

“KEEPING FAITH”

1 Timothy 1:18-20

(Part 1)

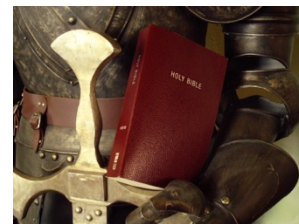
Theme: *Our adherence to the faith results in a pure life and a good conscience.*

Introduction: On Veterans Day, our Country rises in ovation for those among us, past and present, who have served to protect us from all enemies, foreign and domestic. The service rendered by these men and women required sacrifice, devotion, and discipline. Each soldier, sailor, airman, or Marine focused on the task assigned, followed orders, and collectively have been used to the end that our freedoms remain intact. It is intolerable for a person on active duty to be derelict, insubordinate, or AWOL. There is an expectation of each one that they do their duty or die trying.

Too often, Christians think of the Christian life in terms like gentle, lowly, meek, tolerant, affirming, positive and so on. Yet we are called to contend for the faith as the enemy of our souls assaults us from every possible direction to the point where there is no defined front – only a constant struggle against spiritual forces of wickedness threatening to overrun us from every side – cp. [*Ephesians 6:12*](#). We are not constantly being outflanked, we are surrounded. These spiritual forces are often personified in those who give place to the Devil and follow his influences to undermine the Word of God – cp. [*2 Timothy 2:25-26*](#)

Our passage today is a call to arms. It is commission to engage in the conflict. We are not a voluntary army, but a conscripted people who are to engage in the conflict against compromise, corruption, and false doctrine. Our task is to engage wherever we are using the whole counsel of God – in our text called “the faith” – and defend the Church. Paul informs us that in this effort, ***“our adherence to the faith results in a pure life and a good conscience.”***

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| <p>I. The Conflict for Faith – 1:18</p> <p>II. The Conscience in Faith – 1:19</p> <p>III. The Correction of Faith – 1:20</p> |
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I. THE CONFLICT FOR FAITH – 1:18

A. The Preparation for the Conflict

1. Because of the schemes, trickery, fairs, and counterfeiting utilized by Satan and his forces, the people of God must be diligent to know Christ intimately through the careful study of God’s Word.
2. In our text, Paul tells Timothy that as he engages in the struggle against false teachers, he must remember how he has been prepared – ***“This***

command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you ...”

3. The option does not exist for Timothy to conscientiously object to engaging in the struggle – he received a commission – *“This command”* [παραγγελία] – refers to an order as in the military; we are reminded of the general responsibility that we each have in the struggle against the enemy – we are called to arms.
 - a) *We have already seen that one of Paul’s expectations of Timothy is that he would stop the heretical teachers from further ability to teach.*
 - b) *It also includes Paul’s message in the epistle generally – the entirety of what he writes under the direction of God’s Holy Spirit.*
4. This obligation was something Paul personally *“entrust[ed] to ... Timothy”* [παρατίθημι] – to place something before Ousomeone for safekeeping; the obligation Paul gave to Timothy was that he would essentially defend what Satan desires to undermine or nullify.
5. It is apparent by this text that Timothy had been officially “ordained” or set apart for the gospel ministry – similar to the way that we have done with the young men who have come through GBC in our Residencies or Internships and like Victor will experience in a few short weeks.
6. Paul states that this charge to defend the truth is *“in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you ...”*
7. *“prophecies”* [προφητεία] – refer to the authoritative declarations of godly men who speak God’s word either by way of revelation (new truth and predictions) or reiteration of truth (exposition of God’s Word).
8. Here the term refers to those affirmations given by **the utterance of one who interprets divine will or purpose**¹ and would refer to this commission to ministry Timothy has received – cp. *1 Timothy 6:12*.
9. None of you ought to interpret this to exempt you from the fight – thinking since you haven’t been officially commissioned into the ministry you should leave it to those who have been – cp. *Jude 3; Philippians 1:29-30*.

B. The Protection in the Conflict (... by them ...)

1. As we are prepared for the conflict through the ministry of God’s Word, fellowship with God’s people, and the strengthening of God’s Spirit, we are to rely on these resources for our engagement in the conflict to defend the Gospel – *“... that by them you fight the good fight”*

¹ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 889.

2. Paul reminds us that the resources for the conflict are not physical, innate, or borrowed – they are personally supplied to each of us through the Holy Spirit who indwells us – cp. [2 Corinthians 10:3-4](#).
3. It is the “sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” we wield in our conflict with the falsehood, errors, and corruptions that Satan seeks to perpetrate upon the church – cp. [Ephesians 6:13-17](#).
 - a) *We read God’s Word to know what it says.*
 - b) *We study God’s Word to understand the ramifications*
 - c) *We listen to God’s Word preached to surrender to its authority*
 - d) *We memorize God’s Word to have access to it in moments of conflict*
 - e) *We discuss God’s Word with others to gain greater perspective*
 - f) *We apply God’s Word, so we are not forgetful hearers.*
 - g) *We defend God’s Word to preserve its integrity, purity, and power.*

C. The Push in the Conflict

1. As a result of the immersion in the truth, when falsehood is encountered, we are among the elite soldiers in the conflict that do not merely stand our ground, we take ground from the enemy – “... *fight the good fight.*”
2. “good” [καλός] – refers to what is intrinsically noble, virtuous, or praiseworthy and worthy of our calling and commission.
3. “fight” [στρατεία] – is not a reference to a skirmish or a singular battle, but to a campaign, or expedition and refers to a lifelong war we are engaged in for the glory of Christ Jesus and the prevailing victory of the Gospel over sin and the world in the struggle over the souls of men – [John 12:31; 1 John 3:8](#).
4. Engaging in the victory over the enemy is the great joy of the believer who Jesus is pleased to use to accomplish His purposes:
 - a) *Christ overcame Satan and his demonic host at the cross when He “disarmed” them – [Colossians 2:14-15; Hebrews 2:14-15](#).*
 - b) *Christ will fulfill the promise given when sin entered the world and crush Satan -allowing His ultimate work on the cross to squish the head under the powerful feet of His Church - [Genesis 3:15; Romans 16:20](#).*
 - c) *Knowing the power the Church possesses as it wields the truth of God’s Word, He flees from a believer who resists Him with it - [1 John 4:4; James 4:7](#).*
 - d) *It is in this way that the Holy Spirit uses the Church to restrain sin in this world – by thwarting the advance of wickedness beyond God’s purposes – cp. [2 Thessalonians 2:7](#).*

5. Jesus wins the war in this world, and we have the privilege of being part of the host used by Christ to accomplish His victory in this world.
6. This is the “*good fight*” that we are to “*fight*” to the glory of Jesus Christ and the advancement of the Gospel.

So What?

1. **Opportunities** Our study of God’s Word must not be merely for immediate consumption but must include fortifying our souls for the day of conflict.
2. **Our spiritual struggles must be waged using God’s Word - not opinions, philosophies, or conventional wisdom!**
3. **Our victory is certain in Christ Jesus – therefore join the battle knowing that in the end we win!**

Our adherence to the faith results in a pure life and a good conscience.

Part 2

Introduction: The stakes remain critical – believers have always been under the constant barrage by the incendiaries launched by the besieging enemy of our souls. The conflict in which we are embroiled is essentially a struggle going far beyond our own participation in it. It extends beyond us both spatially and temporally. It extends into the heavenlies with even angelic forces that are waging a spiritual battle over the affairs of men with demonic forces directing national policy and pursuits in conflict with the angels for the welfare of God’s people. It also extends beyond our lives – having been started by Satan’s rebellion against God and his corrupting influences in Adam and Eve. It has fiercely waged since then and continues to be an engagement despite the doom of our enemy that Christ has guaranteed. He has taken the primary role of conqueror in our conflict – cp. ***John 16:33; Romans 8:37; 1 Corinthians 15:57.***

Last time we were looking at our responsibilities to engage in the Conflict re: Faith. We saw 1) The Preparation for the Conflict as we are oriented to God’s Word, and 2) The Protection in the Conflict through the use of God’s Word; and finally, 3) The Push in the Conflict wherein we both defend God’s Word from corruption, but also advance God’s Word through our faithfulness to it. We are assured that we will overcome because of the victory of Christ over Satan.

Review above.

II. THE CONSCIENCE IN FAITH – *1:19*

A. The Criterion for a Virtuous Conscience

1. Paul continues to refer to the circumstances under which we are to wage war in the defense of the truth.
2. We are to do so while *“keeping faith and a good conscience”*
3. *“keeping faith”* [ἔχων πίστιν] - refers to having possession of something; or to hold onto, grip something.
4. It speaks of clinging to the truth of the Gospel when the pressures of enemies are seeking to loosen your grip.
5. This is the opposite virtue of those who turn away from the faith - cp. 1 Timothy 1:6; 6:10, 21.
6. *“keeping faith”* involves:
 - a) *Limiting Our faith to what is revealed in Scripture - 1 Timothy 3:9.*
 - b) *Focusing on living out the truth - 1 Timothy 4:1-2.*
 - c) *Nourishing ourselves on it - 1 Timothy 4:6.*
 - d) *Teaching it to others - 1 Timothy 4:13.*
 - e) *Prioritize the faith above all else - 1 Timothy 6:10.*
 - f) *Guarding it as a stewardship to be handed down to others - 1 Timothy 6:20.*
7. When these priorities are preserved, one not only is able to be *“keeping faith,”* but it will also result in a pure life.
8. What we do - that is, the normal conduct of our lives - results from what we believe; morality follows doctrine.
9. Thus, when we are *“keeping faith,”* we will also be knowing *“a good conscience.”*

B. The Consequences of a Violated Conscience

1. When a person allows their conscience to become soiled because they have neglected the faith, it results in compromise, corruption, and even condemnation.
2. Departing from “the faith” will produce conduct that violates the moral coding or programming that truth produces in our lives.
3. As we *“fight the good fight”* by keeping the faith, we also keep a *“conscience”* that is *“good”* [ἀγαθός] - all that it should be.

- a) *Weak Conscience* - [1 Corinthians 8:10](#).
 - b) *Seared Conscience* - [1 Timothy 4:2](#).
 - c) *Defile Conscience* - [Titus 1:15](#).
 - d) *Dead Conscience* - [Hebrews 9:14](#).
 - e) *Evil Conscience* - [Hebrews 10:22](#).
4. Paul describes what happens when we lose ourselves from the faith and go against what we know to be true and defile our conscience - *“which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith”*
 5. *“rejected”* [ἀπωθέω] - describes the intentional “thrusting away” or “pushing aside;” it describes the deliberate repudiation of something.
 6. It refers to the *“good conscience”* that results from *“keeping faith”* - they didn’t think truth matters and as a result their lives became impure causing them to push aside *“a good conscience.”*
 7. The violation of the conscience then becomes a means by which the truth of the faith is further abandoned and a cyclonal, downward spiral results until one has *“suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.”*
 8. The idea of *“shipwreck”* is hotly debated as to what it means - it cannot refer to losing salvation as that would require a “works-based” salvation.
 9. It likely refers to the isolation away from the harbor of the Church that results from excommunication - even as Paul refers to in the following verse 20.
 10. This serves as a warning to believers concerning the intolerance of moral compromises which whittle away at one’s commitment to the absolutes of God’s Word.
 11. When people begin to conduct themselves in corrupt ways, the question that immediately surfaces is what about God’s Word have they rejected?

III. THE CORRECTION OF FAITH - [1:20](#)

A. The Gravity of the Correction

1. Paul immediately calls attention to two men in Ephesus who were *“shipwreck in regard to their faith.”*
2. He states: *“Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander ...”*
 - a) *“Hymenaeus”* - *evidently a leader in Ephesus whose life became a shambles due to an abandonment of the truth of the Gospel* - cp. [2 Timothy 2:17](#).
 - b) *“Alexander”* - *a man who was apparently an artisan with copper in Ephesus who initially professed Christ, but eventually turned from the truth and against Paul* - cp. [Acts 19:33](#); [2 Timothy 4:14](#).

THE EPISTLE OF 1 TIMOTHY

3. Paul informs Timothy that these two men have received the harshest consequences for their repudiation of the truth - “... *whom I have handed over to Satan ...*”
4. Timothy is being reminded of the extent we are to go in protecting the Gospel - we cannot tolerate those who are belligerent toward correction with the truth.
5. “... *handed over to Satan*” [παραδίδωμι] - refers to the process of excommunication from the fellowship of believers in the Church - cp. [1 Corinthians 5:5](#).
6. It means to “give up (over) to” - the sinner has chosen to side with the enemy against the Lord Jesus Christ, so we are to give them over to the enemy.
7. It is the practical application to what Jesus taught in [Matthew 18:15-17](#):
 - a) *Appeal to a sinning brother that he should repent*
 - b) *Approach the sinning brother again with a couple others who appeal to him again to repent*
 - c) *Announce to the church the need for the brother to repent so the appeal for repentance becomes churchwide*
 - d) *Acknowledge that the so-called brother is actually unregenerate and denounce his claim to eternal life.*
8. This last step is the point at which you exclude him from the protection of the Church and declare the sinner to be in Satan’s grasp.
9. This is essential to the purity of the church - cp. [1 Corinthians 5:6-7](#).

B. The Goal of the Correction

1. Although we are to do this for the purity of the Body of Christ, there is also the concern about the soul of the person in sin - “... *so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.*”
2. To claim to be a Christian and yet profane the sanctity of the Gospel and repudiate the Lordship of Christ Jesus is to “*blaspheme*” - cp. [v. 13](#).
3. The goal is to see the person recovered and restored to the fellowship of the saints and submission to Christ Jesus.

So What?

1. **There is an unbreakable link between what we believe and how we live.**
2. **It is necessary to concern ourselves with both WHAT we believe and HOW we live.**
3. **Given that Jesus has already won the victory, our defeat equates our**

independence from Him

- 4. Fighting the good fight by keeping the faith & a good conscience means we are to tenaciously cling to Christ!**

Our adherence to the faith results in a pure life and a good conscience.