

The Man of God

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Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0 : 00] We're in 1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 11 through 14.

! If you're there, would you stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together!
You, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith.

Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Jesus Christ, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his Word. Would you please be seated? We've been going verse by verse through the book of Timothy since the beginning of the year, since January 5th.

[1 : 25] And if you've been here for the past seven months, the past few months, or even for the past few weeks, I'm sure that you've noticed that a consistent theme the Apostle Paul addresses in this letter is the problem of false teachers and the negative impact they've had on the church in Ephesus, which Timothy was pastoring.

That theme begins almost from the very beginning of this letter in chapter 1, verses 3 through 7, where there the Apostle Paul says to Timothy, As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussions, desiring to be teachers of the law without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

False teachers in Ephesus promoted doctrine which created false doctrines which created disorder in the church's worship. Paul addresses that in chapter 2.

In chapter 3, verses 1 through 13, he addresses the church's need to have qualified leaders, qualified men to serve as elders and deacons in the church who possessed certain characteristics that would help Timothy to lead the church in part by helping him protect the church from the deception of the false teachers from spreading so that the church would be on track, so the church would be on its mission.

[3 : 17] And then Paul gives his purpose for writing this letter in chapter 3, verses 14 through 15. He says, I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and a buttress of the truth.

Then in chapter 4, verses 1 through 5, Paul describes false teachers and identifies the true source of their deception, which is demons. The true source behind what they teach is satanic.

In the rest of chapter 4, Paul contrasts false teachers with true teachers who preach the scriptures whose source is God. In chapter 5, Paul gives more instruction for the church about confronting church members when they sin, how to properly care for widows, and how to protect and discipline elders when needed.

In the beginning of chapter 6, Paul addresses Christians' attitude towards their work and towards their employers. And then in verses 3 through 10 of chapter 6, Paul again writes about false teachers.

To this point, he's exposed what false teachers do. They damage the church. And he talks about what motivates them or what's the source behind them, which is Satan, and what motivates them is a love for money.

[4 : 46] These men aren't content in Christ because they don't truly know Christ. They aren't truly saved. They are like Judas who betrayed Jesus for money.

They are the wolves Jesus described dressed in sheep's clothing in Matthew 7, 15. In our text today, Paul turns his focus away from false teachers to Timothy.

He says that all the things that characterize the false teachers should not characterize him. And he lists the characteristics or the features that should distinguish Timothy and all other true men of God from false teachers.

And so the main idea for this morning's sermon is that there are four features of a true man of God that distinguish him from a false teacher. There are four features of a true man of God that distinguish him from a false teacher.

Now you might be thinking, why does this matter? You might be thinking, these verses address Timothy. They address elders. They address pastors. I'm not Timothy. I'm not an elder.

[5 : 54] I'm not a pastor. What does this have to do with me? If you're a Christian, this has a lot to do with you. For one, it's important that you know these features so that you won't be deceived.

Because you're more capable of being deceived than you realize. At the Last Supper, Jesus told his disciples that one of them would betray him. And let's look at their response when Jesus said that in John 13, 21 through 22.

After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his heart and testified, truly, truly, I say to you, one of you, the 12 disciples, will betray me. And the disciples looked at one another, uncertain of who he spoke, uncertain of who it was.

Even after Jesus identified Judas and dismissed him to carry out his nefarious plan in verse 29 of John 13, it says some of the disciples thought that because Judas had the money bag, Jesus was telling him, buy what you need for the feast or that he should give something to the poor.

Remember, these men, these 11 men, had spent the last three years of their lives with Judas.

[7 : 12] And they had no idea. They had picked up none of the clues. They had detected nothing about him that would make them think that he was a false disciple who would betray Jesus.

After the Apostle Paul's arrest for preaching the gospel, he met with the elders of the church in Ephesus. And he gave them this warning in Acts 20, 28 through 30.

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure, fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

And from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things to draw away the disciples after them. 1 Timothy was written after these events in Acts chapter 20.

So understand, brother, understand, sister, if these could be deceived, the disciples could be deceived, the men that Paul addressed in Acts chapter 20 could be deceived, you can be deceived.

[8 : 18] If you don't pay careful attention. If you don't know these features which will help you better discern who you should be listening to.

In the case of our church, knowing these features is important as well because you should use them. They should help you as you consider who to nominate, who to set aside to serve as an elder in our church, which leads to the second reason why this matters for you.

Because before giving the qualifications for an elder in chapter 3, Paul says in chapter 3 verse 1, this saying is trustworthy, if anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.

And so if you desire to be an elder, you desire a noble task. But not just anyone can be an elder. You must meet the qualifications.

If you are an elder, presently, you must keep meeting the qualifications. And the features of a godly man in our text today should describe you if you are or if you are aspiring to be an elder.

[9 : 31] This also matters, Christians, because these features should also distinguish you from the rest of the world. The Lord has commanded all of his followers, all of his disciples to follow him, to renounce the things of the world, to advance his kingdom by sharing his gospel and making disciples.

We are all called, not just pastors, not just elders. We are all called, those whom Christ has been gracious to save, to be ambassadors for him, to represent Jesus in this world and to do the things,

being about the things, featuring the things that we will see in our text this morning.

Our churches need pastors. They need elders who possess these features and promote right doctrine, which promotes right behavior in the members of the church who will hopefully feature these qualities too.

If you're here this morning and you don't know Jesus, you have not been saved, you're in the right place, but what you need most is to know who Jesus truly is.

Lord and Savior. Friends, Satan is a deceiver. He is the father of lies. He has inspired many false teachers throughout all time, and is still doing it very much today, who appear to be men of God, who appear to know what the Bible says, who appear to claim to speak the truth of God's word, but who are truly wolves dressed in sheep's clothes, and they are seeking to eat you up and devour you and to keep you from the truth of the gospel that saves.

[11:16] You're going to hear the true gospel today, and I pray that today, and I hope that today is the day of your salvation. So again, there are four features of a true man of God that distinguish him from a false teacher, and the first one we see is at the beginning of verse 11.

A true man of God is distinguished by what he flees from. Distinguished by what he flees from. Verse 11. But as for you, O man of God, flee these things.

And so here Paul makes a sharp contrast between false teachers and Timothy. He does that by employing something in the Greek called the vocative case, which is rarely used in the New Testament.

The vocative case was used when you wanted to directly address someone, and you wanted there to be no doubt that you were addressing them. It was used when you were calling out to someone specifically.

This is how we see the word used in the Bible, usually whenever they use the word O. O God. He's saying here, O Timothy. We do something kind of similar with the English when we say, hey.

[12:30] Hey, you. Hey, Danny. You know that they're talking specifically to you. It's direct.

And there's a little bit of intensity to it. Someone specifically is being addressed with some intensity when you see the vocative case. They really want that person whom they're addressing to hear what they have to say.

In this case, Paul is singling out Timothy, the pastor and elder of this church, and he's telling him, he's urging him, intensely warning him, flee these things because you are a man of God.

Paul is the only one to use the title man of God in the New Testament, and he uses it here and one other time in 2 Timothy 3, verses 16 through 17, where there he addresses Timothy again and men like him who are called to preach God's word.

There he tells him, all scripture is breathed out by God, is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

[13:49] While the title man of God is used only twice in the New Testament, it is used over 70 times in the Old Testament. In each of those instances in the Old Testament, it described an individual who was called by God to represent him by proclaiming his word.

And so what Paul is doing here is he's reminding Timothy of what he's been called to do, what he's been ordained to do, what he's been set aside by God to do, to preach God's word, and to preach it in a way that shows that he is different from the rest of the world, to rightly be motivated in his preaching to glorify God in his task, to be God's spokesman, to be God's man, God's preacher, God's champion in the war against false teachers.

As a man of God, Timothy needed to be distinguished from the false teachers, and he would be distinguished from them by what he fled or fled from.

Paul says to flee these things. Well, what things? In the immediate context, Timothy is to flee from what we read in the verse previously, in verse 10, where Paul talks about the love of money, and it's a root of all kinds of evil.

It is through this craving that some, and he's talking about false teachers, have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. It's not just false teachers, but Christians can fall into that too.

[15:17] A true man of God, a true minister of the gospel, is not in it for the money. God may choose to bless them financially, but money is not something that they love.

We can also include the other things Paul mentioned in chapter 6 that Timothy is to flee from. In chapter 6, verse 3, he's to flee from teaching, any teaching that contradicts the Bible.

He's to flee from quarrels about words that deny the authority of Scripture, in verse 4. He's to flee from temptations that money will make him content, in verses 6 through 10.

And in 2 Timothy 2, 2, Paul adds that Timothy is to flee from youthful passions, desires that characterize immature people, like pride, arrogance, lust, and selfishness.

Timothy is to flee from these things. When he's tempted to sin, when he's tempted to exchange the truth of God for a lie, Timothy is to make a swift departure from those thoughts, from those desires, that will lead him into sinful actions.

[16:30] In the Greek, the verb flee is written as a present imperative. An imperative is a command. And the present tense means that Timothy is to never stop fleeing from these things.

He is never to stop, take a time out, from fleeing these sinful desires. The sense is that if he stops fleeing, these things will eventually catch up to him, overtake him, and keep him from reaching his goal.

Now, as I was thinking about that, the image that popped into my mind was Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark. Remember in the very beginning of that movie?

That movie's old. So if I'm spoiling it for you, you've had plenty of time to see it. But if you remember at the very beginning, Indiana Jones, he's getting that golden idol and he's there and he's weighing out the bag of sand and he's gonna do a quick switch because he knows there's probably some kind of booby trap.

He thinks he's done it, but lo and behold, he set off the trap, which includes his being chased through this temple by a giant boulder. His only hope to survive is to run, is to flee.

[17:46] If he would have stopped, he would have been crushed. If he tried to stand and resist it, he would have been overpowered by that boulder. He had to flee if he was going to escape to safety.

Sin does the same thing to us. Yes, there are times to resist, but there are many times where we need to flee. Just like in a battle, in a war, there are times to retreat, to safety, to avoid more devastating casualties, to regroup and reengage the enemy at a later time in a more effective way with renewed strength.

This is a truth for all Christians, but I think especially for pastors and elders who are called to be above reproach. If a pastor bounces around from church to church, maybe because they're seeking what he thinks will be bigger and better pastors, he may be motivated by money.

If he bounces around from church to church after a few years, never able to stick it out for longer than that, it may be that he's fleeing from his own sins that have caused disruption in the church.

If a person claims to be a man of God and talks a lot about money, it may be and probably is the case that that's truly what they worship. And in such cases, you should flee from sitting under their teaching, their preaching.

[19:23] So pay attention. Pay attention to what they talk about, what they preach about, and if you can, pay attention to how they live their lives. When they're outside of the pulpit, how do they live?

How do they talk? What do they post about on social media? You'll find out what they truly love often. A second feature is that a man of God is distinguished by what he follows after.

So not just what he flees from, but what he follows after. In the rest of verse 11, Paul says, pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness. A true man of God flees from sin because he's pursuing holiness.

Righteousness refers to the man of God's conduct. His actions and obedience to what the Lord's commanded him in his word. Godliness is the result of a righteous way of living.

A person who obeys the Lord begins to act like the Lord. They live in submission to the Lord and his authority over their lives.

[20:31] They go where he sends them, they stay where he tells them to stay, they say what he tells them to speak, they do what Jesus commands.

They are faithful to the Lord. They love him and they love those whom he has saved. While they flee from sin, they are steadfast in their determination to oppose those who don't.

they won't quit the good fight. They won't surrender their hope and trust in God no matter how difficult their circumstances in serving him are or might be.

I can't help but think that maybe the Holy Spirit was bringing Psalm 57 to Paul's mind at this point in his writing this letter.

There in Psalm 57, David expresses his supreme confidence in the Lord as he was fleeing from King Saul who wanted to kill him.

[21 : 36] And in that Psalm, he repeatedly mentions his steadfast heart, his resolute faith, his resolute hope and trust in God.

Though he takes refuge in a cave as he's fleeing from an enemy, he rejoices in the Lord who is his true refuge and who he can be steadfast. Let's read that Psalm or a portion of it, verses 6 through 10.

Here David speaking of his enemies, they set a net for my steps, my soul was bowed down, they dug a pit in my way but they have fallen into it themselves.

My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast. I will sing and make melody. Awake my glory, awake, O harp and lyre, I will awake the dawn.

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples, I will give praises to you among the nations for your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

[22 : 39] Timothy likewise was to flee from sin but he was to remain resolute, steadfast in the faith. There were problems with the church in Ephesus but instead of leaving those problems for someone else to deal with, he was to remain.

he was to be steadfast. He was to be gentle as he exercised self-control in dealing with people in the church as he faced the difficulties of confronting false teachers, confronting sin and putting the church back into order.

He wasn't to think, well, maybe there's another church, second church of Ephesus down the street or something like that that I could try to go to and let somebody else deal with this.

No, he was the man. The man of God called to remain steadfast. God calls a man of God to do hard things.

That's a truth, that's a reality we see throughout all of the pages of Scripture. But the man who is following after Jesus who did the hardest thing will pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness throughout it all.

[24 : 00] They will be distinguished by the passion they have to pursue the Lord to be a God-pleaser and not a people-pleaser. Now, the third feature, a man of God is distinguished by what he fights for, what he flees from, what he follows after, what he fights for.

In the beginning of verse 12, Paul tells Timothy, fight the good fight of the faith. The Greek word translated as fight is *agonizomai*, from which our English word *agonize* derives.

It was used both to describe someone who pursues victory in war and victory in athletics. Think of someone running a long-distance race. If you've ever run a long-distance race, you know about the agony.

You know how you run to the point of exhaustion with sweat dripping down your face. Your lungs are burning inside of you. Your feet feel heavy and you wonder, how much longer do I have to run? How much longer can I run? You want to stop, but you haven't reached the goal, so you press on. And then, up ahead, you see the finish line and you dig deeper.

[25 : 21] You find an extra gear that you didn't realize that you had. You see the goal and you press on, running faster than you thought you could have ran before, pushing yourself, driving yourself, fighting the thoughts to slow down.

This is agony. This is the agony as you increase your speed, as you approach the goal to finish what you started.

Paul describes this fight, this agony, as good. If you've ever run in such a way and you've reached the finish line despite the pain, despite the agony, you feel there's a, there's a good feeling, isn't there?

This fight is a good fight. It's a fight worth fighting. It's worth the agony because the victory, the goal once attained is worth whatever blood, whatever sweat, whatever tears were shed to reach this goal.

Paul says that it's a fight of the faith. And by faith, he refers to the whole, the whole body of Christian truth, the whole contents of God's word, the faith that Jude wrote about in verse 3 of his book.

[26 : 42] Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

Paul had fought for this faith. And as he approached the final days of his life on earth, he was certain of the truth that he had agonized to protect and proclaim was well worth the fight.

In 2 Timothy 4, 6 through 8, he says, for I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race.

I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Christian, we're all called to fight this good fight. We are all commanded by our Lord to contend for the truth that we believe.

[27 : 53] The truths that have been handed down to us, to our generation, at this point, at this time, in God's redemptive plan to protect and to proclaim, trusting that it will have been worth it when we see Jesus, the one who agonized for us on the cross to purchase our salvation.

Hebrews chapter 12 verses 1 through 2 gives us this encouragement. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, all those who have agonized before us, all of those who have fought the good fight before us, let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, he's the goal, the founder and protector or perfecter, excuse me, of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. We all need to fight this fight. This is especially true for the man of God who is commanded by the Lord to equip the saints for the work of the ministry and who will stand before the Lord one day and give an account for how he fought this fight, for how he contended for this faith.

James 3.1 says, not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. Paul urged Timothy to fight the good fight of the faith in the rest of verse 12 by taking hold of the eternal life to which you were called, about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Timothy was to seize, he was to grasp, he was to have a firm grip on the realities of eternal life. And as he did that, Paul says, he was to remember the confession that he made either at his baptism or his ordination or both when he confessed that Jesus Christ is his Lord and Savior.

[30 : 06] These things would help him flee from sin, follow Jesus, and fight the good fight because it would give him an eternal perspective. whatever agony he endured in the fight for the faith, whatever persecution he suffered, he could know that it would all be worth it in the end.

A true man of God is distinguished by what he fights for. He defends the truth. He proclaims the truth. He isn't tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes.

He lives a life of submission to the Lord, not to the culture. He gives his life to the Lord, unafraid to offend someone if it means reaching more because the gospel is an offensive message.

But it is a truth that we must not be ashamed of. It's a truth that we cannot change in order to make it seem more appealing to sinful people because that's not the gospel. The faith, the gospel must never be compromised because it is the difference between life and death.

A true man of God doesn't try to soften the edge of God's word. He believes it. He submits to it. He wields it. He uses it in the battle against Satan, against his lies, and against false teachers who are inspired by him to attack the truth of God's word.

[31 : 41] And then fourthly, a true man of God is distinguished by what he is faithful to. What he flees from, what he follows after, what he fights for, and now what he's faithful to.

In verse 13, Paul says, I charge you in the presence of God who gives life to all things and of Christ Jesus who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession.

to further stress the importance of Timothy being a man of God, Paul calls God as a witness in this charge that he's giving to him.

But God's calling, or Paul's, I should say, but Paul's calling God the Father and God the Son as witnesses was not meant to intimidate Timothy.

It was meant to encourage him. God gives life to all things. He gives life. He preserves life. He's saying, Timothy, God will sustain your life.

[32 : 45] Nothing can happen to you outside of God's sovereign rule over all things. Timothy was likewise to be encouraged by Jesus' example. Jesus had already done what Paul now called Timothy to do.

And Timothy knew what the results of his good confession were salvation. Jesus entrusted himself to the Father's will. He died knowing that he would rise again and he knew what his rising again would achieve.

Paul writes about that in Philippians 2, 5 through 11 where he's talking about how as Christians the mindset of Christ that we should have towards one another. Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God as a thing to be grasped but emptied himself by taking the form of each servant being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross.

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

In Christ Timothy had nothing to fear. He needed to remain faithful to the one who is faithful. He would never leave him he would never forsake him he was to remain faithful in verse 14 to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[34 : 29] The command again it refers to the entire revelation of God's word. As a true man of God Timothy was to keep God's word unstained untarnished unmixed with any thought opinion feeling or emotion that would tempt him to say things that contradicted God's word or to let others who fell into that temptation go unchallenged.

He was to do this for as long as he lived or until the Lord returned. for all we know that's what Timothy did and until the Lord's coming that's what the true man of God is to do today and it's what all who look forward to Christ appearing are called to do to feature these features.

So how should we adjust to what we've heard? Well I think it's to be fed by godly men to be fed by godly men who who feature these things because you know for some of you it's happened before and I know some of you guys because of different situations you're going to have to leave our community you're going to have to leave our church and when you go and you look for another church prioritize the preaching of God's word prioritize the teaching of God's word don't pick a church primarily based on the music style the activities the events the people who go there who you might want to be friends with pick a church where you will be fed God's word every time you go to church I think there's another way for some of you that you need to adjust based on what you've heard and maybe that's for some of you younger men it may be that

God is calling you to be a preacher of his word and as I've talked to other pastors what we're seeing is that there is fewer and fewer men who are who are going or coming out of seminaries who are expressing a call to ministry I think there's other reasons for why that might be but it could be that God is calling you to do this and so strive to be a man of God and for all of us let's not waste our time pursuing the things of this world which will perish but we need to be faithful to the Lord and as pastors and elders we need to be faithful to the Lord and the people whom he's entrusted us to care for Jesus Christ is the God man fully divine fully human two natures in one person and we see him doing all of these things we see him featuring all of these qualities as we read about him in the gospels he came to die in obedience to the father's will because that's the only way anybody could be saved was for God to take the place of sinful people and to take their punishment to endure the wrath of the father and to rise again it's the only way anybody can be saved there's no other way and Jesus did that and he came and he fulfilled all that the law required and he died and on the third day he rose again and he ascended into heaven where he continues to live and where we anticipate his second coming and friend if you haven't believed in him today is the day where you've heard his gospel today is an opportunity for you to turn from your sins and repentance and faith in Jesus Christ it's not about featuring these things first and then turning to Christ it's realizing you're a sinner in the desperate need that you are in of a savior and for all of us whom God has been gracious to save we must be busy about being the kind of people that God has enabled us to be and called us to be fighting the good fight seeking to live lives that please the Lord that our light would shine and that hopefully more would hear the good news of Jesus Christ and God would be gracious to save them let's pray

Lord we know that what we've read in your word these words were intended for Timothy they're intended for pastors and elders whom you call to the ministry but truly Lord they're they're they're to be true of every person whom you've saved that God you you call us to salvation you call us you enable us to live a a different way with new desires to obey you to follow you to pursue Christ likeness to pursue righteousness and holiness and so Lord while these features should definitely be exhibited in men whom you call to preach and to teach your word they should be true of all of us and God I think too often we are lethargic in this race in this fight Lord too often we allow those who claim to speak to you to go unchallenged because we're afraid of offending

[40 : 38] Lord the gospel is an offensive message and Lord you've called us to proclaim it Lord we pray for our church that you would continue to bless our congregation with godly men to to lead it well whose aspirations are to please you and to give you glory in everything and Lord we pray for our church that our members would be equipped to do the work of the ministry Lord that that more and more we would be obedient to you that we would be walking close with you Lord that we would be a church that pleases you God we pray that you would call more men godly men to preach your word Lord we need godly men behind pulpits so Lord we pray that you would raise up men in the next generation young men who may be in this room right now Lord we pray for men to be called to be faithful and for those whom you've called Lord to remain faithful that you would be glorified in your church in Jesus name we pray

Amen you