

March 14, 2021 - I Timothy 6:17-21 - "Pauls' Final Charge"

### Introduction:

Ann Landers once had a very interesting letter in one of her columns. She wrote about a man who earned a very good living, but during his lifetime he was very stingy with the money. When he was dying, he said to his wife, "I want you to promise me one thing. Promise me that when I'm dead you'll take my money and put it in my casket so that I can take it with me." Surprisingly, the wife agreed to do as he asked her. When her husband died, her friend saw her at his funeral put something into the casket and asked what she had put in there. She told her friend about her husbands' request, and how she agreed to it. Her friend was astounded; she couldn't believe this woman would do this. How will you live? She asked. Oh, I suppose I will be able to live comfortably that is unless he finds a way to cash that check.

Paul reminds us the desire to have money and possessions can lead us to do things that are foolish and to over indulge ourselves. Remember, we came into the world with nothing, and we will leave the world with nothing. In verses 17 to 21, the whole issue here is on proper stewardship. Whatever we have God has given to us to manage and to be good stewards of.

**But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth... Deut. 8:18***

### I. Lessons regarding the Wealthy vv.17-19

1. So Paul gives a final charge to Timothy that goes back to the subject of the wealthy. He tells us in verse 17, Command those who are rich in this present world not to be (high minded) arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth. It appears that before Paul closes this epistle he returns to the subject of the rich and money. He had wrote about this in verses 9,10 and like most preachers for a moment changed the subject and went on a bit of a rabbit trail telling Timothy as we studied last time the virtues a pastor must follow. Then Paul launched into a beautiful doxology. Paul before he finishes his epistle goes back to this subject possibly because there were wealthy converts in Ephesus taught properly they could be a real blessing to the ministry.

2. So now he is talking about those who are rich rather than those who would get rich at any price. And he wants it clear that it's not a sin to be rich, but it is a sin to misuse that stewardship. Folks, this is at the heart of the passage. Pride is a constant danger with riches. It is very easy to believe that we *are* more because we *have* more than another man has. Put very simply he is saying if you are rich don't flaunt it!! He tells us that we can use money for our enjoyment, but don't covet it. Don't put your hope in your wealth it could disappear just as quickly as it appeared. Instead of trusting in yourself and your wealth Paul commands us to put our hope in God who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment.

3. We need to wake up to the truth that money can lead you away from God, and to learn about proper stewardship of our money as recorded in vs. 18 and 19. God puts money and extra resources in the hands of followers for a reason. In verse 18 it commands them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. One reason we have resources

entrusted to us is so we will have the where-with-all to be rich in good deeds. God may have given you more than your needs to get resources into his projects. He may be waiting for you to become trustworthy before he trusts you with more. How we use God's resources matters very much. In Acts 16, Lydia was a very wealthy woman, and she was able to house the Apostle Paul and all of his traveling companions. Dorcas was a wealthy lady, and she was able to make garments and give them away to the poor. Philemon was a wealthy man, he had many servants and he had a big house, a church met in his home. Joseph of Arimathea was rich and had much influence and he gave Jesus his burial tomb.

4. When we give of our extra resource...verse 19 explains we will lay up treasure for ourselves as a firm foundation for the coming age. Jesus declare, **But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**---Matthew 6:20, 21

How we invest heavens resources in this world connects diametrically to our heavenly blessings. If our faith is strong we will invest in the things of God after God's own heart such as missions, soul winning, youth, the poor and his church. When we invest generously in God's work and in God's heartfelt desires we form a foundation for the coming age.

5. Paul does not condemn the rich, nor does he tell them that they're more blessed by God because they have more money. Money does not always translate into blessing from God. There are people who have nothing who are at the apex of God's blessing. There are people who have everything and are in utter misery and rejected by God. You cannot equate material blessing with God. That is not the way God pours out His blessing in the age of grace. There are examples of what happened to folks who got rich quick.

#### Illustrations:

Jack Whittaker won the Powerball's \$314 million jackpot (\$113 million after taxes). At the time, it was the largest jackpot ever won by a single ticket. But the lottery changed Whittaker's life and within a few years, the West Virginia construction contractor faced personal loss and tragedy. The day would come when many West Virginians recalled the story of Jack's Powerball Christmas with a shudder at the magnitude of ruination: families in shatters, some teenagers died from drug overdoses, folks were undone by the lure of all that easy money.

My father won a big lottery he quit his job and drank himself to death in a couple of years. Only the best alcohol would do; a bottle a day... I met a guy who won over 5 million. I worked in a courthouse at the time and was in the courtroom when he entered his guilty plea for possession of drugs and guns. As I recall, he got a 10 year mandatory minimum sentence. He said that winning the lottery ruined his life. ---Another guy won 21 million and he didn't know he had a winning ticket for 4 months and found out after he got back from a trip to Asia. He had to leave his job teaching (which he loved) because students and fellow teachers were harassing him for money. The school faculty apparently got upset because after he won, he only gave the entire staff \$100 gift cards to Starbucks and they felt entitled to more.

### Application:

Riches are given to you in order that you might invest it employ it to advance the work of the One who gave it to you. You are a steward of God's affairs, a steward of the things entrusted to you. And some day every one of us must give an account of what we used it all for. Now, using it for a certain degree of your own enjoyment and pleasure is right, too. The man who learns how to use money for that purpose has learned how to be poor in spirit, that he might be rich in stewardship. Our riches are to be used for the advancement of his work.

### II. Lessons Regarding Entrustment Vv.20-21

1. First, Paul challenges Timothy to distinguish between what comes from God (that which was committed to your trust), and what comes from man (*vain babblings*); and to guard against becoming enamored with what comes from man. Paul had confidence in Timothy and he did trust him. Yet Paul also knew how great the power of seduction is, and how high the stakes are so he warned him to be very cautious. *Keep that which is committed to thy trust.* The word keep / **guard**, foo-las'-so - phulassō. It's used of valuables kept in a safe place meaning to guard from being lost or perishing. The next phrase is actually one word "*that which is committed to your trust*," that's one word in the Greek, parathēkē, the deposit. "Guard the deposit." It could read, "What has been deposited with you, guard."

2. The gospel is a **trust** committed to pastors like Timothy; but also to all believers. And when that trust is broken, *some have strayed concerning the faith*. We must do all that we can to keep this **trust**. Folks the Christian message is a divine trust which must not be weakened or diminished without serious consequence.

3 Secondly, Paul challenges Timothy avoid the danger "of profane, empty babblings." The word "Profane" in verse 20, is an interesting word, beb'-ay-los / bebēlos. It originally was used in Greek to refer to everything outside the sacred grounds of a temple. Anything that attacks the Scripture such as lies, myths, false doctrine is unsacred, not holy, having no connection with God or with truth of God.

4. Paul says in verse 21 to Timothy, avoid it, the word avoid means to go out of the way, to turn aside from this. Timothy you must stand firm for they have abandoned their sacred trust. They have led a lot of other people astray with them. They have deviated from the faith. We are experiencing so much of this in our day and Pastors are declining to truly speak out against these false truths that violate the sacred trust of the scriptures.

### Conclusion:

We must be good stewards of all that God has blessed us with and most of all to safeguard the truth of the gospel its holy doctrines as a sacred trust, just like Timothy did. We have a war out there and we must stand for the truth.