

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 4TH, 2019 // 1 TIMOTHY

In 1 Timothy 6, Paul ends his letter to Timothy with an encouragement to pursue contentment, godliness, and bold identification with Christ as we live out life in His kingdom here and now.

BONDSERVANTS & MASTERS (1 TIM. 6:1-2)

Critics of Christianity and the bible have taken this passage (and others like it) to mean that somehow the bible condones slavery. Two problems with this view- 1) Paul has already condemned slavery in this letter in 1:9-10, 2) the "slavery" Paul speaks of is very different than the one we might have in mind. As Americans, the only type of slavery we have in our history is the African slave trade of the 1700-1800s.

SLAVERY IN HISTORY

1. Hebrew servant-hood (voluntary in order to escape poverty, slaves released on sabbatical yrs)
2. Roman slavery (1/3 of Roman empire, done primarily on the basis of social/economic status, usually not lifelong)
3. Indentured servitude (slavery to pay off debt)
4. African slave trade (lifelong, involuntary, solely done on the basis of race)

Slavery of any kind is not God's will, it's a product of sin-racism, abuse, and even poverty that led to indentured servitude are all products of sin.

- Biblical instructions concerning slavery are not biblical approval of slavery.
- For Christians, social redemption is secondary to personal redemption.
- Christianity is more concerned with personal revivals than with social revolutions.

So to those in Ephesus who are "under the yoke as a bondservant" (vs. 1), they're told to honor and respect their own masters.

- They're told to do this so that the "name of God and the teaching may not be reviled".
- In our context, this could be applied to employee and employer relationships.
- When we honor those in positions of authority over us this honors the name of God.

Any bondservant with "believing masters" must also not take advantage of their masters due to the fact that they're "brothers", rather they must "serve all the better" (vs. 2).

- When we work for an employer who is a believer that doesn't mean we can take advantage of them just because they're a Christian.
- If we use another believer's obligation to be kind and Christ-like as an excuse to be lazy or irresponsible, we're disobeying this scripture.

CONTENTMENT (1 TIM. 6:3-10)

Most likely, when Timothy "urged" these things (vs. 2), he'd be challenged by false teachers.

- So Paul sets the standard by which true and false teachers could be measured.
- False teaching is any "different doctrine" that doesn't line up with the words of Jesus and "godliness" (vs. 3)- it deviates from the revelation of God and leads to ungodly lives.

False teachers in Ephesus claimed to have special knowledge and were elitists- but Paul says they're "puffed up" and "understand nothing" (vs. 4).

- False teachers had an "unhealthy craving for controversy" and for "quarrels about words"- anyone who loves lengthy disputes, arguments, and competitive theological debates about "silly myths" is completely misled.

The fruit of these teachers "ministries" of devoting themselves to and debating others over myths and endless genealogies was not godliness.

- The fruit was "envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and friction among people".
- In contrast, God's truth always produces true godliness when it's applied, not more sin!
- But these people saw "godliness" simply as a means to financial gain (vs.6).

You don't have to watch Christian T.V. for too long to notice that for some teachers' ministries are simply big business and a "means of gain".

- There will always be those who attempt to use God as a means for profit and prestige.
- But Paul says that true gain is, "godliness with contentment" (vs. 6)
- Personal peace ("true gain") is not found in the accumulation of stuff- but in an intimate relationship with God.

"We brought nothing into this world, and we cannot take anything out of this world" (vs. 7).

- Nothing we own will follow us into the next world- we will end life as we started!
- What do we truly need in terms of material possessions to be content? Food & clothing (vs. 8).
- Contentment has nothing to do with how much you have- it's how much God has of you.

When we desire to be rich we fall into temptations and many "senseless and harmful desires" that lead to

ruin and destruction (vs. 9).

- Think of how much sin is committed by a desire to "be rich"- theft, envy, neglect of family for the sake of career success, illegal drugs processed and sold, gambling addictions, prostitution, pornography, & human trafficking.
- There's a root cause to these sins.

That root is "the love of money" (vs. 10).

- Money itself is amoral, it's a tool that can be used for good or for evil.
- But when we make the accumulation of wealth the thing that we live for and long for more than anything else, it will cause us to "wander away from the faith" (vs. 10).
- It is IMPOSSIBLE to serve both God and money.
- The "love of money" is...1. Deceptive. 2. Dangerous 3. Damning.

How do I stay free from the "love of money"? Live Simply 2. Serve the Poor 3. Give Sacrificially

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT (1 TIM. 6:11-19)

Paul makes a passionate plea to Timothy- "you, O man of God, flee from these things" (vs. 11).

- Free from the love of money and material wealth and pursue instead the things that really matter- "righteousness, godliness, faith, love steadfastness, & gentleness".
- These are the things that WE WILL take with us when we die- what we become is more important than what we acquire.

Timothy is again instructed to "fight the good fight of faith" and to "take hold of the eternal life to which you were called" (vs. 12).

- He's told to defend truth, pursue true godliness, and to live in the power and values of God's eternal kingdom here and now!
- Eternal life does not begin when we die- it happens here and now when we let go of the things of this world and take hold of the values of the kingdom.

Timothy is then charged to "keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs. 13-14).

- We all are to flee from materialism and unrighteousness, and to devote ourselves to growing intimacy with Christ, to real, genuine community with other believers, and to guard the truth that's found in Scripture.
- This is the path to joy and contentment!

For those in "this present age" who are rich (vs. 17), God doesn't require from them a vow of poverty or the forsaking of wealth completely.

- What He does require of them however is to not be arrogant and to not set their hopes on the "uncertainty of riches", but on God. Financial circumstances make little difference in the value system of God- what matters is how a person manages what they've been given.

Those who are rich are commanded to do 4 things-

1. "Do good"- use what God has given you to do good things, not simply on yourself.
2. "...be rich in good works"- real wealth is found in who you are, not what you own.
3. "...be generous"- give sacrificially to those who are truly in need.
4. "...be ready to share"- share with others what you've been given and be a blessing.

GUARD THE DEPOSIT (1 TIM. 6:20-21)

The gospel and sound doctrine, as given by the apostles, must be defended and preserved.

- This work was entrusted to him, just as valuables are deposited into a bank for safekeeping, so he's told to "guard the deposit entrusted to you" (vs. 20).
- There are future generations depending on us to pass down to them that which is true and will bring eternal life- we've got a job to do!

Guarding the deposit involves not only speaking against false teaching, but it also avoiding it (vs. 20).

- False teaching can lead us to "swerve" from the faith.
- We must be careful what voices we are allowing to speak to our lives and our souls.
- It involves not just avoiding false teaching, but knowing the truth of God's Word.

Guarding the deposit of faith entrusted to us involves not just knowing the truth of God's Word, but actually living the truth out and letting our lives shine as a witness to it.

- "Grace be with you" is how this letter ends.
- When we heed this word and live this out, we live out of the overflow of God's abundant grace- our lives display that we've actually been transformed by His grace and love.

Hidden Rocks

- 1. Rebellion & disrespect towards authority. 2. The love of money and material wealth. 3. False teaching and ungodly living.