

I TIMOTHY 6:17-21
EXHORTATION AND GUARD!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to I Timothy chapter 6 as we finish up Paul's first letter to his son in the faith, Timothy.

Keep in mind that Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to correct some of the problems that had come up in the church there with false teachers and their false doctrine. There was some disorder in the roles in the church. There were leaders that should not have been leaders.

And Timothy, as his role as the pastor of the church there in Ephesus, was to correct those problems or as Paul put it, **“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia - remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.”** I Timothy 1:3-7.

In other words, get the house of God there in Ephesus in order Timothy. Once things start to move in that direction, disorder, it is hard to correct it. And that was why Timothy was to remain there in Ephesus, to fix the mess that had come up in the church.

And Paul explains what the role of the church is all about as he told Timothy, and us, **“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”** I Timothy 3:14-15.

In other words, the church is to be about proclaiming the truths of God found in the Word of God to the people of God – ***IT IS A PILLAR!***

Also, the church is to be the ground of the truth and we know that God’s Word is truth. Thus, don’t let anyone take it away, change it or discredit it. You are a bulwark or a defense against this! The church is – ***THE FOUNDATION OF THE TRUTH!***

I have called our study this morning – ***EXHORTATION AND GUARD!***

And I have also broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into two main points and they are,

EXHORTATION TO THE RICH – I TIMOTHY 6:17-19

GUARD WHAT WAS COMMITTED TO YOU – I TIMOTHY 6:20-21

With that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in I Timothy chapter 6 beginning in verse 17 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we look at – ***EXHORTATION AND GUARD*** and we finish up this first letter that Paul wrote to his son in the faith, Timothy.

I TIMOTHY 6

VERSES 17-19

In these verses here in I Timothy chapter 6 we see Paul give this ***EXHORTATION TO THE RICH.***

As we look at these verses, we can see the good and bad in being rich.

Now, in saying that, some of you may be thinking, ***“Hey, what is he talking about. I am not rich. Not even close! So this really does not apply to me!”***

Sorry, but you are wrong. Before you get mad at me let me show you what I mean. Pew Research Center did a study back in 2015 and they wrote the following regarding wealth in America. This is what they said,

The U.S. stands head and shoulders above the rest of the world. More than half (56%) of Americans were high income by the global standard, living on more than \$50 per day in 2011, the latest year that could be analyzed with the available data. Another 32% were upper-middle income.

In other words, almost nine-in-ten Americans had a standard of living that was above the global middle-income standard. Only 7% of people in the U.S. were middle income, 3% were low income and 2% were poor.

- <https://bit.ly/3GJzKox>

Now some of you may be thinking that was a long time ago, the report was from 2015 and the data from 2011. But let me put this into perspective for you. This is from September of 2023, this past year and we are told,

If you earn \$60,000 a year after tax and you don't have kids, you're in the richest 1 percent of the world's population.

If you have a household income of \$130,000 after tax and you've got a partner and one kid, you're also in the richest 1 percent.

Or say you have a household income of \$160,000 after tax and you've got a partner and two kids. Guess what? You're also in the 1 percent.

- <https://bit.ly/48kBYWV>

Now maybe you make less, but you are in the top 10 percent of the richest people in the world at least!

But most of us fit into that top 1 percent, so what Paul is writing to Timothy here about what we do with our “**riches**” is for us as well.

And please don't think that this is going to be a sermon telling you how you need to give the church more money. Not at all. The church needs absolutely nothing, you don't have to give, but as you will see, you get to give.

In fact, I have never asked for money over the last 28 years, and I never will. I truly believe where God guides, He provides, and we have seen it.

When something comes up, I will let you know about it and then you can pray and see what the Lord wants you to do. I do that just to let you know what we are involved with and that is the end of it.

Remember what Paul said about giving in II Corinthians 9:6-7, “**But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.**”

You give as God leads you and you give cheerfully. If you can't, then don't give. It is as simple as that.

And what Paul is doing here in I Timothy chapter 6 is he is giving us a correct perspective on the resources that we have, and he does not want money to control our lives or cause us to do things that we should not be doing.

Now let me ask you this. Is it wrong to be rich, to have money?

Not at all. And I think what Paul tells us here puts it all into perspective for us. Yes, there are some who are rich now, and Paul wants them to understand that they are to use their riches responsibly.

If God has blessed you with money there is nothing wrong with that, again, that is what Paul is telling us.

He also warns though, to use what God has blessed you with not for earthly gain but for the building up of God's Kingdom.

And folks, that truly goes for all of us here.

Now I am not saying, nor is Paul saying that you can't buy a car or a house or new clothes. Not at all. He is saying that we need to be wise with what God has given to us.

I like what John Wesley said, ***“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can.”***

It is the *CAN-CAN* approach to life!

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-21, **“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”**

And as I said, that goes for all of us, where is our treasure?

May it be in the Lord!

Let me add this little note. If the world's economy collapsed today, and it could, 70% of the people in this world would have absolutely nothing!

Again, where is your treasure, where is your faith – in the riches of this world or in the Lord who owns everything and gives us what we need?

But we see in America the lust for money, for riches, for possessions and it seems to be out of control. Let me share this with you regarding how this can even happen to Christians. We are told,

The Puritan Cotton Mather, alarmed by the trend toward materialism in New England society, made this statement in his famous book *Magnalia Christi Americana*: ***“Religion beget prosperity and the daughter devoured the mother.”***

Mather was noting a common, though not inevitable, effect of Christianity. Authentic conversion to Christ so changes people’s lives that bad habits fall away, and they become better workers and managers as they live out the Scriptures, resulting in economic prosperity.

But tragically, in many cases the new prosperity and material wealth devour the same Christianity that gave them birth – especially in the second or third generations.

This cannibalism by prosperity, so to speak, has haunted God’s people throughout history. The apostolic church itself was not exempt, especially in centers like Ephesus.

When Christianity came to Ephesus, it was already a rich city, one of the wealthiest in the ancient world.

Quite naturally some of the Ephesian converts were “rich in this present age” (v. 17). Some, in fact were wealthy slave owners (cf. 6:2).

And Christianity went on to make them even richer as they abandoned wasteful excesses, managed their households better, and profited from the hard work of converted slaves. As a result the jaws of prosperity opened wide, ready to devour a fresh harvest of the rich.

Just a few lines earlier in this chapter Paul had attacked the greed that seduced the false teachers in Ephesus, who thought “godliness is a means of gain” (6:5), characterizing them as “those who desire to be rich” (6:9).

Then he gave Timothy an extended charge that began, “But as for you, O man of God, flee these things: (v. 11) and ended with a resounding doxology.

Now Paul returns to the subject of riches in order to say a few words – not to those who want to get rich, but to those who are *already* rich.

Here Paul does not condemn riches as such but delivers the plain truth about the dangers and responsibilities of wealth.

His final words to a rich church have not lost their edge over the centuries. Prosperity is always ready to devour its Christian mother – and today’s rich church must not forget it.

- R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, 1-2 Timothy and Titus, pp. 171-172

I also think the idea is that of contentment. Too often people are jealous of what others have and yet, they don’t see all that God has given to them. This lack of contentment leads to being unthankful and that is a slippery slope to travel on.

Some of you may remember Christina Onassis. She was the daughter of the Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis. She was also the stepdaughter of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

Guess what the annual income per week was for Christina Onassis.

It was one million dollars per week!

I don’t know how she could live on just that pocket change!

There was a day when she was out of diet Coke and thus, she dispatched her private jet to America for a few cases at the cost of \$30,000 round trip!

She had also left her David Bowie tape in Switzerland, and she thought it was better to send her helicopter there to pick it up instead of buying a new one!

Often her friends were too busy to be with her, so she paid them \$20,000 or \$30,000 a month just to spend time with her!

She had all the money, all the riches in the world at her disposal and yet it did not satisfy Christina Onassis.

She died at the age of thirty-seven of heart failure brought on by dieting and barbiturates!

And yet we long for riches and we miss out many times on that which is more costly than gold, more precious than silver, more beautiful than diamonds and that is the Lord Jesus Christ!

Listen to what Proverbs 23:4-5 tells us, **“Do not overwork to be rich; Because of your own understanding, cease! Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle toward heaven.”**

J. Vernon McGee gives us this perspective on riches, on money. He wrote, *“A wealthy man told me, ‘I do not make money for the sake of money. I make money for what it can do. At first I made money for what it could do for me. Now I make money for what it can do for God.’ There is nothing wrong in a man becoming wealthy. The wrong comes when there is the overweening desire of the heart for money. That is covetousness; actually it is modern idolatry.”*

Exactly!

Noticed how Paul warned Timothy about the destructive power money has on people. He wrote in I Timothy 6:10, **“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”**

You see, Money is not evil but the **“love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.”**

Why is that?

Because we come up with all kinds of plans and ideas on how to become rich that take us away from the Lord and many times the things that we are doing are not right and we get hurt in the end or we hurt others.

And Paul told Timothy to flee these things, don't go down that path!

Then what are we to do?

This is simple. Paul wrote, **“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.”** I Timothy 6:6-8.

In other words, as I have said – ***CONTENTMENT!*** We are content in what God has given to us and here in the verses we are focusing on this morning, we are to thank God for what He has given to us and not look down upon those that do not have what we have.

We are not to trust in these riches because as quickly as we make them, they can fly away!

Instead, we are to trust in the living God and use what God has given to us to minister the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others.

Again, many think the main reason for giving unto the Lord is because the church needs money. Like I have said, that isn't true.

The most important reason to give is because you need to be a giver. It is God's way of guarding you against greed and trusting in uncertain riches.

God will provide for His work even if you do not give; but what will happen to you?

EXHORTATION TO THE RICH!

As we read on, we will see Paul close out his letter by admonishing Timothy and us to –

GUARD WHAT WAS COMMITTED TO YOU!

VERSES 20-21

As we conclude this letter, we see this - ***GUARD WHAT WAS COMMITTED TO YOU!***

These closing verses bring before us the great dangers of so-called intellectualism, rationalism, modernism, liberalism, and every other “*ism*” which disregards or waters down sound doctrine.

Make no mistake about it. The truth of God is under attack today. Let's guard it, preserve it, teach it to new generations.

Let's not pollute Scriptural teaching with speculation. We need to keep our doctrine pure and Biblical.

And please understand that this call is not to Timothy or pastors alone, but to all of us, that we are to guard, protect the truths of God from a world that is trying to water them down, negate them.

You see, we are, as a church, as a body of believers, “**the pillar and ground of the truth.**” I Timothy 3:15.

Thus, we are responsible to hold onto and proclaim the truth! May we keep that truth that has been committed to us, let us not drop the ball!

It is as Jude admonishes us, **“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”** Jude 3.

The truths of God found in the Word of God have been entrusted to us. And this faith we have does not change, it was the same 2,000 years ago as it is today.

Don't let people tell you that God's Word has to change or be updated, that is not true. It **“was once for all delivered to the saints.”**

Make no mistake about it, there are attacks out there by the highly educated people regarding what we believe.

They call us Creationists, *“Flat-Earther's”* because they think we are backwards, we don't believe in science, and we are just as foolish as those who used to believe that the earth was flat!

Guess what, it was not Christians who believed in a flat earth, because the Bible clearly tells us the earth is a sphere, not flat!

Isaiah 40:22 cites **“the circle of the earth,”** and Proverbs 8:27 also references the earth's circularity. These match a ball-shaped earth.

Listen carefully to what is going on and I think the main reason many are leaving the faith is because they are not being taught the truths of God found in the Word of God or the Word of God is watered down and thus, as the world comes against what they say they believe, they have no ground to stand upon.

That should not be!

Listen to this. We are told,

For some time now, Christianity has been on the decline. According to a September 2022 Pew study, people identifying as Christian have decreased from 90% of the U.S. population in 1972 to 64% in 2020.

But it's not just researchers who are talking about this.

As of Dec. 6, 2020, the hashtag *"#exchristian"* had **696.7 million cumulative views on TikTok and was assigned to more than 68,600 posts on Instagram.**

When looking specifically at evangelicalism, the numbers nearly double. The hashtag *"#exvangelical"* was viewed **1.1 billion times on TikTok and was assigned to 105,000 posts on Instagram. . .**

When it comes to the moment people first began doubting their faith, LGBTQ acceptance is the most common reason, followed by the behavior of Christians, and then things not making sense on an intellectual level (an example of this would be: I couldn't reconcile how there can be an all-powerful God and evil).

- <https://bit.ly/3RPOW8P>

Once again it is a lack of Biblical teaching that has confused so many and now, they equate love with accepting all things, all religions, all sexual behaviors. Nothing is limited!

If you think I am making a lot out of nothing, did you listen to those numbers regarding those who have left the faith! And it is young people because they don't know the truths of God found in the Word of God and their conclusions are nothing more than worldly wisdom, which is deadly.

Listen to what one person, who claims to be a Christian had to say and you will see what I mean. You will see the danger of this kind of theology. We are told,

“One of the teachings of our Bible is “who the Son (Jesus) sets free is free indeed.” Works really nice as a church song or devotional content. But I realized when I opened up to the possibility that all are welcome, literally all with no exclusions - the queer community, women in positions of spiritualism leadership, other religious traditions experience God too, there are no limits on God’s presence and how that spirit moves among us . . . - then I knew it. That was freedom and love and grace and kindness and all the goodness of the God I had been told about. It was all still there just truly, finally free.”

- <https://bit.ly/3RPOW8P>

In other words, there is no right or wrong. Everyone is open to the God of their own choosing, of their own imagination. You have no limits. No boundaries and that is the freedom that Jesus was talking about. Not at all!

What this person is saying, and there are scores of others who feel the same way, and they are basically saying, ***“That the Bible is not the source of truth, your feelings are. And if you really want to practice the love of Jesus in this world, stop judging the people of this world. God doesn’t and neither should you!”***

And so many Christians are being swayed by these lies.

True love speaks the truth because apart from repenting of your sins and asking Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life, you will die in your sins. This is a life and death issue, and we must not lose sight of that fact!

And yes, they will try to sway you to their thinking because they are so educated, but I have news for them, I know the author of the Book, the Bible and I think He knows what He is talking about. It is His Spirit that speaks to our hearts as He opens up God's Word to us, helping us to understand it!

I am going to trust Him rather than trust those who are trying to negate Him!

And if you check out what they have to say, it is nothing more than hot air, empty words, idle babbling.

Let the Word of God by the Spirit of God and with the Grace of God guide you and you will be all that God wants you to be! Amen!

Yes, some will stray from the truth, but don't give up.

GUARD WHAT HAS BEEN COMMITTED TO YOU!

AVOID PROFANE AND EMPTY BABBLINGS!

Now some may come to the conclusion and say, ***“The Bible said that the world is going to Hell, so there is nothing we can do about it! You know, ‘Que Sera, Sera, whatever will be will be!’”***

To me that is an unloving attitude to have. If we really love people, if we really love sinners, then we should be reaching out to them with the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

I know that it does seem overwhelming, but God is with you, He will never leave you or forsake you!

But we also need to understand that God will do His part and yet we still need to do our part in the work.

We don't sit back in or Lazy Boy chair waiting for God to work. We need to take those steps of faith and do what God is calling us to do.

Let me show you what I mean.

In Acts chapter 12, James the brother of John and Peter were arrested by Herod for preaching about Jesus.

Herod put James to death and Peter was locked in prison. Herod was going to wait until after Passover to put Peter to death. Herod was happy to do this, put these Christians to death, because the Jews were pleased with his actions against Christians, or I should say Christ followers.

And in Acts 12, beginning in verse 6 we are told, **“And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, ‘Arise quickly!’ And his chains fell off his hands. Then the angel said to him, ‘Gird yourself and tie on your sandals’; and so he did. And he said to him, ‘Put on your garment and follow me.’ So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. And when Peter had come to himself, he said, ‘Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people.’”** Acts 12:6-11.

First let me show you the hand of God in all of this, because this is not something that Peter did.

And then I will show you Peter's part in all of this because Peter played a role in getting out of this prison.

Keep in mind that Peter, in prison, is bound by chains between two soldiers, so it is not like he could sneak out.

But here is God's part.

THE CHAINS FELL OFF HIS HANDS!

THE SOLDIERS DIDN'T KNOW THAT PETER WAS LEAVING OR THAT THE CHAINS CAME OFF!

PETER WAS ABLE TO PASS BY NOT ONLY THE FIRST GUARD POST BUT ALSO THE SECOND GUARD POST!

THE IRON GATE THAT LEADS TO THE CITY JUST OPENED BEFORE HIM!

And what was Peter's response to all of this?

Yes, at first he thought that he was just dreaming, he did not believe that this was real.

But then in Acts 12:11 Peter said, "**... 'Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people.'**"

That was God's part in this. God did all of this but that is not the end of the story. You see, God did His part and now it was time for Peter to also do his part. That is how God works many times. He will assist us, but we must take those steps of faith.

Think about it though. It would have been easier for God to just take Peter and transport Him to another location, out of the prison, right?

Of course that is right. But again, God wants our faith to grow and that is how He works. He takes these difficult and sometimes impossible situations, does a work and then calls us to step forward!

In these verses here in Acts chapter 12, listen to what Peter had to do.

PETER HAD TO ARISE OUT OF HIS SLEEP, TO STAND UPON HIS FEET!

HE HAD TO GET DRESSED, GIRDING HIMSELF, PUTTING HIS SANDALS ON, PUTTING HIS GARMENT ON!

HE HAD TO GO OUT, FOLLOW THE ANGEL!

HE HAD TO LEAVE THE CELL WITH THE GUARDS THERE BUT NOT SEEING WHAT WAS HAPPENING, THAT THEIR PRISONER WAS ESCAPING!

HE HAD TO GO PAST THE TWO GUARD POSTS!

HE HAD TO GO OUT OF THE GATE OF THE CITY!

What I want you to see is that if Peter did not do his part, he would have remained in prison. Yes, God did His part but then it was up to Peter to walk by faith.

The same is true for us.

When God opened the door for me to move here to Manitowoc to be the pastor of this church, he orchestrated all the events to bring that to pass.

He did not transport me, my family, and all our household goods up to Manitowoc. I had to take those steps of faith. I had to leave my job. I had to leave the church I loved. I had to leave our beautiful home. I had to leave my friends. I had to find a house. I had to find a job. I had to get a moving van and pack all our stuff, drive up here, and then unpack all our stuff!

You see, God's part was opening that door for me to come here, and my part was walking through that door that God had opened!

Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:10, **“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“For we are God's [own] handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live].”**

I love this, Paul says that we are God’s **“workmanship”** or POIEMA (poy’-ay’ mah) in the Greek. This word can speak of a poem or of a tapestry, a masterpiece. When you look at the back of a tapestry it is a mess, it is ugly with threads going in all directions, you can’t tell what you are looking at.

But, when you look at the other side it is a beautiful picture, a masterpiece. God is making us into a beautiful masterpiece and when we look at it through this side of heaven it may look like a mess, but when we get a heavenly perspective, we see that God has made our lives into His beautiful masterpiece, what He began in us He will complete! In fact, when God looks upon us that is what He sees, a beautiful masterpiece!

Now what does Paul mean when he says that we are this poem or masterpiece, and we are **“created in Christ Jesus for good works”**?

I think Paul is speaking of living out our Christian faith. God has worked in us, He has brought salvation to our lives and thus, what God has done on the inside let it flow outwardly to touch the lives of others so they may see your good works!

We see this once again in Philippians 2:12-13, where Paul wrote, **“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”**

Let me say this. Philippians 2:12 is very troubling to some. They read this and they think, *“See, Jesus saves us but then you must work to keep, to maintain your salvation and if you don’t, you will lose it!”*

What is wrong with that statement?

It is not Scriptural!

Listen to what Paul tells us Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

So that is not right, that you have to work to maintain your salvation because the work was completed by Jesus on the cross of Calvary for us and we are to receive that free gift by faith.

We are saved by Grace through Faith and not by the Law through works!

Here is the key. Paul tells us that we are to **“work out”** not *“work to get in”* our salvation.

His point is simple. Since God has worked in you, now let that flow out into your actions, the things you are doing, bear fruit in your life showing you are abiding in Him!

You see God put it in you and now you must work it out in your daily life. You must humble yourself and surrender your life to God, be in obedience to what He has said.

Be like Jesus demonstrated for us, and as you live out your faith the love of Christ will be seen and the fruit of the Spirit will be manifested in your life!

Keep in mind that the verb “**work out**” carries the meaning of “*work to full completion,*” such as working out a problem in mathematics. In Paul’s day it was also used for “*working a mine,*” that is, getting out of the mine all the valuable ore possible.

In other words, Paul is telling us that we are to reach for our full potential in all that we do for God’s glory and that is only going to be accomplished as we surrender our lives fully to His will and purposes!

We see this picture of God working and then what we are to do in the story of Philip and his witness to the Ethiopian treasurer in Acts chapter 8.

We are told beginning in verse 26 of Acts chapter 8, “**Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, ‘Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.’ This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go near and overtake this chariot.’ So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’ And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The place in the Scripture which he read was this: He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.’ So the eunuch answered Philip and said, ‘I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself**”

or of some other man?’ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?’ Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.”

As you read this story you can clearly see the hand of God in working all this out. But I also want you to see that yes, God was working but then Philip also had to work, or I should say walk by faith for this to all play out.

Look at God’s part and then we will look at Philips part in all of this.

GOD CALLS PHILIP FROM A VERY FRUITFUL MINISTRY WITH THE SAMARITANS TO GO TO THE DESERT, TO GAZA!

GOD HAD THIS ETHIOPIAN TREASURER, WHO HAD BEEN TO JERUSALEM TO SEEK THE LIVING GOD AND DID NOT FIND HIM AND IS HEADING HOME WITH THE SCROLL OF ISAIAH!

GOD CALLED PHILIP TO GO NEAR THIS MAN!

GOD TRANSPORTED PHILIP TO AZOTUS WHERE HE MINISTERED AS HE WENT THROUGH THE AREA GOING TO CAESAREA!

God once again is orchestrating this whole series of events, but it is also up to Philip to go where God is calling him. It made no sense from a human perspective. Things were happening in Samaria. People were getting saved, and we would think that is where Philip needed to be.

But God had other plans for Philip and is calling him to go to the desert, where no one is at. Well, not no one, there is a man that needs to hear about Jesus, he is there!

Look at what Philip had to do, his walk of faith. God did His part and now Philip had to do his!

PHILIP AROSE AND WENT DOWN TO GAZA, THE DESERT!

PHILIP WAS TOLD TO GO NEAR THIS MAN AND HE RAN TO HIM!

***PHILIP SAW THE SCROLL AND INQUIRED IF THIS MAN UNDERSTOOD
WHAT HE WAS READING!***

***PHILIP SHARED JESUS WITH THIS MAN WHO WAS SEARCHING FOR THE
LIVING GOD!***

***PHILIP MADE SURE THIS MAN HAD COME TO CHRIST BEFORE BAPTIZING
HIM!***

PHILIP PREACHED THE GOSPEL WHEREVER HE WENT!

My prayer by showing you this is that you would see that God has work for you to do. Not only that, but He is orchestrating it, and we may not fully understand it, but when God is working are we willing to take those steps of faith and do our part!

Now some of you may be wondering, ***“How do I know what God wants me to do? How do I know where God wants me to walk?”***

Those are great questions, and we can make it more difficult than it really is. God is not hiding what He wants you to do. It is not like He made this into some kind of scavenger hunt. God wants us to be aware of what He is doing and what He wants us to do so we can follow Him, so we can do our part as He does His part!

So what can we do to know what God wants from us?

The first thing you need to do is be in God's Word, the Bible.

Psalm 119:105 tells us, "**Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.**"

Notice that God's Word is not darkness, it does not lead you into darkness, there is no darkness in it. God's Word is a lamp and a light to our lives.

And yes, by keeping to the ways of the Lord we shall escape the snares of our adversaries, for God's ways are safe and free from treachery.

As our path is filled with the light of God it is God who then is directing us, helping us to see where we need to go, what we need to do.

Thus, be in the Word of God because, as the Psalmist said, "**Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.**"

Another important aspect in knowing what God wants you to do, where He wants you to go is to be in prayer or be in fellowship with Him so that He can speak to your heart and show you.

The first time I went to Russia to speak at the conference out there, I felt the Lord calling me to go to Russia. I had never been there before, my wife was, and thus, I was not sure why or how, but I knew what He was saying to me. In fact, I did not know anyone in Russia!

A short time latter George Bryson called me and asked me if I wanted to go to Russia to speak at the conference there with him. God was orchestrating these events and now I needed to walk by faith, which I did.

God did His part, opening that door for me.

I had to get my visa for Russia. Get my plane tickets. See what God wanted me to share at the conference and the other churches.

Now I also said that George Bryson had asked me to go with him to Russia and that is the other way that God shows us what He wants us to do, where He wants us to go. He uses other people to speak to us.

Now let me say this. If someone comes up to you and tells you that the Lord told them you are to go to Africa to be a missionary, don't go unless the Lord also speaks to your heart as well.

What God does with other people is confirm what He is speaking to you. Please understand that.

I pray that has encouraged you. That you see the hand of God upon your life, that He is orchestrating things for you and then you need to walk by faith and do them or say them.

And, as we have seen this morning, the – ***EXHORTATION TO THE RICH!***

That we would use what God has blessed us with for His glory!

Also, as Paul closed out this letter, he told Timothy and us to – ***GUARD WHAT WAS COMMITTED TO YOU!***

One writer put it like this. He wrote,

This defines the essential work of the church and its leadership today.

It is not responsible to do new theology but to guard and exposit [elaborate] the apostolic deposit.

As William Barclay has suggested, an elder and preacher does well to remember that his duty is not to himself but to the truth and to his children and his children's children.

If in our day the church is weakened and enfeebled [weakened] by inattention to the deposit, if in our day Christian ethics are more and more melded into the world because of neglect of the deposit, if in our day the Christian faith is distorted by attempts to make it culturally relevant, we would not be the only losers, but also our children and their children.

We must guard the deposit. The apostolic urgency has not diminished.

Avoid! Guarding the deposit requires avoidance: "Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called 'knowledge,' for by professing it some have swerved from the faith" (vv. 20-21). . . .

Those who are leaders must guard the truth. We have received the gold, and we must render gold!

- R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, 1-2 Timothy and Titus, pp. 176-177

And I will close with this.

Let the Word of God by the Spirit of God and with the Grace of God guide you and you will be all that God wants you to be! Amen!