

Thursday, August 6, 2020
Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

"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."

1 Timothy 6: 12

These words were written by the Apostle Paul to a young believer and pastor named Timothy. Timothy was one of Paul's right hand men in the mission of the Gospel. Based on a few other Bible passages that talk about Timothy, he is believed to have been a timid person. Many of us can relate to that, I'm sure, especially when it comes to being involved in the mission of the Gospel. Paul evidently saw the need to let Timothy know that the Christian life is not all "puppies and rainbows." It does call for a certain level of fortitude on the part of the believer.

The closer we come to the time to elect or re-elect a President of the United States, we are seeing a bit of "fighting" going on in our country. There is an obvious polarization taking place. I suppose such a "contest" between candidates and political parties has always taken place for every presidential election. Each "side" believes that everything will be great if their candidate gets elected and that everything will fall apart if the other candidate is elected. Perhaps the chasm between the two main political parties is wider today than it has ever been. Regardless of who gets elected as President of the United States, the most important things still lie in the hands of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Paul was exhorting Timothy to "fight hard" for the Christian faith. Neither Paul nor Timothy was running for office, so neither one needed to worry about saying the "right thing" in order to be popular. In fact, the message of the Gospel is not a popular one, but it does require a certain level of ... "assertiveness," shall we say? Our "fight" as Christians is not against people. Our "fight" is against the one who is trying to destroy people's souls in hell.

The "Good Fight" is fought with God's Word and the message of the cross. It calls for a spirit of power and truth which comes from the Holy Spirit. Paul was telling young Timothy to "fight." "Don't give up, Timothy! Don't give in to the messages you are hearing from others. Don't be swept away by the sinful ways of the world, no matter how attractive they may seem."

I believe God is saying the same thing to you and me, especially if we have been living timidly in this day and age. "Fight the GOOD fight of the faith." Keep praying. Keep evangelizing. Live holy lives. In verse 11, just before the verse printed above, Paul says to Timothy: "But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness." In other words, "Stay the course."

Can you and I "stay the course" as well? No one will think poorly of you and me if we bail on God. In fact, you and I will be hailed as heroes for the cause of "self-actualization" if we live our lives exactly the way we want to live them. In other words, the world's message is a pleasant one. Be whatever you want to be. But the message of Jesus and of the cross is, "Don't let go of the salvation that has been won for you." As Paul said to Timothy, "Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called..."

The world has "truth" on the ropes, so to speak. We do need to "fight back." Not with fists or weapons or even with harsh words, but with truth being spoken in love.

God's Peace!
Pastor Jim