

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

The Final Charge

1 Timothy 6:13-16

Keywords: Second Coming, Harold Camping, Faithfulness, Attributes of God

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: Paul gives Timothy a final charge regarding the ministry that is set before him. It is designed to remind him of Who it is he is serving and how he is to serve. To sum it up, he is to serve faithfully until he dies or until the Lord returns. It is therefore a call to a lifelong pursuit of integrity in the ministry.

Dismiss

I. Introduction.

- A. Read 1 Timothy 6:13-16.
- B. The video.
 - 1. Has been teaching for quite some time that the visible church is apostate and is to be rejected and that the true believer is to depart from it. He has taught that the Spirit of God and Jesus Himself will not work through the church to save people anymore.
 - 2. He has a false understanding of the church and seeks to make the distinction between the visible church and the universal, invisible church. He teaches that no one needs or should attend the visible church, it is enough to be part of that invisible church.
 - 3. Brief comments on the nature of false teachers and the wisdom of discernment.
 - 4. The cost of the reputation before those outside the Church.
- C. One of the greatest protections against being led astray is to have a solid, yet growing, grasp of the person and nature of God.
 - 1. Theology Proper—The study of God.
 - 2. Show me a wandering Christian and I will show you a person with a weak view of God.
 - 3. Show me a persevering believer and I will show you one who has a right view of the glory, the power, and the majesty of God.

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- D. This applies to the doctrine of perseverance as well.
1. Brief reminder of doctrine.
 2. Hebrews 12:1-2 tells us to fix our eyes on Jesus.
 3. When you have wandering eyes you have a wandering heart. It does not fix itself upon God; rather it seeks other things to satisfy it.
 4. “Be appalled, O heavens, at this, And shudder, be very desolate,” declares the LORD. For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns, That can hold no water.” (Jer 2:12-13 NAS)
 - a. Consider this for a moment.
 - b. Calvin pointed out that no one has ever been rebuked for having drunk too much of the Lord. Rather it is because we keep digging cisterns that are incapable of satisfying the soul.
 - c. It is God who has given us His Son; therefore Paul is able to exhort each of us in Romans 8 with this words, having given us His Son, will He not give us all other things as well?
 - d. What Jeremiah describes here is not a life of greyness and tastelessness. But a pursuit of soul-satisfying joy. John Piper points out that the problem with us is not that we are pleasure-seeking people, but that we are willing to settle for such pitiful pleasures.
 - e. Or consider the words of C. S. Lewis, “Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”
- E. As Paul draws this letter to a close he gives a final charge to Timothy. It is one to be faithful, to persevere and to fight the good fight. But wrapped around this call to faithfulness is the glory of God, who is Paul’s witness as he gives this charge.

II. The Final Charge.

- A. Keep the commandment.

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1. What is the commandment?
 - a. This is not clear at all.
 - b. Vss 11-12 have four specific commands given. Some see that he is simply referring to them and collectively putting them under the single word, "commandment."
 - c. Others see it as a commandment that was given when Timothy was set apart for this task.
 - d. I think it is best to keep it broad and all-encompassing as possible. It probably embraces Timothy's commitment to Jesus and all that means with regard to life and ministry. 4:16 is an example.
2. Why keep it?
 - a. Made in the presence of God.
 - (1) This is designed to add weight and responsibility to Timothy. What is being charged is not some after thought that Paul appends to the letter; rather it is the culmination of the letter in many ways.
 - (2) So again, why keep the commandment?
 - (3) First, because the Father is the life giver. He is the one who has given life to Timothy and expects Timothy to serve Him rightly in that life.
 - (a) Each of us has been given that life. We do not know how long it is and it is expected that we serve with the awareness of God's gift and our life before His face on a daily basis.
 - (b) The idea of God as the life-giver and father of all is found in Ephesians 3:14-15, "I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.
 - (c) The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; (Act 17:24-25)

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- (d) James 4:14 reminds us "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away."
 - (e) We must remember that life is not found in ourselves, but in God. And though it is a gift, it is also a responsibility, where we offer up to God a life of true worship with the time given to us.
- b. The second reason he is to keep this commandment is because this charge is made in the presence of Jesus.
- (1) Because Jesus kept His confession—He persevered in his witness, so too Timothy, as a follower of Jesus and an example of one who follows Jesus, must finish his ministry at Ephesus.
 - (2) To reference Jesus here is not in the sense of His exalted position, seated at the right hand of the Father.
 - (3) Rather it is at the point of supreme weakness as He, the King of kings, stands before Pilate awaiting his verdict and condemnation.
 - (a) John 18:36-38 is a good point of reference to the specific event and confession. "Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." 37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." 38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no guilt in Him.
 - (b) And later, the last conversation between Pilate and Jesus is in 19:10-11 "Pilate therefore said to Him,

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‘You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?’ Jesus answered, ‘You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin.’”

(4) Here is a simple principle to take from this passage, “God does not ask us to do anything that was not first done by Jesus.”

B. How to keep it?

1. Without stain.

- a. Spotless, speaks of Jesus as the spotless lamb. And it is the kind of character that is to be that of a believer.
- b. This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (James 1:27)
- c. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, (2 Peter 3:14)

2. Without reproach.

- a. This is the same as what every elder is to be. Here Timothy is to embrace it. The Christian life before our Lord is not to be one of the minimum but to always pursue excellence in purity and holiness.
- b. The reason behind this is that the Ephesian church has probably brought much disrepute upon themselves and the name of Christ. This is why the emphasis for the leaders to be of good repute outside the church.
- c. Here again we see the error of Camping’s false teaching. The scores of people who sold everything to support his message. The ridicule that is occurring right now around the world.

C. How long am I responsible to keep it?

1. Until Jesus returns. The call to persevere is until the end.

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2. I have not fully kept my charge before God until I stand in His presence.
3. Notice the sense of imminence in Paul's anticipation. He understood that Jesus could return at anytime and that Timothy is to live with that reality in his mind.
 - a. Obviously that did not occur, yet this command therefore continues to press wise Christians on each day even now.
 - b. Imminency is not contrary to certain events from happening as seen in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4.
4. Dr. Z's constant reminder about eschatology—it is primarily ethical.
 - a. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:2-3)
 - b. Titus 2:11-13.
 - c. Matthew 25:1-13 The ten virgins.
5. Notice the synergistic aspect of this command. (If time, brief explanation between monergism and synergism)
 - a. Timothy is expected to keep himself unstained. It is his task.
 - b. Yet when you compare this with 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:23) you see how this command is then turned into a prayer by Paul.
 - c. It is not an either/or, but a both/and process of holiness and perseverance.
6. Along with all of this there may also be the sense of Paul's own labor in the life of Timothy in mind. "For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy." (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)
7. The "He" (15) here is not speaking of Jesus, but of the Father.

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- a. The second coming of Jesus shall come, but not in our time table but the Father's. The reason that Timothy and you and I should persevere is precisely because of who God is.
 - b. The God you serve is the one who gives life, who is sovereign, The King of kings and the Lord of lords, the only one who possesses immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen.
 - c. In other words, we do not serve in vain. There shall be one victor and only one victor.
8. Here we get the sense of God's gloriousness and majesty.
- a. We see His self-contentment in the term "blessed" which means "happy." God is infinitely happy in Himself and what the gospel does is invite you to enjoy and partake of that joy
 - b. "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' (Matthew 25:21)
9. But we also see the utter separateness of Him and His creation. He dwells in unapproachable light.
- a. Then who might see Him? Who can approach Him?
 - b. And it is here that the gospel again comes into focus.
 - (1) John 1:1, 4-5, 14, 18.
 - (2) "And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation." (Colossians 1:15)

III. Conclusion.

- A. The answer to how to persevere in the Christian faith is easy to answer. It is ever and always to look to Jesus.
- B. In Jesus we see our sin-bearer and life. In Jesus we see our High Priest who always makes intercession on our behalf. In Jesus we have one who is sympathetic to our weaknesses.
- C. But also in Jesus we see the faithfulness of God who kept His promises.
- D. Harold Camping is found to be a liar, but God has shown Himself to be faithful.

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Small Group Questions

- **Describe a time when your knowledge of God strengthened you.**
- **Consider the quote by C. S. Lewis on pg 2. How are we too easily pleased?**