

1 Timothy 6:17-19

INTRODUCTION:

As I mentioned this morning, I spent this past week studying with (and preaching to) other preachers down at Little Egypt Bible camp.

- The letter of **1 Timothy** was chosen for this preacher's retreat very purposefully as the preacher Paul wrote this letter to the preacher Timothy.
- Paul was giving Timothy some of the most basic and yet specific advice that Timothy could use in strengthening the Lord's church in Ephesus where he was located at the time.
- The letter that Paul wrote to him had a very specific theme throughout it.

The word "**eusebeia**" in the Greek language means "**godliness**" and this particular word is used eight times in this letter.

- This is of particular significance because it is only used 15 times in the entire New Testament.
- The continuing theme that is used throughout the letter is that of conduct of certain groups of people, specifically that they conduct themselves with "**godliness**."

For obvious reasons, therefore, this particular letter in the Bible is very applicable to each and every person that is here this evening.

- In the first chapter the main emphasis seems to be on keeping to the teaching of Jesus Christ.
- In **verses 11-12**, Paul specifically indicated that he had been "**entrusted**" with the "**gospel of the blessed God**" and in **verse 10** that there were those that were doing things "**contrary to sound teaching**."

In **chapter 2**, Paul gives Timothy instructions about how the church members should act toward those in positions of authority and how women needed to conduct themselves with godliness.

- **Chapter 3** talks about the conduct of the elders and deacons.
- **Verse 15** specifically says, "**I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God...**"
- **Chapter 4** again has a focus the truth of Jesus' teachings.
- In **verse 7-8** Paul specifically wrote, "**discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all thing, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.**"
- Paul gave specific emphasis on being prepared for life after death.

Chapter 5 begins by focusing on how to treat different people of different ages and genders and it ends by speaking about how to treat the elders of the church.

- And finally **chapter 6** begins by talking about the conduct of servants toward their masters followed by what me might call, "**A Charge to the Rich**."
- This is where I would like for us to focus the majority of our time this evening... specifically, we will be studying **1 Timothy 6:17-19**.

I have attended a couple of graduations over the last couple of weeks and I've noticed that they talk a lot about the future and they look forward to seeing all of the accomplishments that these particular graduates will fulfill within their lifetimes.

- And I noticed that nobody ever says anything about anything after this lifetime.

- I know... that shouldn't surprise me, however I as I think back to the founding of our country and the fact that they used the Bible as their educational textbook, I got to thinking about the fact that today's textbooks only focus on this life and completely ignore life after death.
- In other words, if we were to go back to using the Bible as our text book, we would see more and more people that are aware of the need to be prepared for life after death.
- It just makes me sad to think about how many are going to be lost because they don't even want to think about life after death.

As many of you know, I was asked to give the opening and closing comments for Kelsey's graduation.

- When I was asked to do this, I had to ask... "**What do the opening and closing comments entail?**" because I didn't realize they had to use this "**code word**" for prayer.
- Anyway, I took this opportunity to get the students and the parents thinking about life beyond this earth.
- I honestly don't remember what I said, however I know one of the things had something to do with all of the studying that these students had done in their textbooks and how that has value in this life, however I expressed how much greater value it is to study the word of God for the life beyond this one.

The point that I want to make is that we are an incredibly rich nation and it is incredibly easy for us as a society to completely ignore life after death.

- However as we look at our text, we see the incredible importance of storing up for ourselves for the future.
- Paul is still talking about conduct as he instructs the rich not to be conceited and to focus on good works and generosity.
- He is also still talking about Godliness as opposed specifically here to worldliness.
- And so this is the charge that Paul gives to Timothy... Read with me **1 Timothy 6:17-19**...

17 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.

18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,

19 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.

As Paul begins wrapping up the letter, he comes to this point where he gives Timothy some basic instructions—A list of DOs and DON'Ts.

I. He begins in **verse 17 by saying DON'T BE CONCEITED.**

This idea of being "**conceited**" comes with it the indication of being "**high minded**," full of pride, or arrogant.

- My guess is that some of the members of the church in Ephesus were supposing that because of their wealth they were better than those with less.
- With materialism comes this problem of looking down upon those of the lower class.
- And so we must ask ourselves... "**Is this conduct befitting of a Christian?**"

When it comes to putting a focus on life after death, there are certain qualities that can help a person to be prepared—Qualities such as wisdom, righteousness, and a strong faith.

- Can our wealth help with any of these qualities?
- Do we become wiser, more righteous, or stronger in our faith simply because we have more money?

- I think that the main point that Paul was trying to get across to Timothy is that material belongings are in fact a gift from God.
- He can arrange the circumstances of life to make us as rich or as poor as he wants us to be.
- With these thoughts in mind, Paul is saying that we should not be conceited because God happened to have blessed us with material things—Rather, humility should be exemplified.

II. In addition to saying don't be conceited, he wrote DON'T FIX YOUR HOPE ON THE UNCERTAINTY OF RICHES.

Let's think about at least a couple of ways in which riches can be taken away.

- First of all, they can be removed from us in death.
- Turn and let us notice **Luke 16** for a moment.
- When we consider the end of **Luke 16** and what Jesus said about the rich man and Lazarus, we realize that all of his wealth made him very comfortable in this present life, however, his wealth couldn't bring so much as a drop of water to his tongue in the torment that he received after his death.
- And his wealth was not sufficient for bringing the gospel message from the dead to his five living brothers.
- Abraham said to him in **verse 31**, *"If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead."*
- The rich man's wealth was of absolutely no value once his heart beat for the last time and he took his last breath in this world.
- He learned that there was no security in his riches.

Turn back four chapters to **Luke 12**...

- Let us consider the rich man who built the bigger barns in **Luke 12:17-21**.
- Do you remember what Jesus taught in this parable?
- The rich man's land was "*very productive*" according to **verse 16** and so he began to ask himself, *"What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?"*
- His answer, according to **verse 18**, was to tear down his barns and build bigger ones.
- He also concluded in the next verse that once that was completed, he could *"take... ease, eat, drink and be merry."*
- The main emphasis of this parable however comes in **verses 20 and 21** where Jesus made a very strong point.
- These two verses say, *"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."*

The problem comes from the fact that the rich man feels as though he doesn't need anything or anyone.

- He has put his hope in his material possessions and feels as though he can take ease, eat, drink and be merry.
- Therefore, he doesn't hold any dependence upon God.
- And ultimately, when his soul is required of him, he learns that there was no security in the riches that he had put his hope in.

Other than death, what else can take away our riches?

- Well... for starters, how about the stock market or other world circumstances.
- How about some form of natural disaster, like a fire, a tornado or a flood like we have seen in New Orleans in the last few years.
- What about some sort of medical crisis of a family member?

- Life savings can be eaten up pretty quickly when the medical bills start stacking up.

Perhaps a good example of this is with Jacob and his family when Joseph was 2nd in command in Egypt.

- Joseph had predicted there would be a 7 year famine and this dramatically affected Jacob and Joseph's eleven brothers.
- Another great example is that of Job during the days when Satan was testing him.
- Job had great wealth and a big family and large herds of livestock that was all taken away from him for a time.
- We could also consider that our wealth can quickly be taken away from us because of bad choices that we make—The prodigal son blowing his inheritance is a good example of this.
- Our world circumstances can take away our riches pretty quickly...
- **Proverbs 23:4-5** say, *“Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration of it. When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings Like an eagle that flies toward the heavens.”*
- Once again, we see that there is no security in our riches!

Paul is driving home to Timothy the importance of putting trust in God not in wealth.

- In the parable of the unrighteous steward in **Luke 16:9** (Just before Rich man & Lazarus) Jesus said, *“And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.”*
- Jesus was trying to get His disciples to consider life beyond and to gain heavenly treasures and gain friends that will welcome them into eternity.
- **Matthew 6:24** *“You cannot serve God and wealth.”*
- This is why Paul told Timothy, don't fix your hope on the uncertainty of riches.

III. **After giving these two don'ts Paul follows up (still in verse 17) with a “do”... HE SAID DO FIX YOUR HOPE ON GOD.**

This goes all the way back to the very first verse of this letter that Paul wrote.

- In **1 Timothy 1:1**, Paul specifically referred to *“Christ Jesus, who is our hope...”*
- He is the hope for forgiveness of sins. He is the hope for reconciliation with God.
- And he is the hope for victory over death.
- In **chapter 1:4**, some of the church members had apparently been putting their hope in their genealogies and the fact that they were descendants of Abraham rather than being concerned about their conduct and godliness.

When Paul says that Timothy should teach the rich to put their hope in God, he immediately gives a reason for it.

- Because God *“richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.”*
- God doesn't leave or betray those who put their trust in Him.
- We could consider several examples from the Old Testament.
- Joseph, for example, was sold into slavery and was later imprisoned and yet he turned out to be one of the most powerful men in the world because God richly supplied.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego had become some of Nebuchadnezzar's first hand men because God richly supplied for them.

- Ultimately they were thrown into the fiery furnace and again God richly supplied for them and brought them safely out of that situation.

Psalm 62:10 says, *“...If riches increase, do not set your heart upon them.”*

- People put so much trust in the tangible things around them that they often forget God’s blessings.
- In contrast, if we remember how much God has richly supplied for us, we would never feel as though the world could supply for us anything of real value.
- For only the things beyond this world are of true significance.

Who can we think of in the Bible that really put their trust in God?

- How about Abraham who was willing to sacrifice his son on God’s behalf?
- How about Daniel who was willing to be thrown into the lion’s den for God?
- Or Stephen who preached God’s word even though it meant his own demise at the hands of Saul and a gathering of Jews.
- All of these incredible acts of faith show us that their hope was fixed on God!

Notice also in **verse 17** that God richly supplies “*all things to enjoy.*”

- Paul was trying to express that everything in God’s creation is ours to enjoy.
- Paul told the Corinthians the same thing in **1 Corinthians 3:21** when he wrote, “*So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you*”
- Another excellent passage, written by Solomon in **Ecclesiastes 5:18-19** says, “*Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward. Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.*”
- All things have been given to us by God and they are there for us to enjoy...

Terry Mabery, preacher in Collinsville this past week gave us preachers a devotional message one morning from **1 Chronicles 29:10-16**.

- These few verses are a prayer by King David who said to God that “*Both riches and honor come from Thee...*”
- A couple of verses later, David repeated, “*all things come from Thee...*”
- As David continued in the same prayer he also said, “*we are sojourners before Thee...our days on the earth are like a shadow...*”
- This is precisely what Paul was trying to get across to Timothy... all things belong to God and He has entrusted them to us for only a short time.
- The best thing to do, therefore, is to fix your hope in God.

IV. With that in mind, in **verse 18, Paul continued with further instructions... DO GOOD AND BE RICH IN GOOD WORKS.**

Rather than focusing on self pleasures and ignoring the needs of others, we take the J O Y acronym (Jesus / Others / Yourself) and we apply it to our lives.

- Has anyone seen the movie Fire proof?
- One thing that I really liked about the movie is that they hit the nail on the head as far as the value of doing nice things for your spouse.
- And this can be applied to many areas of life, however a husband should be trying to “out do” his wife in random acts of kindness.
- In this movie, he did little things like pouring her a cup of coffee, giving her flowers, and doing dishes.
- Good things began to happen for him when he sincerely made an effort to please his wife by doing nice things for her.

This very same concept also applies to our relationship with God.

- We can do good works by going through the motions, however it only REALLY pleases God when we whole-heartedly strive to please Him.
- He knows our thoughts and our motives and He richly rewards those who are “*rich in good works.*”

V. Something that ties in very closely with this is found in the end of **verse 18 where Paul instructs Timothy about another “do”... DO BE GENEROUS AND READY TO SHARE.**

Jesus extensively taught His disciples to take focus off of possessions and to focus on eternal life...

- And this ties in very closely with the fact that all things belong to God anyway.
- I can't help but to think of how easily money comes and goes for Jesus and his disciples.
- In the end of **Matthew 17**, a tax collector had come to Peter asking if Jesus was willing to pay taxes.
- And when Peter approached Jesus, He told Him the following... “...*go to the sea and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for you and Me.*” (**Matthew 17:27**)
- This was just one of those learning experiences that taught Peter that God will supply in times of need and that it is ok to be generous and ready to share with others.

Back in **1 Timothy 6:19**, Paul gave two reasons why we should be generous.

- First of all, we will be rewarded for it later—He wrote about... “...*storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future.*”
- And second, he wrote about the enjoyment that one can receive in this life as a person will “*take hold of that which is life indeed.*”
- They can therefore enjoy this life in the mean-time.

SUMMARY:

There is a very serious danger for us to forget about and become ignorant about life after death.

- We should be living our lives being constantly aware of the fact that we are storing up for ourselves a treasure for the future in the life after our death.

CONCLUSION & INVITATION:

With these thoughts in mind, therefore, let us remember this basic set of DOs and DON'Ts that Paul gave to the young preacher Timothy.

- Don't be “*conceited or... fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 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.*”
- This is an excellent passage that helps us to see the value of being prepared for life after death.

If you are concerned that you are not prepared for your life beyond this world, we encourage you to make things right tonight.

- Jesus suffered and died so that we would have hope for the future and He made all the arrangements for us to receive the reward.
- We just need to be obedient to Him by repenting of our sinful ways and washing away our sins in baptism, and living a faithful life trying to please Him by the things that we do.
- If you would like to respond to the invitation, please come forward...