

**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 Three  
Keeping the Faith**

NL, MC *Hymns*: 832

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 4:7c; 1 Tim. 1:19; 3:9; 4:1; 6:12; 1 Thes. 3:2; Jude 3

2 Tim 4:7c	... I have kept the faith.
1 Tim 1:19	Holding faith and a good conscience, concerning which some, thrusting these away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith.
1 Tim 3:9	Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
1 Tim 4:1	But the Spirit says expressly that in later times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons.
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 Thes 3:2	And we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and encourage you for the sake of your faith.
Jude 3	Beloved, while using all diligence to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you and exhort you to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

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

- A. 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—Eph. 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:7c:
- 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,
- 2 Tim 4:7c     ... I have kept the faith.
1. *The faith* in Ephesians 4:13 is not faith as a believing action but the objective faith.  
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,
  2. 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—John 3:16; 1:18; 1 John 4:9.  
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.  
John 1:18     No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.  
1 John 4:9     In this the love of God was manifested among us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might have life and live through Him.
- B. Subjective faith has to do with our action of believing—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.
1. According to this meaning, to have faith in the Lord is to believe in Him.
  2. All genuine believers in Christ are one in having faith related to Christ.

- C. 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:
- 1 Thes 3:2 And we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and encourage you for the sake of your faith,
  - 1 Thes 3:5 Because of this, when I also could bear it no longer, I sent to find out concerning your faith, lest perhaps the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.
  - 1 Thes 3:6 But Timothy, having just come to us from you and announcing the good news to us of your faith and love and that you have kind remembrance of us always and long to see us, just as we also you,
  - 1 Thes 3:10 Night and day petitioning exceedingly so that we may see your face and complete the things that are lacking in your faith?
  - 1 Tim 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
  - 1 Tim 4:1 But the Spirit says expressly that in later times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons
  - 1 Tim 4:2 By means of the hypocrisy of men who speak lies, of men who are branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron,
  - 2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.
1. These two aspects of faith involve one another.
  2. Our believing (subjective faith) is out of the things we believe and in the things we believe (objective faith).

## II. "I have kept the faith"—v. 7c:

- A. *The faith* here is objective.
- B. The word *faith* in this verse implies our believing in Christ, taking His person and His redemptive work as the object of our faith—1 Tim. 1:19; Gal. 1:23.
  - 1 Tim 1:19 Holding faith and a good conscience, concerning which some, thrusting these away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith;
  - Gal 1:23 But they only heard this: He who was formerly persecuting us is now announcing as the gospel the faith which formerly he ravaged.
- C. 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—1 Tim. 1:4.
  - 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.

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

- A. To fight for the faith means to fight for God's New Testament economy.
- B. 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. 1:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:4.
  - Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
  - 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;
  - 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.
- C. Because of the different teachings, the church had already become degraded and had deviated from the faith—v. 3.
  - 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
- D. Paul charged Timothy to fight against the deviation from the faith, which is to fight the good fight of the faith—6:12a.
  - 1 Tim 6:12a 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”:**

- A. 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—v. 12b.  
1 Tim 6:12b ... lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called ...
- B. We fight the good fight of the faith not only objectively but also subjectively by laying hold on the eternal life—v. 12b.  
1 Tim 6:12b ... lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called ...
- C. We need to lay hold on the eternal life; then we will be able to fight the good fight of the faith—v. 12.  
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.

## **V. A proper Christian life involves keeping the faith for participation in the divine riches in God’s economy—1:19; 3:9; 4:1; 6:12; Titus 1:4; Jude 3:**

- 1 Tim 1:19 Holding faith and a good conscience, concerning which some, thrusting these away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith;
  - 1 Tim 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
  - 1 Tim 4:1 But the Spirit says expressly that in later times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons
  - 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.
  - Titus 1:4 To Titus, genuine child according to the common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.
  - Jude 3 Beloved, while using all diligence to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you and exhort you to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.
- A. 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—1 Tim. 1:4.  
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.
  - B. 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—2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:23-26.  
2 Cor 5:17 So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.  
Gal 3:23 But before faith came we were guarded under law, being shut up unto the faith which was to be revealed.  
Gal 3:24 So then the law has become our child-conductor unto Christ that we might be justified out of faith.  
Gal 3:25 But since faith has come, we are no longer under a child-conductor.  
Gal 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
  - C. By faith we are born of God to be His sons, partaking of His life and nature to express Him—John 1:12-13:  
John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,  
John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
    1. By faith we are put into Christ to become members of the Body, sharing all that He is for His expression—Rom. 12:4-5.  
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.
    2. This is God’s plan, which is carried out in faith, according to God’s New Testament economy.

## VI. We need to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience—1 Tim. 3:9:

- 1 Tim 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
- A. The faith refers to the things we believe in, the things that constitute the gospel—Rom. 1:1, 3-4.
- Rom 1:1 Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, a called apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,  
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;
- B. The mystery of the faith is mainly Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4.
- Col 2:2 That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,  
Eph 3:4 By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,
- C. In order to hold the mystery of the faith, we must have a pure conscience, a conscience purified from any mixture—1 Tim. 3:9; 1:19.
- 1 Tim 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.  
1 Tim 1:19 Holding faith and a good conscience, concerning which some, thrusting these away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith;

## 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”—v. 3b:

- A. *The faith* in this verse is not subjective; it is objective.
- B. The word *faith* here does not refer to our believing but refers to our belief, to what we believe.
- C. The faith in Jude 3 denotes the contents of the New Testament as our faith, in which we believe for our common salvation—Acts 6:7; 1 Tim. 1:19; 3:9; 4:1; 5:8; 6:10, 21; 2 Tim. 3:8; 4:7; Titus 1:13.
- Jude 3 Beloved, while using all diligence to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you and exhort you to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.
- Acts 6:7 And the word of God grew, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly; and a large number of the priests obeyed the faith.
- 1 Tim 1:19 Holding faith and a good conscience, concerning which some, thrusting these away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith;
- 1 Tim 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.  
1 Tim 4:1 But the Spirit says expressly that in later times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons  
1 Tim 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.  
1 Tim 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all evils, because of which some, aspiring after money, have been led away from the faith and pierced themselves through with many pains.  
1 Tim 6:21 Because of which some, professing this, have misaimed regarding the faith. Grace be with you.  
2 Tim 3:8 And in the manner that Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these also oppose the truth; men corrupted in mind, disapproved concerning the faith.  
2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.  
Titus 1:13 This testimony is true; for which cause reprove them severely that they may be healthy in the faith,
- D. This faith, not any doctrine, has been delivered once for all to the saints.
- E. For this faith we should contend—1 Tim. 6:12.
- 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.

## VIII. We all need to “arrive at the oneness of the faith”—Eph. 4:13a:

- A. The faith mentioned in this phrase is objective faith.
- B. The oneness of the faith depends on our full knowledge of the Son of God—v. 13.  
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,
- C. Only when we take Christ as the center and we focus on Him can we arrive at the oneness of the faith.