

**I. In the New Testament, faith is both objective and subjective**

- The objective faith refers to the subject of our believing, that is, to the things in which we believe; this objective faith includes the contents of God's New Testament economy. *The faith* in Ephesians 4:13 is not faith as a believing action but the objective faith. The items of the objective faith are only those items that are related to our salvation—in other words, only those items that relate to Christ's person and work. [Eph. 4:13] *Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*
- Subjective faith has to do with our action of believing. According to this meaning, to have faith in the Lord is to believe in Him. All genuine believers in Christ are one in having faith related to Christ. [1 Tim. 1:19] *Holding faith and a good conscience, ...*
- In 1 Thessalonians 3:2 faith is not only subjective, referring to the saints' believing, as in verses 5, 6, and 10, but also objective, referring to what we believe in, as in 1 Timothy 3:9; 4:1; and 2 Timothy 4:7. These two aspects of faith involve one another. Our believing (subjective faith) is out of the things we believe and in the things we believe (objective faith). [1 Tim. 3:9] *Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.*

**II. "I have kept the faith"**

- *The faith* here is objective. The word *faith* in this verse implies our believing in Christ, taking His person and His redemptive work as the object of our faith. [2 Tim. 4:7] *I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.*
- To keep the faith is to keep the entire New Testament economy of God—the faith concerning Christ as the embodiment of God and the mystery of God and the church as the Body of Christ and the mystery of Christ.

**III. First Timothy 6:12a says, "Fight the good fight of the faith"**

- To fight for the faith means to fight for God's New Testament economy. To fight the good fight of the faith is to fight for the contents of the complete gospel according to God's New Testament economy. [Eph. 1:10] *Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him.*
- Because of the different teachings, the church had already become degraded and had deviated from the faith. Paul charged Timothy to fight against the deviation from the faith, which is to fight the good fight of the faith. [1 Tim. 6:12] *Fight the good fight of the faith...*

**IV. In 1 Timothy 6:12b Paul goes on to say, "Lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called"**

- To fight the good fight of the faith in the Christian life, we need to lay hold on this life—the eternal life, the divine life—and not trust in human life.
- We fight the good fight of the faith not only objectively but also subjectively by laying hold on the eternal life. [1 Tim. 6:12] *...lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called...*

**V. A proper Christian life involves keeping the faith for participation in the divine riches in God's economy**

- The economy of God is a matter in faith, that is, a matter that is initiated and developed in the sphere and element of faith.
- God's economy, which is to dispense Himself into His chosen people, is not a matter in the natural realm nor in the work of the law but in the spiritual sphere of the new creation through regeneration by faith in Christ. [1 Tim. 1:4] *...which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.*

**VI. We need to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience [1 Tim. 3:9] Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.**

- The faith refers to the things we believe in, the things that constitute the gospel. The mystery of the faith is mainly Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ. [Col. 2:2] *...the mystery of God, Christ.* [Eph. 3:4] *...understanding in the mystery of Christ.*
- In order to hold the mystery of the faith, we must have a pure conscience, a conscience purified from any mixture.

**VII. Jude says in his Epistle, "I found it necessary to write to you and exhort you to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints"**

- *The faith* in this verse is not subjective; it is objective, it does not refer to our believing but refers to our belief, to what we believe.
- It denotes the contents of the New Testament as our faith, this faith, has been delivered once for all to the saints. For this faith we should contend. [Jude 3] *...to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.* [Titus 1:4] *To Titus, genuine child according to the common faith...*

**VIII. We all need to "arrive at the oneness of the faith" [Eph. 4:13] Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God...**

- The faith mentioned in this phrase is objective faith. The oneness of the faith depends on our full knowledge of the Son of God. Only when we take Christ as the center and we focus on Him can we arrive at the oneness of the faith. [1 Tim. 6:21] *Because of which some, professing this, have misaimed regarding the faith...*

While instructing the elders and the deacons, Paul tells the deacons to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (1 Tim. 3:9). This means that the deacons should live Christ in His Body. If we do not live Christ in His Body, our conscience will be bothered by the shining of the truth. Our conscience will condemn us. Although we might not have any wrongdoings, our life is not a life in the Body of Christ nor a life that lives out Christ. Our conscience, which has been enlightened, must be so pure that it wants nothing other than Christ and the church. Then our conscience will not condemn us, and we will have a pure conscience to hold the mystery of the faith. People in the world may know that we believe in Jesus, but they do not know the mystery of our faith in Jesus. The mystery of our faith in Jesus is to live Christ and to live Christ in the Body of Christ. This is a great matter.

The testimony of the church depends upon whether the serving ones—the elders and deacons—know the truth. They not only need to know the truth, but they need to keep the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. If all the elders and deacons do this, the church will be strong and rich, and it will be able to spread.

*<Excerpts from “Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord’s Recovery, Book 5, Concerning Various Aspects of Church Service”, Chapter 8, “The Service of the elders and deacons in the church”>*