



1 Timothy

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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. 1 Timothy 6:12

Paul has just previously exhorted Timothy with direct words of what he should do. He now continues to exhort him with strong and direct challenges to grow in the faith in a steadfast and hearty way. He begins with, "Fight the good fight of faith." Actually, there is an article in front of "faith," and so it should read, "Fight the good fight of the faith."

He is using the terminology of the Grecian games here, having done this at other times in his epistles. They were as well known then as the Olympics are for us today. In this expression, he is equating Timothy to a fighter on a set team (the faith) and he is encouraging him to fight that good fight on its behalf. The goal of this fight is to "lay hold on eternal life."

Again, there is an article in front of "eternal," and so it more rightly says, "lay hold of the eternal life." All people will live out an eternity somewhere. For those who are not in Christ, it will be an eternity, but not one of life. Instead, it will be one of corruption, but it will be eternal nonetheless. This is another reference to the Grecian games. Just as the crown of victory is held out to the victor to lay hold of, Timothy is exhorted to grasp this far more worthy prize. It is that which the victor will possess forever.

He then notes that it is this eternal life, "to which you were also called." There are two aspects to this. The first is spiritual and inward. It is the call of any believer, who then responds to that call – accepting Christ Jesus and coming to salvation. In Timothy's case, that call then transferred to a greater inner call to the ministry. In conjunction with this, there is also the outward calling which came by those who recognized his inward calling, confirming it in him as

a minister of the Lord. This is evidenced by the words, “and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

In these words, Paul could be referring to Timothy’s conversion and baptism, or he could be referring to his acceptance into the ministry. What is more likely is that Paul is thinking of both. He is looking at the entire process of Timothy’s conversion, growth, inner desire to serve, review by those who would eventually ordain him, and his actual ordination process. In this, Timothy confessed the good confession at various times, and certainly “in the presence of many witnesses.”

The entire thought is one which is united, from beginning to end. Paul is exhorting Timothy based on who he is as a believer, and the process of his walk in Christ which brought him to the position he now is in. He is to continue that good fight, and continue to lay hold of the eternal life as the prize which is set before him.

Life application: How willing are you to continue to lay hold of that which you already possess? Is it wearisome to grasp what Christ has offered and pursue it continuously? Or is it your heart’s desire to grab it, hold it fast, and not let it go for a second? Don’t be the faithless Christian that says, “Yes, I’m saved. I’m good with that.” Instead, let the fire burn inside you always. “Yes, I’m saved. I will do all I can to continue to work out this salvation with joy and zeal.” May it ever be so in your life.

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, 1 Timothy 6:13

Based on his words just given in the previous two verses, Paul now urges (or charges, as the word also signifies) “in the sight of God.” This is similar to the charge he gave in verse 5:21. Timothy is being reminded that everything which occurs, including Paul’s charge, is in the presence of God. He is there, He is watching, and Timothy is to remember this. He is to take to heart the words of instruction, and apply them steadfastly to his life and doctrine.

He then adds in a special thought concerning God. It is He “who gives life to all things.” God isn’t just a being who watches as things unfold, and who may direct things to happen as he sees fit, like a chess master. Rather, God is the Creator, and He is the Sustainer of all things. No matter what happens in this stream of time, God is there tending to the beings He created. For those who are in Christ, nothing can separate us from His eternal promises. Therefore, Timothy has no reason to fret over the awesome charges he has been given. He is simply to be obedient to them, and God will direct according to His wisdom.

Paul next adds in a second witness to his charge by saying, “and *before* Christ Jesus.” Jesus was named in the charge of verse 5:21 as well. Paul is not making a distinction between God and Christ Jesus by saying this, but rather is calling on the name of Christ Jesus as the Mediator between God and Man, and the One who is the example for man to God, and of God to man. As this is “in the sight of” Christ Jesus, it is an obvious reference to His omniscience and omnipresence. One cannot actually call a witness before a being which is not present, and who does not have knowledge of the witness.

From there, Paul says that it is “Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate.” There are two major views on what this actually means. The first is that He suffered under Pilate. He was a faithful witness to the truth of God, making His confession through the Cross of Calvary. In this confession is seen the love of the Father through His sacrifice. In this witness, there is found emulation in each faithful believer who is willing to follow Him even unto death. Revelation 1:5 gives this sense –

“...and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.”

The second view is that the witness was before Pilate. He had spoken to the leaders of Israel, claiming that He was the Messiah, the Son of God (John 19:7). They then explained this to Pilate who then interrogated Him further. Christ Jesus made the good confession which is then the “warrant for the truthfulness of Timothy’s confession” (Vincent’s Word Studies).

What is probably the case is that Paul is referring to the entire sum of what occurred. Both His words and His actions became a united confession “before Pontius Pilate.”

It is of note that the mentioning of Pontius Pilate here is similar to many other early Christian writings where the crucifixion is connected to him. For this reason, it is assumed that Paul’s words are a part of a liturgical confession of early Christian believers.

Life application: As a Christian, are you willing to stand on the truth of Christ’s words and deeds as your own charge, and as your own confession? To what point will you follow through with this? Even to death itself? We have been given the example in Christ. Are we willing to follow that example as it was given if called upon to do so? Let us determine now that no matter what we are faced with, we will confess Christ unflinchingly.

...that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing, 1 Timothy 6:14

These words are tied to the beginning of the previous verse – “I urge you in the sight of God ... that you keep this command without spot.” It is specifically speaking of this, but it may also be inclusive of the entire body of words thus far detailed since verse 11. Either way, Timothy is urged by Paul to hold fast to what has been commanded “without spot.” That means in an unsullied manner. The Greek word specifically speaks of that which is morally untainted. There should be no deviation from Paul’s charge, and it is to be carried out in a faithful and zealous manner. How good it would be if all of the Lord’s ministers acted in such a manner today!

Paul continues with the word “blameless.” This gives the sense of “above reproach.” There should never even be a hint that someone could bring a charge against him in light of the entire scope of his conduct. Any charge that may be brought would be found groundless. Such is the meaning of what Paul conveys now to Timothy.

With these points of character in mind, he then says that Timothy is to continue in this spotless and blameless state “until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing.” The word for “appearing” here is found only in Paul’s writings, and all of them are in the pastoral epistles with the exception of 2 Thessalonians 2:8. It is speaking of Christ’s literal appearance in a physical manifestation.

Timothy then stands representative of any and all ministers who would follow after him. They are to conduct themselves in the manner stated by Paul, and they are to guard against anything that would bring reproach upon themselves, and thus upon the church and the Lord Jesus Christ. They are to remain morally pure as they conduct their duties.

Life application: How sad it is that pastors and priests throughout the world have departed from the words of this admonition. Pulpits are filled with perverts, and immorality is found in what should be places of purity and holiness. How displeased with the church of today the Lord must be. To get an idea of what His attitude towards such behavior is, take the time to read the seven letters to the seven churches found in Revelation 2 & 3. A couple minutes of reading will show you the Lord’s displeasure at such things.

...which He will manifest in His own time, *He who* is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 1 Timothy 6:15

Paul, while giving Timothy a solemn charge, exhorted him to keep the commandment faithfully “until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing.” Now he continues with that thought by saying, “which He will manifest in His own time.”

It doesn’t say here that God will manifest Christ Jesus on a date when rapture date-setters say will occur. Paul leaves His manifestation up to God. There will be no hint of His appearing until

He chooses to appear, and it will be a specific moment in time which is completely at His choosing, and His alone. As Charles Ellicott states, “Here the language of fervid expectation is qualified by words which imply that in St. Paul’s mind then there was no certainty about the period of the ‘coming of the Lord.’ It depended on the unknown and mysterious counsels of the Most High.”

From there, Paul then states, “*He who* is the blessed and only Potentate.” The word here is *dunastés*. It is where our modern word “dynasty” comes from, and it signifies one who is a ruler or potentate. It is someone mighty in power. In this case, it means that only God is truly in such a position of rule and power, and that any other is below Him. The position He rules from is above all others. This is then explained by the words, “the King of kings and Lord of lords.”

Any king or lord on earth is subject to His true kingship and lordship. The scepters they possess are only because of His allowance. It is He who sets up kings and deposes them. No rule and no authority attains to His position, and all will acknowledge this rule when they are gathered before Him.

In the words found here and the coming verses, scholars attribute these titles to God directly. And rightly so (see verse 13). The next verse describes that which can only pertain to God. However, the same title, “King of kings and Lord of lords,” is given to Christ Jesus in Revelation 19:16 (and a modification of this term is found in Revelation 17:14, which is also speaking of Jesus). Thus, we have a clear and obvious reference to the Deity of Jesus Christ.

Life application: Paul has once again said, clearly and unambiguously, that which is stated in Acts 1:7 and in 1 Thessalonians 5:1. We are not privy to the timing of the Lord’s return. That information belongs to God alone, and it will not be made known until it occurs. Rapture date setters are disobedient to the word of God. Do you think God will tell them when Christ is coming when they are already in disobedience to His word? Nah, not going to happen.