

Set Your Hope on God

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[0:00] Fellas, we're going to get started.

I am reluctant to start because this is the end, at least for this year.

Obviously not calendar year. I don't know what we're operating off of. September to May, I guess.

And we're going to finish up our good friend, 1 Timothy.

Start with 2 Timothy next year. And I've already pledged that I'm going to do 2 Timothy and Titus next year. And we'll see. Jonathan and I talked.

If the Lord comes back, we'll just go to Paul and let him tell us what. And we laughed.

[1:09] If Paul doesn't like the way I've taught it, he can take it up with the guys I stole it from. You know, he doesn't, don't take it up with me. But we come tonight to our last lesson in 1 Timothy, lesson 26 if you're counting.

And Paul is going to close out this first book to his protegee, Timothy, by instructing him on a couple of interesting topics, how to handle riches or treasure and how to handle truth.

Both of those were important to Timothy, and therefore they are important to us some 1,900 years later.

How we handle such things is a measure of the level of spiritual maturity that we find ourselves in.

And we all know that everything we have is a gift of God. And therefore, we are stewards of what he has provided.

[2:20] That is true even over our material possessions, which are actually those things that we're going to leave behind when the Lord calls us home.

We're going to leave those things behind. But we're still responsible as good stewards of what God has given us. First and foremost, we have been called by God to be worshipers of him.

To worship him is to do his will. If we are not doing his will at any particular time, we're not worshipping him.

John talked about that in 1 John on fellowship. We say we're in fellowship, but if we're living in sin, we're not in fellowship with God or with his church.

Jesus said, you shall worship the Lord your God and serve him only. So what we see there is a joining of Christian duty with Christian worship in that great passage.

[3:28] Well, Paul is going to talk to us about handling treasure or riches. Now, you might be thinking, well, that doesn't apply to me. I'm not even close to being rich.

As adult Americans, you and I are in the top 1 to 2 percent of the world's richest people.

The vast majority of people in this world, and I'm saying in the multiple billions, and there's only 7 billion on earth, right?

The great majority of those people live on less than \$2 a day. You know, I've seen children eating out of trash dumps in Egypt, in Algeria, in Saudi Arabia.

These are oil countries. Swimming in oil. That's the same way. Yeah. I've seen them picking up little pieces of glass because someone might give you a penny or a nickel for it.

[4:37] As we've said in a previous lesson, having money is never a sin. Having money does not imply, however, blessing on one's life.

Not necessarily. There are many horribly sinful billionaires in this world. One such man gave \$1 billion last week to the abortion providers in America.

Warren Buffett. Make a billionaire. Donated \$1 billion to those that support the grisly abortion industry in America.

Now, there are a lot of believers who are poor, and we know that. I've been with them around the world. That is not a sign of disfavor with God.

Although, in Israel, they believed that it was back then. The Pharisees said, you know. And that's one of their criticisms of Jesus. And one of the reasons they said he couldn't be the Messiah.

[5:43] Well, he's dealing with the poor, the blind, the lame, prostitutes, tax collectors, even Gentiles. Gentiles.

And so, that was part of the basis for them rejecting him as the Messiah. So, Paul, in his letter, is not calling on wealthy people to give all of their money away, take a vow of poverty, and follow Jesus.

But he is calling on all of us, wherever we find ourselves, to keep a proper perspective on what he calls our treasure.

Keep it in the proper perspective. The first thing he talks about is avoiding danger, because there's some danger associated with this.

In chapter 6, verse 17, he says this. Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

[6:55] Really chew on that, you know, for a while. We're to focus on God who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

I often pray in here Sunday morning, you know, thank you, Lord, for meeting all our needs. May we always be able to distinguish between needs and wants, because they are two different things.

They are two different things. The Holy Spirit says that the rich are to avoid, first of all, the sin of conceit.

That's a very interesting word. It means to have lofty thoughts about oneself. I can tell you that's not a problem for me.

I do not have lofty thoughts about oneself. You know, I've got two problems. I know who I am, and God knows who I am. And he knows better than I do. But for the conceited, it is having an exalted opinion of yourself.

[8:02] When we do this, we cannot help but look down on others. We just can't help. You know, I thank you, Lord, that I'm not like other men. Remember the prayer?

You know, I give a tenth of everything, and I do this, and I do that, and I'm not like that tax collector over there. Rich people can be very adept at doing this. My college roommate was one of the finest guys you'd ever want to meet.

Died young. Worked in baseball for the Rangers. And ran into the owner of the Rangers one day and walked up to shake hands with him, and the guy just said, why would I shake your hand?

You're down here. I'm up here. Wealth and a humble spirit are usually at odds with each other.

Usually at odds. I was in the country of Oman several times. That's just besides Saudi Arabia. And the people there, because of oil, are wealthy.

[9:09] And there is trickle down. They make sure that everybody gets a check. Very few, if any, Omanis work. They don't have to. They don't have to.

I say jokingly, Mike. It's like the Osage. I know you're Delaware. That's a joke. But, you know, why did God find oil on Delaware land?

In Oman, they hire it done. And the times I was over there, I met people from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and other such places.

They're basically indentured servants. And they go over there, and they live in squalor. They live in barracks. And they send their money home.

And they don't get very much, but they get room and board in some pretty bad conditions. I was talking to an Omani one day, and I said, well, your country is really clean.

[10:11] And it was. There was no trash. It was just beautiful. It was pristine. The yards and the public plazas and everything, just gorgeous.

And he told me, he said, yeah, we pride ourselves on that. But he said, an Omani would not stoop down and pick up a chewing gum wrapper. We hire people to do that for us because we're wealthy. We're rich. So we are not to be conceited. The opposite of conceit is to be humble or to have humility of mind.

Now, the Greeks had a real problem with that attitude because the Greeks had great pride. Paul says not to be conceited.

The Greeks had a problem with that. And I'm going to tell you, in our day, who has a problem with that? I hope I'm not offending anybody. The French. The French. And, you know, anybody here

ever been to France?

[11:12] Yeah, as I have. And, you know, I found that it's not so much the French as it is the Parisians. And, boy, they really can be toots.

Can you say that in church? Toots. And it was interesting. You know, the times I was over there, I was with one of my Phillips guys, and he'd been there many, many times, spoke the language. And I said, why do they not like Americans or the English or Germans? He said, it has come as a shock to them to discover that not everybody wants to live in Paris, France. They thought everybody in the world wanted to be French because the world revolves around them. And they were very, very conceited.

And, Kylie, I don't know if you experienced this, but the Norwegians I was around, they're kind of the highest of the Scandinavian. And I went through the advanced management school at Phillips with some Norwegians.

[12:20] And, boy, they really were very high opinion of themselves, very high. Paul says don't be conceited.

And if you're lucky like me, you don't have anything to be conceited about, so it comes natural. Paul also then goes on to warn about the temptation of fixing our hopes on the uncertainty of riches. He is a fool that puts his trust in money and not in God. Wealth is like eagle's wings and can fly away in a moment.

But let me assure you, it does not hang around long in the Holland household. It goes rapidly. Rapidly. We are never to trust in riches. We are to fix our hope on God. He supplies all our needs and he gives us things to enjoy.

[13:23] The Lord had this to say about earthly riches. Matthew 6, 19 to 21. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth. Why not, Lord?

What's going to happen to those? Moth and rust destroy them. And where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

Where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in or steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

So just figure out where your treasure is. And if it's not where God wants it, you need to change because that's where your heart's going to be. Well, Paul goes on to say we have a duty to fulfill. He says instruct them to do good, to be rich. Whoa, there's that word. I thought he said not to be rich. But Paul says, no, be rich in good works.

[14:29] To be generous and ready to share. Well, if that's all you had, you could say, well, that's inspired. That doesn't come natural with people.

A believer that is better off than another believer has a duty to use his God-given resources to help the left fortunate brother.

We're to help all people, especially those of the household of faith. Paul tells Timothy there are four stages to this. First, he says, the rich brother should be instructed to do that which is good.

Those who are in a position to help the less fortunate believers must use their lives and their money to do those things that genuinely help the person in need.

And the greatest need is to make sure they hear the gospel of Christ. That's really the hallmark of VOM right there. That's what we do. Next, the well-to-do brother should be rich in good works.

[15:39] We are not to hoard our wealth but use it to perform good works on behalf of others. We are to support our family.

We are commanded to help widows, and we looked at that in a previous lesson. We are to support the leaders God has put in place to shepherd the flock of God.

And we should be willing, when we can, to support the brother or sister in need. And I've had a few opportunities to do that.

You know the best way, the funnest way, is that a good word? The funnest way to do that is when they don't know it. There's something exciting about that. They'll find out in glory maybe.

Maybe we can tell them then or something. We are to be generous toward those in need. And this really goes to a heart attitude.

[16:39] What is your heart attitude? There was a couple in this church years ago. They're a loving couple. I love them. They're with the Lord. And they were tithers. Boy, were they tithers.

They agonized if one month it came down to a half penny. They didn't know what to do. I thought he was going to take a saw and cut that penny in half because it didn't come out right.

You know, and it was real funny to watch them. I loved them dearly. They're both gone now. We are to be generous to those in need.

And that's to be our heart attitude. Christians are to give sacrificially in all areas of life.

Did Christ give sacrificially? Well, look to the cross. Of course. And he owned everything. He owns the cattle on a thousand years. Sell some Lord and give us the money.

[17:38] I mean, that was a prayer once at Dallas Theological Seminary. They were going under financially. And a guy did that. Fourth, Paul tells Timothy to be ready to share.

Look for opportunity to share in fellowship with another brother in need. Well, then Paul talks about the future. Storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

There is an end result for how we handle that which God has provided us. When we share earthly treasures, there is a corresponding storing up of heavenly treasures.

And you know, moth and rust aren't going to attack those, are they? Do not, and we should not expect, and be careful, do not expect a return on your investment in this life.

Don't expect that. Just give out of the abundance and store up for yourself heavenly treasure.

[18:53] And let me say this too. Let God keep the record. Don't try to keep that yourself. I mean, I'm telling you, I know some men in this room, when they go stand before the Lord, he's going to say, Do you remember when you did such, such?

Well, I don't really remember that, Lord. Well, I remember it. I'll never forget how you helped that person. That's what it's all about. Don't look for the return on your investment in this life.

Be looking for the life to come. And like I said last week, and I think we maybe need a banner. We should be focused on making eternal friends.

Can you imagine in glory someone walking up to you and say, I was in your Sunday school class. I met one of the ladies that started the school. She talked about she went to church here and was in my revelation.

I go, no memory of that. None whatsoever. Focus on making eternal friends. That is real life or as Paul puts it, life indeed.

[20:03] That's how Paul says it. But Paul shares with Timothy and with us something more important than how we handle material treasure that God has provided us.

How do we handle the treasure trove of truth that the Holy Spirit has deposited in us through His Word?

Something that's more valuable than gold. Truth. The Gospel of Christ. The Bible. The Word of God. Chapter 6, 20 and 21.

We were talking about a tape.

And I listened to it several times. It's only four minutes. But this well-known pastor and really a good guy, he said, The problem with the church in America is we're gospel ignorant.

[21:19] We are gospel ignorant. Most churches cannot tell you what the gospel is. They cannot tell you that. We are to cling to the truth even if we die for it.

I mean, you've got to deny this or you'll be killed. That happens all the time around the world, 100,000 times a year. That is the day in which we live.

Many say there's no such thing as truth, but if there is, there's no such thing as religious truth. Isn't that an oxymoron? Well, there's no such thing as truth, but if there's truth anywhere, you can't find it over there within religion.

There's no truth there. I told you before, Rabbi Zachariah, you know, talking, the kid got up from college and said, There's no more absolutes. Dr. Zachariah said, How sure are you that?

He said, I'm absolutely certain. How certain are you? Absolutely. So you're absolutely certain there's no moral absolutes? Yes. There's no absolute in this universe? Absolutely. He said, You've just declared an absolute.

[22:22] Of course, he was a laughingstock. You know, he was a laughingstock. Cling to the truth. The church is described as, 1 Timothy 3:15, the pillar and support of truth.

And I always have to say this, even though you already know it. Remember, the church is not brick and mortar. It's people. The church is to guard the truth, proclaim the truth, and hand down the truth to those who come after us.

I'm so pleased. These young men have been here almost every session or maybe every session this year. We start back in September, fellas. The church in the 21st century has largely failed to do

this.

And that is especially true of the church in Western nations, including Western Europe and North America. Our calling is to be salt and light in a dying culture.

Instead, we've entered into league with the dying culture by compromising what we believe. David Platt wrote a book called *Radical*, and it's about the most radical book I've ever read.

[23 : 35] But he says in there, take back the gospel from the American dream. We think they're one and the same. And the prosperity gospel, I think, has had a lot to do with this.

And this joining together with Caesar, you come out with this Heinz 57 brand of church. And it's not a pretty sight.

We're going to Scotland in three weeks. You know, let's take my place. It's open. I've been there.

Anyway, Diane and I and her niece are going to Scotland. And we will see these beautiful cathedrals, one that's probably 50 times the size of our physical planet with the land, including land, the cemetery around it, Glasgow Cathedral.

There's 12 members in that church. We went to it. We asked them, what happens when you all are gone? They said it's a museum. Many of these cathedrals in Scotland are pubs.

The church is closed, and they're now pubs. And that's the trend. That's the trend in Western Europe, England, Scotland. These were the centers of the Reformation.

[24 : 56] And yet they've all gone the other way. We're in league with a dying culture. People ask me, what's wrong with America?

And, you know, there's a lot of things wrong. But I think, ultimately, the church has failed to be salt and light. We're to be the grain of sand in the oyster, the irritant.

It becomes a pearl. But we're to be the irritant. We're to say to the culture, no, you're not going to kill babies. No, we're not going to have homosexuality in the public square.

No, you're not going to take God out of the public square. We won't let you do that. We will not allow. We're not going to let you do that. We will obey Caesar as long as Caesar doesn't do anything to violate a command of God.

Once he does that, we have to obey God and not Caesar. That's a Peter and John thing. Of course, I always add a caveat to that. If you're ever going to do that, be clear that it's a violation of Scripture that you're being asked and be willing to pay the price.

[26 : 00] And Caesar will exact a price. The church was largely silent when God was being taken out of the schools.

We have been silent as God has been removed from the public square. We have said little when the highest court of our land authorized the wholesale slaughter of our unborn children.

I saw a deal the other day. You know, within a week or maybe it's two weeks, that baby's got a heartbeat, a pancreas, fingerprints. I mean, and they want to say that's tissue.

We have turned the other way as homosexual behavior has become inculcated into the very fiber of our nation. Speak out now and you are threatened even with criminal prosecution.

I remember a pastor in Long Island that paid out of his own pocket a billboard said, man shall not lie with man as with a woman. And he was investigated by the authorities there, the police.

[27 : 04] He even took his children out of classrooms and interviewed them without the parents' knowledge. What happens at your house? What do you talk about at dinner? Do you read the Bible? What do you pray about? What do you think about at dinner?

These were the questions that were asked. You know, my comment is where's the ACLU? That's what they should be standing at. That should scare everybody, but it doesn't. Now, those few who speak out against such actions that violate our very nature are branded the real enemy.

And, you know, I'll say this. The change in America has been so rapid. I don't think that the country we have, we live in today, is the same country as when we started this study.

I think there's been that much change since September. I'm reminded of the quote by the German Martin Niemöller.

He said this. First, they came for the socialists. And I did not speak out because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists.

[28 : 12] And I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews. And I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me.

And there was no one left to speak out for me. They were all gone. They were all gone. and he was in a Nazi concentration camp. We're actually closing our study.

I should have told you before we started. This was a brief. I didn't know how long we would go tonight with the ladies. So I just wanted to close with some of my own thoughts. We live in a time of encroaching darkness.

We live in a time where the world and even this country are getting dark. Never be ashamed of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that has been entrusted to you.

Never be ashamed of the gospel. John MacArthur wrote a book, *Ashamed of the Gospel*. And what a revelation that book was. These are just my thoughts as we close.

[29:36] Time is short. Eternity is long. Men are dying, men and women, and going to hell every second of every day.

Every second. Hundreds have entered hell since I got up here this evening. Many in the church are asleep. Others have gone over to the enemy.

I remember David Platt in Radical talking about coming back from India in a very poor area of India. And went to a very affluent church.

They invited him. And they wouldn't hear about him. It was a mission trip to India. So he's up there talking. And he said, they have these dire needs because the Muslims are wanting to kill them. The Hindus are wanting to kill them.

And Chairman of the Deacons said, you know, we wish they'd all die and go to hell. And then we could just be ourselves and wouldn't have to worry about them.

[30:50] And David said, I was just floored. I was floored. Some have gone over to the enemy. Others in the church are deluded into believing that they have a saving relationship with Jesus when, in fact, he does not know them.

Remember, he never, in Matthew 7, he didn't say, you never knew me. He said, I never knew you. I ask people, you know, the common thing is, do you know Jesus?

I always ask people, say, does Jesus know you? Do you? Savingly? That puts a little different twist on it. Fellas, we live in difficult days.

Some of you got young guys, young kids. Some of us have young grandchildren. Even more important, you know, your young fathers are protecting your children from the world.

Grandfathers are protecting the world from the world and their parents. We have a higher calling. I have to protect them from my own kids. We live in difficult times and things are going to get worse before Christ returns.

[32:05] We're promised that in Scripture. And that fact that as dark as it is, it's going to get darker, has tremendous implications for ourselves and for our physical and our spiritual children.

Now, what do I mean by that? All these little kids running around here are all of ours. We're responsible for all of them. I'm sorry. I don't know the names of one of your daughters, but they're my spiritual granddaughters.

I'm responsible before God. And, boy, raising kids in this culture is going to be a challenge, really a challenge.

Dr. Schaefer said this. I've used this before. I'm going to use it again. He paraphrased Jeremiah 12.5, and I'm paraphrasing Dr. Schaefer. We, and by that he meant the church, we have not run well with the footman.

How, then, are we going to run with the horseman? If we've been unable to keep up with the footman, can we expect to keep up with the horseman?

[33:19] You can look at that in Jeremiah 12.5. This is the day of the horseman. Things happen with blinding speed.

Look at communication alone, Internet stuff. You know, I made a deposit the other day at the bank. I was overdrawn. I don't know how that happened. I still, I can't figure it out. \$20 overdrawn.

I called my banker. I put \$500 into that account. I called my banker, and I said, Craig, I'm overdrawn. He said, well, let me look at it. I mean, this is a minute later. And he's in another town. And he said, you're not overdrawn. You just put \$500 in there. I wasn't out of the parking lot yet. Things happen very quickly. Things happen overseas.

We see it instantly, don't we? We see it live. We see it live. Well, I thought seriously about just ending the lesson on that note.

[34:18] And the more I thought about it, the less attractive it sounded. Because that's a somewhat depressing ending. The last thing I want is you guys to be depressed all summer.

And then you have to come back next fall. And we pick it up at 2 Timothy. And we come in here, and you're depressed. I don't want that to happen. So I thought it advisable to end on a high note. Okay? Here's the high note. The Lord is on his throne. The Lord is still building his church. And the gates of hell will not prevail against the true church. It will not happen. The prophetic clock is ticking.

When we're awake, when we're asleep. It is ticking. And the return of Christ for his church is right on schedule. It's not going to be early.

[35 : 29] And he's not going to be late. And in the meantime, and all this summer waiting for 2 Timothy, obediently watch and wait and work and worship the Lord, anticipating his kingdom.

And since I can't get a higher note than that, we'll say a bit of due to 1 Timothy and pick it up there next September, Lord willing, with 2 Timothy.