain (Proverbs 23:4-5). The rich are to hope in God with the rest of God's family.

B. **The responsibilities (1 Timothy 6:18)**

1. **Be rich...in good works!**

Paul says that those who have wealth should be active in good works, just like everyone else.

2. **Be lavish...in generosity!**

Apparently there were some rich folks at Ephesus who thought, “I'm fine to serve, but I'm not going to give.”

C. **The motive (1 Timothy 6:19)**

This is a dazzling incentive for the rich here in 1 Timothy 6:19, which Paul took almost verbatim from Jesus, in Matthew 6:19-20. Additionally, those who are generous take hold of that which is truly life!

III. A CHARGE TO TIMOTHY (1 Timothy 6:20-21)

A. Obey this command: guarding the deposit (1 Timothy 6:20)

The deposit of the truth of God's Word generally and the gospel of Christ specifically is what is to be guarded with Timothy's life. How?

B. How to obey

1. Avoid the controversies

2. Avoid the contradictions

That's one great way to guard the deposit—don't soil it with the stuff false teachers bring to it.

C. Why to obey: swerving from the faith (1 Timothy 6:21)

Paul is re-stating what he said from the beginning in 1.6: if you don't avoid this, you swerve from the faith.

CONCLUSION #1: DID TIMOTHY HEED THE CHARGE?

This is the final charge from Paul to Timothy in this letter. Did Timothy heed the charge? Church history tells us that Timothy would go on to pastor the church at Ephesus for another 30+ years after this letter, laboring there with the apostle John as well. Timothy would eventually die guarding the deposit Paul had entrusted to him, being clubbed to death in Ephesus after protesting a debauched festival procession down the main street. He did indeed fight the good fight of faith, and took hold of the eternal life to which he was called. Paul's final charge to Timothy was most emphatically not wasted.

CONCLUSION #2: ALL THIS IS BY GRACE

Surprisingly, though the epistle is addressed to just one person, Timothy, the *you* is plural here. Thus we're confident that Paul intended this letter for the church at Ephesus, as well as any other church where this letter has been read and preached and studied, for the grace that began the letter now concludes it as a blessing for *the entirety of God's family*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Context

- What was the main point of the passage immediately before this week's passage?
- Are there logical or thematic connections to the passage from this week's sermon?

Observation

- Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text?
- Are there key connecting words (for, therefore, but, because) that indicate the logical flow of the passage?
- What is the main point or points? What supporting points does the author make?
- What surprises are there in the flow of the argument?

Meaning

- How does this text relate to other parts of the book?
- How does the passage relate to Jesus?
- What does this teach you about God?

Application

- What does this teach you about you?
- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
- Is there some attitude you need to change?
- How does this passage call on you to change the way you live?