

Title: Living life, knowing Jesus will return soon!

¹¹ But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³ I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and *before* Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴ that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, ¹⁵ which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.

¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

²⁰ O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— ²¹ by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.

Grace *be* with you. Amen.

Introduction

We have now arrived at the last passage in 1 Timothy.

We began the series in September 2018 and I have worked systematically through Paul's letter to a young Pastor called Timothy.

The reason that Paul wrote this letter was that false teachers had got into positions of leadership and were taking people in the wrong direction.

The false teachers had moved away from the teaching of Jesus Christ, and they were teaching other things. This caused disputes, arguments, and serious problems in the Church.

Paul wanted Timothy to have a good leadership structure in the Church.

This is why he mentioned the roles and qualifications of Elders and Deacons in Chapter 3.

This is why Paul taught about women not having authority over men, and backing it up with the Genesis account of Adam and Eve.

You may remember that I stopped the series here to expose what the **whole Bible has to say on the subject of women.**

This message was the **TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD AND NOT MY OPINION.**

Can I ask you to re-read the message carefully, pray about it and then re-read it again.

Some people have definitely misunderstood and misread the truth.

The Bible can be quite offensive if we have fixed ideas on subjects that Paul dealt with in his letter to Timothy.

God's word is ALWAYS for our good and the best that God has for us on this earth.

The question we need to ask is "**who is influencing my mind?**"

Is it God's word? or is it other people who either doubt God's word, or do not believe God's word?

There is only ONE TRUTH, and it is our job to discover it.

I have found that you need to read the whole Bible on any given subject or topic to discover the truth.

It is not enough to read God's word or even perhaps agree with God's word. It needs to be applied to our lives and the life of the Church here at O.I.C.

This is the difficult thing for many people.

Nevertheless, God never instructs us to do something that is impossible to do.

God always invites us to trust His word in all matters.

God always rewards FAITH in His word.

So Paul brings his letter to a close in chapter 6: v. 11-21.

In doing this he seeks to accomplish a number of things which will become evident as we go through the passage.

As we go through this passage, it should answer the following questions.

1. In what ways should the doctrine of the return of Jesus Christ shape and inspire our Christian ministry today?
2. How should Christians be using their money and wealth?
3. What is involved in guarding the gospel, and God's Word, the Bible, and why is it so important?

I am going to divide the passage into three sections.

1. Living our life in the light of Christ's return – 6: v. 11-16.

Paul tells Timothy that he must have a check up on his present position.

There are three words that are easy to remember in English.

These are "**Flee**" v. 11, "**Follow**" (pursue in N.K.J.) and "**Fight**" v.12.

- a) **Flee** – When Paul tells Timothy to flee from these things, he is talking about the false teachers and their behaviour.

In particular Paul is concerned by the way the false teachers had influenced people about money.

Paul was also concerned about the pride and greed of the false teachers.

This is highlighted in Chapter 6: v.4.

Paul tells Timothy **not to have any contact with false teachers**.

In fact, the Greek word where we get the English word flee means to run away and hide. (Greek= pheugo = fugitive)

So if we want to follow God's wisdom and instructions then we all need to keep completely separate from false teachers.

This is not just the Jehovah Witnesses, or other Christian style cults. These are also people who come into the Church with wrong teaching.

- b) **Follow** – Paul tells Timothy to follow or pursue a different route.

Paul tells Timothy to concentrate on 6 things. These are **righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness**.

It is worth spending a few moments on these six things because the Holy Spirit of God is wanting every Christian to do the same.

Firstly, we need to group righteousness and godliness together.

Righteousness means to do what is right in relation to both God and man.

It is a life-style marked by obedience to God's word.

When you obey God's word you are "Righteous".

God is saying to us all today – You have to always do the Right thing by God's Word.

This may not be easy, but it is the path of righteousness.

We have been studying 1 Timothy for 6 months. When we start obeying the teaching of this letter, rather than being critical about the truth, then in God's eyes we are righteous.

Godliness, which could be translated, "**God-likeness**", comes from an inner heart attitude. This is where we surrender our heart and desires to the heart of God.

We are god- like because God is working through us.

In Romans Chapter 12: v. 1 this is described as our reasonable service.

Romans 12: v. 1-2 in N.K.J.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

It is interesting to note in v.2 that that a renewed mind is needed because the world is always trying to pollute our minds.

This is the battle ground for truth, the mind.

In Timothy's case it was the false teachers that were doing the polluting.

Paul groups "faith and love" as he does in his other writings.

Faith is simply a confident trust in God for everything.

It involves loyalty to God for His power, purpose, plan, provision and His promises.

A faithful person trusts God to fulfill His word.

Love - This is God's "agape" love, or sacrificial love.

It is a love for God, a love for other believers and a love for those who are not yet believers in Jesus Christ.

Matthew 22: v.37-39. In N.K.J.

³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." ³⁸ This is *the* first and great commandment. ³⁹ And *the* second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

1 John 4: v. 7-11 in N.K.J.

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

It is not possible to love like God, unless His love is in us, and his love is released through us, to those outside.

This a challenge for all Christians, especially Pastors, who have to love everybody, especially those who do not love you or misunderstand your love for them.

Then Paul mentions perseverance and gentleness

Perseverance is sticking to the task of serving God, no matter what the cost or circumstances.

The Greek word for gentleness which also means kindness or meekness only appears here in the New Testament.

The understanding here is one of humility where a person recognizes that all blessing and success in ministry is God given and we take no credit for it ourselves.

c) Fight - The third thing that Paul told Timothy to do was "fight".

We are not talking about Sumo wrestling here!

Paul tells Timothy to fight the good fight of faith.

Timothy was told by Paul at the beginning of the letter to wage warfare.

1 Timothy 1: v. 18-20 in N.K.J.

¹⁸ This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, ¹⁹ having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, ²⁰ of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

The battle that Timothy was facing was the battle for correct doctrine.

2,000 years later we face the same battle, and that is the battle for correct doctrine.

All over the world today this battle continues, but there are too few Christians willing to fight this battle or to proclaim the truth of what God's word **ACTUALLY says.**

This is why organisations like "**Answers in Genesis**" actually exist.

They exist because the Church in general is not teaching the truth about Genesis Chapter one.

If you know anything about the last 100 years of Church history, you will have discovered that God has raised up Christian organisations to do the work that the Church should be doing.

Whenever the Church has been liberal on doctrine or not going out to preach the Gospel in evangelism, God has raised up people to do the job.

However, it is the Church that should be doing the work.

Let us fight the good fight of faith together at OIC.

Let us maintain correct doctrine, let us get out and proclaim the Gospel in the Cherry Blossom season. Let us be witnesses for Jesus in our work place and in our families.

If we make the effort, God will help us and bless our efforts.

After all it is HIS WORK.

1 Corinthians 15: v. 58. In N.K.J.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

After Paul's instructions to flee, follow and fight, Paul tells Timothy to **Take Hold, Take Heart and Take Comfort.**

Take Hold - Paul is telling Timothy in v.12 to lay hold or take hold of eternal life to which he is called and to which he professed to believe.

To take hold is to firmly grasp and understand.

Timothy had to fully understand that his future life was the most important thing to hold on to.

I received an e-mail two weeks ago from a prayer supporter, who used to be a doctor. She has supported us for about 34 years.

The e-mail said that she had been given 4-6 weeks to live because of cancer. This wonderful lady, about 60 years old, has let go of this life and **she is holding on to eternal life.**

In reality this lady let go of life a very long time ago personally in her heart and mind, but now she is doing it in reality and actual experience.

May I ask you a question?

What are you holding on to today?

Is it your job, your family, your money, your friends?

Or are you holding on to **Jesus for eternal life?**

The test comes, when we have to **obey the word of God and follow where Jesus leads.**

If we are not willing to obey, or follow Jesus, then that thing whatever it is, has got hold of us.

Take Heart - Paul says to Timothy, take heart, or be encouraged in your heart, because of Jesus Christ and all that He has been through.

Timothy was also to take heart and be encouraged because God was the giver of life to all things.

God would decide when Timothy died and when He would be raised from the dead.

Let us be encouraged too, because God is the giver of life to ALL THINGS.

Take comfort - (v. 14-15) Lots of babies grow up with either a comfort toy, blanket, or something that comforts them.

They don't usually stop being comforted by this object until they are about 8 or 9 years old.

In fact, some people keep their comfort teddy for life!

(Show slide of Mr. Bean's Teddy)

When I mentioned to my daughter Charis some years ago that I never had a teddy or comfort toy when I was growing up, she went out and bought me one. It is now known by my twin grandchildren, Daniel and Josiah, as **Grandad's Teddy. I use it on all my skype calls.**

(Show Mr, Bean's Teddy - live)

Why am I telling you this?

Well because our comfort toy or our comfort teddy, or blanket should be **the second coming of Jesus Christ.**

The second coming of Jesus Christ should give us the support and comfort that **one day Jesus will return and put everything right.**

Now that is better than cuddling Mr. Bean's Teddy, isn't it?

To know that Jesus will one day return, raise all believers from the dead, create a new earth, and we will live for eternity, without sin or any of its effects is something that must comfort us in the difficult times of life.

2. How the future should shape the present – v. 17-19.

In v. 17-19 Paul is demonstrating how our present lives should be shaped in view of eternity. Often it is money that is a test as to the degree that the gospel message has taken root in our lives.

Paul is saying that **how we use our money**, and our **attitude towards money**, can be a **guide as to our understanding of what the Gospel is really all about.**

The financial state of a Church can often be a reflection of the seriousness that its members regard the gospel.

Paul had already exposed the thinking of the false teachers towards money.

Now Paul wanted to make sure that **Timothy had the right attitude towards money.**

In v. 17 Paul tells Timothy to command the rich people in his Church not to do two things.

Timothy had to tell the rich people **not to behave with a superior attitude.** Rich people can often look down on poorer people and are tempted to think that they are better because of their money.

The danger with this attitude is to be proud.

It is very difficult for a wealthy person to have a humble heart.

Timothy was to command the rich people to seek a humble heart and not to trust in their riches. The danger with being rich is that you trust in your riches and not in God.

Proverbs 11: v. 28. (N.K.J.)

²⁸ He who trusts in his riches will fall,
But the righteous will flourish like foliage.

In the parable of the rich fool, Jesus warned of the foolishness of trusting in riches.

Luke 12: v. 16-21. (N.K.J.)

¹⁶ Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. ¹⁷ And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' ¹⁸ So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.'" ²⁰ But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' ²¹ "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

In v. 18 Paul tells Timothy to teach these rich people how to use their money.

The duty of all rich believers is to use their money and resources **to meet the needs of others.** The Apostle Paul gives us four phrases that define this responsibility.

The first phrase is **"let them do good"** - The original Greek language makes it clear that this goodness must come from the heart. It means doing what is noble and excellent.

In other words, the rich people must use their money wisely to do genuinely good things that will benefit other people.

I can think of lots of things that I could do in Japan if I was a very rich man.

So we move from a heart attitude to the practical application.

"rich in good works"

The meaning of this phrase is to be generous in your giving so that the needs of a particular Christian project or ministry are fully met.

Of course we need to support our own families first, and widows and those in real need in the Church. However, when those are met and we still have spare money then we need to continue to give from the abundant supply that God gives us.

Our God is a generous God and He gives us richly all things to enjoy.

“ready to give & willing to share”

If we are rich or have an overflow of our needs, it is a gift from God to use for His glory by giving it to others in need.

Of course we can't meet the world needs in poverty etc. but we can meet the needs of those whom the Holy Spirit guides us to.

Ready to give means being sensitive to the Holy Spirit in our giving.

We don't just throw money at any project or any person who comes asking for money.

Some of the most worthy causes are not even shared in public.

They are just prayed for and the Holy Spirit takes those prayers and somehow communicates it to praying people.

In v. 19 Paul urges the rich people to consider the end result of properly handling their riches. Basically by sharing their riches in this world, they are not getting a return for their investment in this life.

The return of their investment comes later when they get to Heaven.

Those rich people who invest in eternity have fully understood the gospel message.

3. How we should live today to protect the truth. – v. 20-21.

I would first of all like to quote from a respected preacher from the U.S.A.

His name is John MacArthur and he has been preaching God's word faithfully for 43 years. He preaches one verse at a time and has preached through every verse in the New Testament.

This is how he starts his comments on these two verses. (v. 20-21)

“Throughout history the true church has clung to the truth amid the swirling storms of persecution from without, and the insidious attacks of false teaching from within.

Countless thousands of martyrs have paid the ultimate price of death, rather than abandon or compromise the precious truth of God's word.

The Church today has received that legacy of truth from those who have gone before.

It is our responsibility to guard the truth, proclaim it, and hand it down unadulterated to those who will come after us.”

Today, the cry of our culture is that there is no ultimate truth. It is what you are happy about, that is truth to you.”

This worldly thinking has overflowed into the Church.

He goes on to say - “ The most severe crime against God is to miss-handle His revelation, thus portraying a false, idolatrous image of God to the world”.

May I quote from my own words now to say that the biggest danger to the Christian community all over the world is Bible College professors, Seminary Professors who **DO NOT TEACH TRUTH ABOUT GOD'S WORD.**

These people will argue away the Bible and replace it with something that will be more culturally acceptable in this present world.

Scripture, or as we call it, the Holy Bible, must be treated with **reverence and care because it is the self-revelation of God.**

Psalm 138: v.2 (in N.K.J.)

²I will worship toward Your holy temple,

And praise Your name

For Your lovingkindness and Your truth;

For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.

Psalm 119: v.161 (in N.K.J.)

¹⁶¹ Princes persecute me without a cause,
But my heart stands in awe of Your word.

Isaiah 66: v. 2. (in N.K.J.)

² For all those *things* My hand has made,
And all those *things* exist,"
Says the LORD.
"But on this *one* will I look:
On *him who is* poor and of a contrite spirit,
And who trembles at My word.

Application & Summary.

As we close 1 Timothy, the most important application for all of us is to **protect the truth of God's word against false teachers in the Church.**

We can only protect the truth in our own Church and in our own life.

How can we do this?

The first thing is to really know the Bible well and understand the Gospel of Salvation.

Most of the New Testament letters were written by Paul to correct wrong thinking and understanding about the truth of the Gospel.

The second thing is to study "**Bible Doctrine**".

Doctrine is basically what the Bible teaches on any given subject.

I still have my Bible Doctrine Book which actually started its life at the Moody Bible College in 1912, over 100 years ago.

(The Great Doctrines of the Bible by Evans)

The third thing is to understand the latest false teaching in our present culture and be able to defend yourself against it, using the Bible.

One thing that we can do is be more specific in our constitution about the things that we believe.

We need to be more specific on matters like creation, gay marriages and other issues that define the truth of what God's word teaches.

One of the false teachings today is "theistic evolution". This is a way to embrace evolution and continue to be a Christian.

Not only is this wrong and false teaching, but it is the biggest contributor to young people in America leaving the Church.

So let us study the TRUTH, BELIEVE THE TRUTH, APPLY THE TRUTH TO OUR LIVES AND DEFEND THE TRUTH AGAINST ERROR.

For this we need God's help.