

**Outlines of the Messages
for the International Chinese-speaking Conference
February 10, 2024**

GENERAL SUBJECT:

**FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT, FINISHING THE COURSE,
KEEPING THE FAITH, AND LOVING THE LORD'S APPEARING
IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE REWARD OF CHRIST
AS THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Message One
Fighting the Good Fight

JL Hymns: 1232, Banner, 885

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 4:7a; 1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12

- 2 Tim 4:7a I have fought the good fight; ...
1 Tim 1:18 This charge I commit to you, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you might war the good warfare.
1 Tim 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called and have confessed the good confession before many witnesses.

I. As revealed in 2 Timothy 4:7, a proper Christian life is threefold; it involves fighting the good fight, running and finishing the course, and keeping the faith.

2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.

II. "I have fought the good fight"—v. 7a:

A. The believers fight the good fight by receiving the apostle's charge—1 Tim. 1:18:

1 Tim 1:18 This charge I commit to you, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you might war the good warfare,

1. The charge given by the apostle to his spiritual son concerns the economy of God positively and the different teachings negatively—vv. 3-4.

1 Tim 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things

1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

2. Paul charged Timothy to fight against the deviation from the faith, that is, to fight the good fight of the faith—6:12a.

1 Tim 6:12a Fight the good fight of the faith; ...

B. Paul told Timothy that according to the prophecies previously made concerning him, he "might war the good warfare"—1:18:

1. To war the good warfare is to war against the different teachings of the dissenters and to carry out God's economy—v. 4.

1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

2. This war is according to the apostle's ministry concerning the gospel of grace and eternal life for the glory of the blessed God—vv. 11-16.

1 Tim 1:11 According to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted.

1 Tim 1:12 I give thanks to Him who empowers me, Christ Jesus our Lord, that He has counted me faithful, appointing me to the ministry,

1 Tim 1:13 Who formerly was a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insulting person; but I was shown mercy because, being ignorant, I acted in unbelief.

1 Tim 1:14 And the grace of our Lord superabounded with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

- 1 Tim 1:15 Faithful is the word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost.
- 1 Tim 1:16 But because of this I was shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ might display all His long-suffering for a pattern to those who are to believe on Him unto eternal life.
3. On the one hand, Timothy was to war against the different teachings; on the other hand, he was to carry out God's economy according to the apostle's ministry—vv. 3-4, 18.

1 Tim 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things

1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

1 Tim 1:18 This charge I commit to you, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you might war the good warfare,
 4. To teach and preach God's economy concerning Christ and the church is to war the good warfare—v. 18.

1 Tim 1:18 This charge I commit to you, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you might war the good warfare,
- C. First Timothy 6:12a says, "Fight the good fight of the faith":
1. To fight for the faith means to fight for God's New Testament economy.
 2. In particular, it is to fight for Christ as the embodiment of God and for the church as the Body of Christ—Col. 2:9; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27.

Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,

1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:

1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
 3. 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. 3:6.

Eph 3:6 That in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the Body and fellow partakers of the promise through the gospel,
 4. Because of different teachings, the church had already become degraded and had deviated from the faith; Paul charged Timothy to fight against this deviation from the faith, which is to fight the good fight of the faith—1 Tim. 6:12a.

1 Tim 6:12a Fight the good fight of the faith; ...
- D. In 1 Timothy 6:12b Paul goes on to say, "Lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called":
1. The eternal life is actually the processed and consummated Triune God being life to us—John 3:15-16.

John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.
 2. The eternal life in 1 Timothy 6:12b is the divine life, the uncreated life of God, which is eternal.

1 Tim 6:12b ... lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called ...
 3. *Eternal* denotes the nature more than the time element of the divine life—1 John 5:11.

1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
 4. To fight the good fight of the faith in the Christian life, we need to lay hold on this divine life and not trust in our human life—cf. Matt. 16:25-26.

Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.

Matt 16:26 For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?
 5. We fight the good fight of the faith not only objectively but also subjectively by laying hold on the eternal life—1 Tim. 6:12b.

- 1 Tim 6:12b ... lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called ...
6. The subtlety of the enemy in bringing deviation from the faith is to keep the believers from the eternal life.
 7. We, the genuine believers, must lay hold on the eternal life; without the eternal life we are nothing—1 John 5:11.
1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
 8. We need to lay hold on the eternal life; then we will be able to fight the good fight—1 Tim. 6:12b.
1 Tim 6:12b ... lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called ...
 9. In 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, eternal life is stressed again and again—1 Tim. 1:16; 6:19; 2 Tim. 1:1, 10; Titus 1:2; 3:7.
1 Tim 1:16 But because of this I was shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ might display all His long-suffering for a pattern to those who are to believe on Him unto eternal life.
1 Tim 6:19 Laying away for themselves a good foundation as a treasure for the future, that they may lay hold on that which is really life.
2 Tim 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus,
2 Tim 1:10 But now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel,
Titus 1:2 In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the times of the ages,
Titus 3:7 In order that having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
 10. To carry out God's economy concerning the church, as seen in 1 Timothy, to confront the downward trend of the church's decline, as seen in 2 Timothy, and to maintain good order in the church, as seen in Titus, this life is a prerequisite.
- E. We are fighting the good fight against Satan and the kingdom of darkness:
1. We should not only be able to preserve ourselves whole but should also challenge the devil—Matt. 12:26, 28.
Matt 12:26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?
Matt 12:28 But if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
 2. We should be God's soldiers, fighting the good fight, overthrowing the devil's strongholds, and taking captive man's thoughts unto the obedience of Christ—2 Cor. 10:3-5.
2 Cor 10:3 For though we walk in flesh, we do not war according to flesh;
2 Cor 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but powerful before God for the overthrowing of strongholds,
2 Cor 10:5 As we overthrow reasonings and every high thing rising up against the knowledge of God, and take captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ.
- F. We are fighting the good fight for the truth—1 Tim. 6:12; 1 John 1:6; 2:21; 4:6:
- 1 Tim 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called and have confessed the good confession before many witnesses.
- 1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;
- 1 John 2:21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it and because no lie is of the truth.
- 1 John 4:6 We are of God; he who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. From this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.
1. Truth is the Triune God with His word—John 1:1, 14-17; 14:6, 16-17; 15:26; 16:13; 17:17; 18:37b.
John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was

- God.
- John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
- John 1:15 John testified concerning Him and cried out, saying, This was He of whom I said, He who is coming after me has become ahead of me, because He was before me.
- John 1:16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.
- John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ.
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
- John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever,
- John 14:17 Even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.
- John 15:26 But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of reality, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify concerning Me;
- John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming.
- John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
- John 18:37b ... Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I would testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.
2. The divine truth is absolute, and we must be absolute for the truth and uphold the absoluteness of the truth—14:6; 18:37; 3 John 3-4, 8.
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
- John 18:37 Pilate said therefore to Him, So then You are a king? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I would testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.
- 3 John 3 For I rejoiced greatly at the brothers' coming and testifying to your steadfastness in the truth, even as you walk in truth.
- 3 John 4 I have no greater joy than these things, that I hear that my children are walking in the truth.
- 3 John 8 We therefore ought to support such ones that we may become fellow workers in the truth.
3. We should honor God's truth, take the way of the truth, and not compromise the truth in any way—2 Pet. 2:2.
- 2 Pet 2:2 And many will follow their licentiousness, because of whom the way of the truth will be reviled.
4. We need to have the truth wrought into us and constituted into our being—1 John 1:8; 2:4; 2 John 1-2; 3 John 3-4.
- 1 John 1:8 If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- 1 John 2:4 He who says, I know Him, and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in this one;
- 2 John 1 The elder to the chosen lady and to her children, whom I love in truthfulness, and not only I but also all those who know the truth,
- 2 John 2 For the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:
- 3 John 3 For I rejoiced greatly at the brothers' coming and testifying to your steadfastness in the truth, even as you walk in truth.
- 3 John 4 I have no greater joy than these things, that I hear that my children are walking in the truth.
5. For the consummation of the divine economy, we should be absolute for the present

truth and the highest truth and the subjective truths—2 Pet. 1:12; Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4; 12:4-5; John 8:32; 14:6.

2 Pet 1:12 Therefore I will be ready always to remind you concerning these things, even though you know them and have been established in the present truth.

Rom 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,

Rom 1:3 Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh,
Rom 1:4 Who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;

Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,

Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

John 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

6. We must learn to teach and preach things that are higher than where we are.

7. For the consummation of the divine economy, we should be absolute for the way of the divine truth—2 Pet. 2:2.

2 Pet 2:2 And many will follow their licentiousness, because of whom the way of the truth will be reviled.

8. The churches should bear the responsibility to clarify our teachings in order to fight for the truth, care for the Lord's recovery, and take care of our testimony—1 Tim. 3:15; 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7.

1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

1 Tim 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called and have confessed the good confession before many witnesses.

2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.