

Timothy... Don't Quit!

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Well, grab your Bibles and let's go back to 1 Timothy. We're in chapter 6, kinda on the downhill slope here at the end of this letter of the Apostle Paul to his younger understudy Timothy. He has placed Timothy in Ephesus to, um, continue reforming and setting up the church. We call this "Beautifying the Bride." He's telling Timothy here's the way the church, the bride of Christ, is to be fashioned, structured and to function and we've seen so much about that and, of course, all the way through he's giving personal admonitions, even commands to Timothy about what Timothy needs to do and how Timothy needs to respond, and we come to this last session and there may be, um, several parts to this, but I've entitled the exposition of 1 Timothy 6:12, "Timothy... Don't Quit!"

Video clip.
[Walking through the woods.]

Jeff Noblit. What do we say, Ry?

Ry. Never quit.

Jeff. Look at the camera and tell me again.

Ry. Never quit.

Jeff. Never quit.

[Walking further through the woods.]

Jeff. Hey, tell everybody you made it.

Ry. I made it.

Jeff. Now look at the camera. Say it again.

Ry. I did it!

Jeff. No, look at the camera.

Ry. [giggling] I did it!

End of video clip.

He wanted to go into the woods with me and as we were starting back up the hill, I knew for a 2 or 3 year old that was gonna be tough and there was some brush and I said, "I'm not gonna help you." I wanted him to learn that you gotta do things that you think you can't do. That's part of the reason why boys need fathers around. Momma would've picked him up over that branch and took him to the buggy, but, um, us guys are prone to want our young guys to begin to learn how to be men and face things.

Well, that's sort of where Timothy is. Timothy was struggling along in some ways. Uh, I asked myself the question why would Paul not just here at the end of the, the letter but numerous times throughout the letter he basically tells Timothy to keep on keeping on, Timothy, don't back up, don't give up, don't quit. But then I remembered some things about Timothy. First of all, Timothy was raised by women, by his mother Eunice and by his grandmother Lois, so probably things were softer in his raising than if he'd had a dad or a granddad around a lot, so maybe he needed a little more manly challenge. "Son, you don't quit. You keep going." Also, Timothy was a man who tended toward timidity, uh, insecurity. He would face challenges in battles but it was just harder for him. I think the reference Paul makes to him having stomach problems was probably from the difficulties and the challenges and the warfares of reforming a church to be biblically healthy. A third reason why I think he just often says to Timothy don't quit is that Paul is now writing from the perspective that he's at the end of his race. Paul has done it and he knows how hard it can be. He knows how crafty the enemy is. He knows how tempting it is to quit so he's charging Timothy afresh, "Timothy, don't quit." And this is a word for all of us here this morning. You may not be called into the ministry but you're a child of God and God's word to you this morning is we're not quitting. We're not slowing down. We're not backing up. We're not coasting. We're not quitting.

Let's glean from it for ourselves this morning. First of all, I., "Timothy, don't quit, instead you must keep on fighting the good fight of faith." Look at it there in our verse, 2 Timothy, or rather 1 Timothy 6:12, "Fight the good fight of faith." So Timothy, first of all here, you must keep on fighting the good fight of faith. Let me read the whole verse, "take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." So this first phrase, "Instead of quitting, Timothy, keep on fighting the good fight of faith." I got to thinking about that and I thought, you know, really every person on the earth is fighting a fight. They really are. Everybody's fighting in this life. They're fighting for more time. They're fighting for more money. They're fighting to find more pleasure. They're fighting for more popularity. Is it not amazing with, with, uh, the internet, the way people use it to promote themselves. More popularity. They're fighting for more power and more control. Boy, we see that everywhere. They're fighting for a longer life and for better health. And I'm not saying all these fights are wrong, there's good in that, certainly we should fight for those things.

I, I remember visiting with a, a dear man who was, uh, quite wealthy and he lived in an area of the country where very wealthy people live and, I mean, these people are just independently wealthy and he said, "You just wouldn't believe these people. They spend every waking moment looking for the next juice to drink to make their health better, the next vitamin concoction, the next workout, or yoga, or whatever it is just to squeeze every bit of, uh, time they can out of living longer on this earth." Fighting. Fighting for peace and fighting for contentment and on and on we could go, just to squeeze out of life something more, something better, but the problem is this fighting is never-ending because this world never truly satisfies.

In the context of judgment but also there's another side of the coin of what I'm about to say, also to show that God was revealing to Israel, "Now that you've turned to the world and not to Me, you're never really satisfied." Look at Hosea 4:10, "They will eat, but will not have enough." It's just not enough. "They will play the harlot, but not increase." You went after other gods, playing the harlot spiritually, but it's just not enough. "Because they have stopped giving heed to the LORD." Haggai 1: 6, "You have sown much, but harvested little; you eat, but there is not enough to be," there it is, "satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes." Now again, God's judgment is causing leanness to their lives but the other side of the coin is also true, when you look to this world which is what Israel had begun to do instead of looking to God for their peace, their joy, their satisfaction, their supply, they began to look to the world and God said, "How's it working out for you?" It's never enough, is it? Oh, but compare Proverbs 13:25, "The righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite, But the stomach of the wicked is in need."

So actually, friends, this morning whether you're a Christian or not a Christian, fighting is no option. All men are fighting through this life. The man of the world is fighting in frailty and in vanity, and no matter how hard he fights, he ends, ends up rather with total loss and eternal destruction. But now contrast with what he's saying to Timothy here, "Timothy, don't quit, instead you keep on fighting the good fight, the good fight of faith." The Christian, you see, like Timothy, fights not just any fight, he fights the good fight.

The word "good" in verse 12 is a Greek word that has the idea of excellence and sometimes it's translated "beauty or beautiful." I think they actually go together. For example, it's used in Luke, um, 5:21, uh, the temple was adorned with beautiful stones. Same word we have here for "good." A beautiful thing. While the best translation, I believe, is the word "good," is it not also true that it's a beautiful thing when you give yourself to the good fight, the fall of Christ, find your joy and satisfaction in him, give yourself to advance his work and his kingdom. It's beautiful because it's beneficial to yourself for both time and for eternity.

If you'll give yourself to the good fight of faith, it's beneficial to you for time and for all eternity, and in ways too wondrous and too marvelous to even comprehend. It's also beneficial to all those who will watch you and learn from you. If you'll fight the good fight of faith, you'll do the best, you'll be doing the best you can possibly do to bless and

help those around you as they watch your example, learn from your witness. And of course, when you fight the good fight of faith, you are most beneficial to Christ's eternal church and that, again, lasts for time and for eternity. So it's a good fight but it's a beautiful fight. That's a beautiful thing.

So here in verse 12 Timothy is exhorted, even commanded, "Timothy, don't quit. Keep on fighting the good fight." And by the way, let's remind ourselves that it's actually a grace gift to get in on the good fight. You didn't just in your wisdom decide, "I'm gonna follow Christ." You didn't just in your inherited virtue because you naturally have no virtue decide, "I'm gonna be a Christian and I'm gonna follow Jesus Christ." It's a grace gift that you and I are enabled to see the good fight and get in on it and put our arms around it and embrace it with our hearts. In addition to all of this, we fight in a battle where victory is assured. We fight from victory to victory. The victory's already been won, he's already saved us, he's placed us in his heavenly kingdom, and we're fighting for the ultimate victory one day when we get home to a beautified, glorified, eternal state with Jesus Christ. In every way this is the good fight. "Timothy," Paul says, "don't quit, instead keep on fighting the good fight of faith."

Now let's see here. II. He continues on here and he says, "and take hold of the eternal life to which you were called." So, Timothy, don't quit but instead I want you to take hold of the eternal life to which you've been called. Now when we think about what does it mean to take hold of the eternal life? Well, in the balance of biblical truth, the eternal life has at least two major components. Alright, so we're talking about what does this mean to take hold? "Timothy, don't quit but reach out and grab and embrace what's been given to you, this eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Two parts to eternal life. One is that this eternal life speaks to what Jesus called the abundant life, that you might have life and have it more abundantly. We might call it the Christ-centered life or the Christ-empowered life. Paul, on another occasion, calls it the Spirit-filled life. I believe all of these are talking about the same thing. Ephesians 5:18, "do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit." In other words, when you drink an alcoholic beverage, to a small degree or to a great degree you're giving alcohol the control of your life. He said, "Don't do that. Let the word of God by the power of the Spirit of God be the controlling factor in your life." That's embracing and living out this abundant life, the Spirit-filled life, the Christ-centered life. "So strive to walk, Timothy, in Christ in this life you received at the new birth. Timothy, don't quit, instead take hold of eternal life."

So one part of eternal life is, it's something we live out in everyday life. We have it now. We embrace it. We walk with Christ today. You have the special illuminating enablement of the Holy Spirit of God within you to help you grasp the truths of the word of God that you might live out these timeless eternal truths right now in everyday life. Well, another part of eternal life would be the glorified state, the eternal state that we will all get to one day, and I think part of what he's saying here, maybe this is the major thrust, is, "Timothy, don't quit until you get all the way home to the place we're headed to." You know why you can't quit? Because you're still here. Amen. You can't quit because you're

still here. There's no retirement on honoring Jesus. There's no retirement on loving Jesus Christ. There's no retirement on dedicating your heart and your life and your resources to Jesus Christ. You know, as a pastor I've thought about retirement and I thought, well, I may not physically, mentally be able to do what I've done in the past but I've asked the Lord, "Lord, just let me grow old effective for You." Some things may change but we never retire. We don't quit when walking with Jesus Christ until we get all the way home, until we get to that final eternal state.

Paul wrote about it to the Philippians this way, Philippians 3:12, "Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus." He says he in his sovereign grace laid hold of me and brought me to this place of being his child, but on the other side of the coin, I'm in time and space history. I must choose to labor to please him and live for him and honor him and lay hold of until I get all the way home to that glorified eternal state. We work until we get all the way home. There's no quitting until we get to the finish line. "Well, pastor, where's the finish line?" When you look like Jesus. When you're glorified with him in heaven. That's the finish line.

Now there's a little phrase here on this part of the text and you'll notice my outline is just breaking down the, the verse into one phrase at a time. He said, "Timothy, don't quit, instead take hold of eternal life," then here's the phrase, "to which you were called." To which you were called. What a strong motivation this is to us to never quit. Simply put – are you listening – you cannot stop what you didn't start. If you can stop, go ahead. If you can quit, go ahead, in one sense, because you didn't start this and you can't stop it. You didn't capture your heart and mind, God captured your heart and mind through the preaching of his gospel and the power of his Spirit. You didn't choose him first, he first chose you. All of this ridiculous, worldly, blasphemous nonsense today that church has been dumbed-down and reduced to going to some event on Sunday and hopefully it's entertaining and uplifting enough to make me want to come back, what nonsense. Church is because God saved me and God changed me. He's transformed my heart and my, my affections and my desires and he has placed me into his local church and that's where I belong and that's why I attend her meetings. Church is not something you attend, a church is that organism, that organization to which you belong. You were called to that. "You didn't start this thing so you can't stop it, Timothy. God called you to this." What a humbling that is.

What an endearing motivation this is. Now I couldn't just leave this alone. I have several thoughts on "calling" here. "Timothy, don't quit but instead keep laying hold of that eternal life to which you were called." Two aspects to this calling I want us to think about. First of all, based on the balance of biblical truth we know he called us to be with us. He called us that he might be with us, or you could say he called us that we might, we might be with him. He called us to fellowship. The Triune God of all glory, honor and power placed his heart upon me in eternity past – listen – that I might be his own and I might be with him. Talk about security of your salvation, Christ desires you to be with him and he's not gonna, nobody can thwart his will. We need to dwell upon the glorious truth of this. Remember, the focus of God in saving us was not primarily to keep men out

of hell, the primary focus of God in saving us is that he might have a people that would be his and be with him forever. Now it's wonderful beyond compare that getting saved you miss hell, but that's a secondary point in the balance of Scripture. The primary point is God says, "I want you to be Mine." We're a called out people. The word "ekklesia" appears, what, about 100 times in the New Testament. It's translated "church" and it almost always means a local church. Us. And literally the word "ekklesia" means "called out ones." You're the called of God, called to be with him, called to be in fellowship with him.

You know, it's interesting "the called" is a title that's seldom ever used today. We'll say we're Christians, we're saved, we're this and that, how many people that, "Who are you?" Say, "I'm one of the called." Why don't you? It's thoroughly biblical. It emphasizes an aspect of truth that I believe Satan wants us to forget.

Just a few verses. Romans 1:6, Paul addresses the church at Rome and says, "among whom you also are the called," you're the called ones, "of Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 1:24, "to those who are the called," you're the called, "both Jews and Greeks." Jude 1:1, "To those who are the called," again. Boy, I really love this one because of the image it creates for us, Revelation 17:14. This is after the church has been glorified with Christ, our, our, our groom and now we return with him in final judgment, it says, "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him," that's all of us, "are the called and chosen and the faithful." That order is very important because if you were not the called and the chosen, you'd never be the faithful. Get over your arrogant pride. You would not have chosen him to be faithful, you're only faithful because he first chose you. "The called." Isn't it interesting that Paul wants to lay that on Timothy and say, "Think about it, Timothy, you're one of the called ones so you can't quit." I love this emphasis.

Now we're still talking about that, first of all, we're called to be with him in fellowship with him, Mark 3:13-14, what a truth here, "And He," Jesus, "went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve," and here's the phrase, "so that they would be with Him," don't miss that, "and that He could send them out to preach." You know what some of you feel like God may be leading you in the pastoral ministry, I know many, many watch our broadcast in one way or the other. A pastor texted me this morning and said, "We're leaving for church and my wife was listening to something." This actually happened just a moment ago and the pastor said to his wife, "What are you listening to?" He said, she said, "I'm listening to Brother Jeff preach about silly women in the church."

Anyway, these were, these disciples that Jesus selected were called to be with him so that through their witness all the called ones may one day be with him, and this is what his high priestly prayer was centered on concerning us. John 17:24. Jesus prayed as the cross is looming right before him, "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me," there it is, "be with Me." I want them to be with me, Lord. I want them to be with me, Father. "Timothy, you can't quit. Do you not understand God called you to be His, and isn't it precious, Timothy? Isn't it humbling, Timothy? Isn't it marvelous, Timothy? God

wants your fellowship. You can't quit on Him now. You can't slack off now." What a glory this is.

Well, another aspect of this calling that certainly was a part of what Paul was saying to Timothy was the call to a mission, all in effect says to Timothy, "Timothy, be reminded that you were called to a mission. The King of kings and the Lord of lords has called you, Timothy, He's called all of us to join Him in the task of all tasks." Matthew 28:18-20, "Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them,' that includes local church assemblies, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." That's the task of all tasks. "Timothy, remember what you're called to," and, in effect, that's what Timothy's called to. Every minister of God is called to that but every Christian is called to join their ministers and let's all together as God's family keep this going on the earth. We're called to a mission. What an honor, what a privilege. "This calling from the highest of beings, God himself, to give ourselves to the highest of commissions, this can't be neglected, Timothy. You can't quit now." Are some of you sitting here this morning under my voice and you're leaning toward quitting? I have two words for you: don't quit! This is too great! It's too good! It's too glorious! It's too wondrous! If you let this pass you by, you're the fool of all fools. That's, in effect, what Paul's telling Timothy.

Now Timothy I don't think has at this point done this at all, he's just saying, "Timothy, I know you're kinda timid, I know you're insecure, I know you've been really hurt when people rose up against you in the church." He didn't say this but, "You weren't raised by men, you were mostly raised by women. They were probably too pampering of you and, Timothy, you need to man up and keep going. Don't stop. Don't quit."

Well, the next thing, "Timothy, don't quit, you can't quit because you need to remember something and remember you, you've made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. Remember you've made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." That's the last part of the verse, the verse there. "And," the conjunction means Paul's just building one charge and principle upon another and says, "And, Timothy, by the way, you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. God did call you, Timothy, in His sovereign grace but you answered and publicly made your confession, you could say profession, known in front of men."

The word "confession" here is the Greek word "homologia, logia," I guess you could say. Homologia means "the same and then to speak." It means you've made this statement that you're one with Christ, you're the same, you're one of his, you're a follower of his. You've made the confession, Timothy. When we talk about our Confession of Faith as a church, we use the New Hampshire Confession of Faith which was the earliest of the more popular Confessions of Faith among Baptists in America many years ago and we've modified it, not to change what's in it but to amplify some of the elements in it. But that's our Confession. It's just words, logia. It's the word. It speaks the word of what we believe. Someone said that confession is the substance of our profession. "Timothy, your

profession here is that you confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Timothy, you did this before I knew you, you did this in like Iconium and in Lystra, they, regions where you grew up in. You did this in your home. You did this in your community. It's out there, Timothy." Baptism, by the way, is the profession of faith in Jesus Christ. In baptism what are we doing? We're confessing that Jesus is our Lord and Savior and we're confessing because of that we pledge our loyalty to this local church. Baptism is never baptism if it's not before the local church in which you're gonna serve Christ. It needs both of those, a pledging or a testimony of your conversion and your allegiance to Christ as Lord and Savior and then to serve Christ as your Lord and Savior in a local church.

Timothy had done that so, "Timothy, you must finish what you've started. What a shame, Timothy, to turn back or even fall back now." And for Timothy there's a third component, "Not only have you confessed, 'Jesus is my Lord and Savior,' not only have you pledged loyalty to serve him in the local church but, Timothy, you've also confessed, 'God has led me to the office of pastor.'" And I use that in a general sense because at this point you might technically call him an apostle's assistant but he is functioning as pastor in full time ministry in the church at Ephesus. So he had a third component, full-time ministry, and for Timothy this profession or this confession was more than a one-time thing and that's true for all of us. It's more than just words, it includes our life, our lifestyle. He's saying, "Timothy, your whole life thus far has been a good strong confession of Jesus Christ. It would be the utmost shame, Timothy, and the utmost disgrace at this point to fall back." Someone said the more we have progressed, the less excuse we have to digress.

Well, church, I couldn't help but think of Grace Life Church of the Shoals right there. Hopefully it's true. I believe it's true that by God's grace for 40 years together now we've progressed. I remember in those early days when I, I looked at our church and I thought this thing of what conversion to Christ, salvation, we're missing something here. I knew some things were bad wrong but I wasn't sure what it was and so I began to take us through a deep study of the Scriptures and of Baptist history and I found out some things, our Baptist forefathers would be shocked by a lot of the motions, the procedures, if not the antics of what Baptists do today to say get you saved. They would've never done those. The history is clear on it. Charles Haddon Spurgeon's probably the greatest evangelistic Baptist pastor who ever lived and he'd never had a mourner's bench, he never had an altar call, he never called people to the front. You know why? It's not in the book. He gave them everything the book said you do to get people saved but he didn't give them fleshly dependent antics or hoop jumps.

So I thought something's wrong at Grace Life. How can we be baptizing all these people in six weeks or six months later we can't find them anymore? And so we went on a long journey together and a lot of people were unhappy about that, a lot of other churches and Baptist folks outside of our assembly were unhappy about it and let us know they were unhappy about it, and I wanna tell ya, I wanted to quit a lot of times but now today we got that fixed and now today it, and I'm not just exaggerating and throwing out percentages, instead of having like 90% of the folks we baptized be inactive or become inactive two years later, now 90+% of our people are faithful two years later. We've come too far to quit. We're reformed too well by God's grace to quit.

I thought about membership. I wasn't your pastor just a little while and I got to looking at the membership roll and I thought, good night, there's almost 2,000 people on our membership roll that the FBI couldn't find. And we did know about quite a few of them and they lived out there in the world like they were heathens and had never been changed by the power of the gospel, yet we said by our church membership roll they were members in good standing and good disciples of Jesus Christ. I thought, Lord, this has got to change. And by the way, we didn't do it all right. We did the best we knew how to do but we didn't have any example to follow so we just did the best we know and we started updating our membership rolls. Y'all remember the Sunday I dismissed 500 people for forsaking church? Boy, it was fun the next 6-8 months after that. I had some mommas calling me, "You took my baby off the roll!" Her baby was 45, 45 years old. And today we have a very accurate true membership at Grace Life Church. You know, on our biggest Sundays, some Sundays our biggest Sundays we'll have 200-300 people more in attendance than we have in membership. That's healthy. We've come too far to quit now. We've come too far to turn back now. Now we've gotta take this and help others and I need you with me. I need your prayers. I need your support. I need your example. And I need your money.

I thought about corrective church discipline and how I'd read about it and studied about it. In 1875, the Baptist churches of Georgia excommunicated, disciplined from membership 75,000 people. Woo. Now there was some abuse and I thought today it's right the opposite. Today you get excommunicated from the Baptist fellowship if you discipline people. That's just the truth. It took years and years and years. I was learning, you were learning, but today that's just a pattern of healthy church life. If your church has no discipline – listen to me – it's not a church. It's just not a church. I'm sorry. I don't know what it is but it's not a church. Maybe God in grace actually saves some people in that setting but it's not a church. And we've got that going and it's running well and the spirit is right about it and that's what blesses me the most. It's never to condemn and it's never to boast us up as arrogant or better, it's love and compassion and humility for the glory of God.

We've come too far to quit now. Personalized Strategic World Missions, what a journey that's been. We've come too far to turn back now. Small groups, how we've reformed that through the years and how blessed it is. And on and on we could go and now we come to the place, we've been doing this for many years where we're now mentoring other pastors and churches and the last piece of the machine having some structured way to help us do that, it's not everything but a structured training is needed and now we've got that in place. It needs a lot of work. Dr. Tim S.'s helped me a lot on all of this but it needs a lot of work but it's, it's rolling. Can't quit now. Just can't. You just can't quit. I'm not gonna let you quit. Just forget it. "I'm gonna go somewhere." You can't go nowhere else, not gonna let you. We'll let the air out of your tires. Can't quit now. Come too far. Come too far! We can't quit now!

That's what Paul's telling Timothy. "Timothy, you've made a lot of progress. You've helped this church, Timothy." He says, "Don't quit now. Don't quit now." You've made

the good confession. Grace Life Church of the Shoals, you've made a good confession that you believe the Bible. Now listen, you've made a good confession that we can actually structure our church to be thoroughly biblical and God will bless it. Church, you've made a good confession. "Timothy, you've made a good confession. Don't quit now. Don't quit now."

The world makes their confessions of faith, do they not? I mean, if you go out and talk to people in the world, they're making their confessions of faith. They're, they trust in science and make a confession, "Our, our faith is in science. Science will save us." I get so tickled today when they start criticizing us conservatives, "Y'all don't trust the science." You know what the science was saying when I was a teenager? That we're having another ice age. It's true. You know why? When I was a boy and a teenager, we had some, just a series of very bad winters right down here in the mid-South. I literally remember sledding for weeks at a time. Boy, I wish we could have some more of that. That would be so fun. The science, and by the way, it wasn't really true science. It was their speculative hypotheses. We'll have another ice age. Now they're saying we're having global warming but now that's not panning out as the data keeps coming in so they just said, "Well, we'll just call it climate change." When the pandemic started, and I'm not saying these people had ill motives, when the pandemic started, "Don't, don't, don't wear a mask. Masks don't help. Don't wear a mask." Now, "Wear a mask! Wear a mask! It's the only thing that will save us." I'm for wearing a mask. I believe there's wisdom in it, but what I'm saying is science keeps telling us stuff and then changing its mind but people have faith in science. Remember, "We just need 15 days to flatten the curve"? Well, we're on about six months and the curve got flattened but now, now they've changed the end result. Now we've gotta make sure nobody in America ever gets sick again, period.

Now folks, for something to be scientific it, scientific it has to be observable and reproducible. Every time you have these things in order, you get this result every time. That's science. So what I'm saying, I, you and I trust science, this is just not science but people have, look, folks, people have their whole faith in man and his scientific abilities. Their whole faith. They put their faith in religion. They put their faith in education. They put their faith in human goodness. They put their faith in their own morality and their own, uh, uh, ethics and at the end of the day it's all faith in self. People make their confessions of faith who don't know Christ. You know what? They're called too. Remember he said, "Timothy, you are called to this and you made this good confession." Well, they're called and they make their confession except it's not the good call, it's the call of the antichrist spirit. It's the call of the unholy spirit. Jesus said in John 8:23, "And He was saying to them, 'You are from below,'" they're getting a call from below, he said but, "I am from above." James 3:15, "This wisdom," this worldly wisdom that man put their, men put their faith in, this "is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly," nature, "natural," rather and, "demonic." And this unholy spirit call of people to put their faith in anything and everything but God's provision in his Son Jesus Christ, this unholy, unholy spirit's call began in the garden of Eden when Satan told Eve, "Go ahead and eat of that tree. You, you'll be like God when you do that, in effect, you'll be your own god. You'll make your own rules. You'll decide for yourself what's right and wrong,

good and bad. You don't need anybody outside of yourself." Is that not where our world is today? They'll make up morality and what's good and bad and, by the way, it changes every week. That's the calling of the unholy spirit. It's not the good calling and it's not the good confession.

"But Timothy," Paul is saying, "you're not of these. You are called to a better confession, Timothy, to the good confession, good meaning that which is excellent and beautiful. The confession of one called not of the unholy spirit but of the blessed true Holy Spirit of God. So Timothy, stay the course." Then lastly he says in verse 12, "in the presence of many witnesses. Timothy, you can't quit. You need to keep on fighting the good fight of faith. You need to hold to this eternal life. It's what, it's to which you've been called. You've already made the good confession and you made it in front of many witnesses. Timothy, you've been an example to so many, now end well. Now finish up well. Don't quit." Hebrews 12:1 reminds us, "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."

I just want to throw this in. During this pandemic, I believe not many, Grace Life has done very well through this but I believe there's some of the brethren, these are good brothers and sisters, that the evil one's taken advantage of them and they may not have quit but they're leaning over on quitting. Can you give them a message from me and the Apostle Paul? Don't quit. You know, the pandemic got us out of Sunday school, it got us out of coming together for worship, it got us out of this, and some of you may have gotten out of giving, I don't know, it's time for you to get back with it. You've made the good confession in front of many witnesses right up there in that baptistery or in somebody's baptistery. You belong to God and to God's local church and, by the way, we need you. It's just not about, "Well, I can get just as much if I listen to this or go there." It's not about you, it's about us. That junior boy over here, sir, needs to sing you, see you singing the songs of the faith. It'll help him serve God when he gets older. Do you get it, church? We need each other. Don't quit. That junior girl, lady, needs to see you praying with a tear in your eye because your love for Jesus just kinda just overwhelms you that Sunday. It'll help her later on saying, "I'm going on with Jesus no matter what these hellish, ungodly professors in my university tell me." We need each other. Gotta have each other. I'll just be honest, I am, I am wholly dependent upon you. You keep me going. We need each other.

"Timothy, you made this confession in front of so many witnesses. Do you realize, Timothy, how much damage it would do to them if you quit now?" I want to say, "Paul, he hadn't quit. There's no evidence he's quit." Paul says, "Yeah, but he'll want to one day." You may be saying, "Pastor, I'm here and you're screaming at me." Yeah, but you'll wanna quit one day. You will but you can't. You can't stop what you didn't start. God called you to this. So in essence what Paul's telling to Timothy here is, "Timothy, what will everyone think? What will everyone think?" That's, that's not an improper motivation if you just kinda fall out. "Timothy," in effect Paul is saying, "you're a young man but you have established a strong profession both by word and by deed before all so let's not quit now."

Grace Life Church and all of you dear, precious individual members of Grace Life Church, 1,001 ways you individually and we as a body have made a good confession and we need to do what Paul tells Timothy, "Don't slack off now. Don't fall back now. Don't coast now. Don't quit, we ain't done yet." Great great days are ahead for God's church and God's people.