

1Tim 1:18-20 - FAITH AND A GOOD CONSCIENCE NEEDED FOR THE KEEPING OF THE FAITH

- I. A Charge Committed by the Apostle to His Child Timothy
 - A. In verse 18 Paul says “This charge I commit to you, child Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that in them you might war the good warfare.”
 1. The charge here covers the main points presented in the previous seventeen verses.
 - a. On the positive side, the main point of this verses is God’s dispensation
 - b. On the negative side, it is the differing teachings
 2. Hence, the charge given by the apostle to his spiritual son concerns the dispensation of God positively and the differing teachings negatively
 - B. According to the Prophecies Previously Made Concerning Timothy (v.18)
 1. It may be that some prophetic intimations were made concerning Timothy when he was admitted into the ministry (Acts 16:1-3)
 2. Perhaps the elders in the church which recommended Timothy to Paul laid hands on him
 3. At that time prophecies might have been spoken concerning him
 - C. To War the Good Warfare
 1. Speaking of these prophecies, Paul tell timothy, “In them you might war the good warfare.”
 2. To war the good warfare is to war against the differing teachings of the dissenters and to carry out God’s dispensation (v.4) according to the apostle’s ministry concerning the gospel of grace and eternal life for the glory of the blessed God (vv. 11-16)
 3. 1 Timothy was written after Paul’s release from his first imprisonment
 - a. During his first imprisonment, the churches were tested
 - b. This test showed that decline and degradation had set in
 4. The decline was altogether due to differing teachings, teachings that were different from the ministry
 5. What apostles taught and preached was nothing other than Christ and the church: Christ who had been incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and ascended in order that as resurrection life, He might be imparted into His believers to produce the church
 - a. This is the vital focus of the New Testament revelation, and this is God’s economy
 - b. However, this vital matter has been lost for centuries
 - c. Knowing the important of this, Paul charged Timothy to fight a good fight, and to war a good warfare
 6. If we wish to carry out God’s dispensation, we must do it not according to the teaching of traditional Christianity nor according to systematic theology, but according to the apostle’s ministry
 7. God’s dispensation concerns the gospel of grace and eternal life
 - a. The gospel is for the glory of the blessed God
 - b. It is for the expression the manifestation, of the blessed God
 8. The differing teachings were the seed of the church’s decline
 - a. Paul realized the situation even while he was in prison

- b. In Colossians we see that certain "isms" – Judaism, Gnosticism, asceticism – had crept into the church life
 - c. These differing teachings caused dissension and decline
 - 9. Today we also must be on the alert for differing teachings
 - a. Throughout the centuries, the church has been poisoned and corrupted by such teachings
 - b. If we are not on guard, differing teachings may also cause damage to the Lord's recovery in a subtle, hidden way
- II. Holding Faith and a Good Conscience; verse 19 tells us how to war the good warfare
 - A. Faith, Our Believing Act
 - 1. The word faith in the expression "holding faith" refers to our believing act; hence it denotes subjective faith
 - 2. This faith rises up in us when we come to the Word and are infused with God through the Word and by the Spirit
 - 3. The subjective faith moves within us to bring about an organic union between us and the Triune God, where we receive the divine life and nature to be God's many sons and the many members of the Body of Christ to be the corporate expression of the Triune God.
 - 4. We must war the good warfare by this kind of faith, not by trying to keep the law
 - B. A Good Conscience
 - 1. Along with faith, we also need a good conscience, a conscience without offense
 - 2. A good conscience is a safeguard of Christian faith and life
 - 3. Faith and a good conscience go together
 - a. Whenever there is an offense in our conscience, there will be a leakage, and our faith will leak away
 - b. A good conscience accompanying faith is needed for warring the good warfare against the dissenting teaching in a troubled local church.
 - C. Shipwrecked
 - 1. The word shipwrecked implies that the Christian life and the church life are like a ship sailing on a stormy sea, needing to be safeguard by faith and a good conscience
 - a. If we do not have a good conscience, we cannot have living faith
 - b. Likewise, if we do not have a living faith, we cannot have a good conscience
 - c. Faith comes from our contact with God and brings us into the organic salvation with God; conscience is the organ touched by God after we contact Him by faith
 - d. Verse 19 shows us the seriousness of thrusting away a good conscience
 - 2. In verse 20, Paul goes on to name two of those who have become shipwrecked regarding the faith
 - a. Hymenaeus was a heretical teacher (2 Tim 2:17)
 - b. Alexander was an opposer, an attacker, of the apostle (2 Tim 4:4-15)
 - 3. Being more careful or "spiritual" or "heavenly" than Paul, we may not be willing to mention names under any circumstances
 - a. God took the lead to mention the name of His enemy – Satan

- b. God has never said, “My people, I have an enemy. But because I am so merciful, patient, and all-embracing, I don’t want to expose him or mention his name, in hope that one day he will repent.”
 - c. As God has singled out the name of His enemy, Paul mentioned the names of Hymenaeus and Alexander
- 4. Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan “that they may be disciplined not to blaspheme.”
 - a. Paul does not say “punished”; rather, he speaks of being disciplined
 - b. Discipline is somewhat different from punishment, for example when parents deal with their children, they may tell them that they are punished them
 - i. That is not actually punishment; it is loving discipline
 - ii. The discipline in verse 20 may refer to the destruction of the physical body
- 5. Through the carrying out of a certain discipline Hymenaeus and Alexander would learn not to blaspheme God, slander God’s economy, nor damage the apostle’s ministry
- 6. To deliver persons like Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan is to exercise the authority that the Lord has given to the apostle and the church for the administration of the church against Satan’s evil plot