

THE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Timothy 6:11-16

“Rules of Engagement”

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Anaheim Hills, CA | RockCC.com

29:52

I wanna invite you to make your way to 1 Timothy in your copy of God's word. If you didn't bring one, there should be one hiding underneath of your chair or maybe the chair in front of you that you can follow along in those as well.

30:02

We're gonna be in 1 Timothy, chapter six. We're gonna look at verses 11 through 16 together this week and as you guys are turning there, just kind of a reminder of where we were last week because this week's passage from Paul to Timothy is kind of a direct continuation from last week's idea.

30:20

The idea just continues into this week. So last week, if you weren't with us, Paul is warning Timothy, he's telling him to beware because there's a different doctrine out there, that there are people who don't believe in what he described as the sound words of Jesus Christ, that there are people that would believe differently, there's teaching that leads us away from Jesus instead of towards Jesus and those different beliefs, those different doctrines create pride in people, create craving for controversy in people, create this infighting and these quarrels, these things that are identified by people that are not following Jesus in the way that they're supposed to.

30:59

And so he focused his command on the importance of being content with what we have. We don't need to look for more, we don't need to want more, we don't need to look at each other with suspicions and evil thoughts in our minds towards other people, we need to be content in where God has put us.

31:16

I think we could actually add to that from Ephesians chapter four, what Paul said to the Ephesians just a couple of years before this letter, first Timothy was written. He said in Ephesians chapter four, to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bonds of peace.

31:31

There's one body and one spirit. Just as you were called to that one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is overall and through all and in all.

31:44

It's important for us to maintain those bonds of unity in the midst of a world where it is so easy for us to run off the rails, but this week Paul continues in that same thought process and he's gonna talk to us about how we can win that fight, how we should fight the fight and how essentially Paul's giving us his rules of engagement of how we're going to fight well and how we're going to learn not to fight at times.

32:08

And so Paul lays out for us this week and this is the outline for this week that we're gonna look at. He's gonna tell us that we need to know when to run. He's gonna tell us that we need to know when to fight and ultimately he's gonna tell us that we need to know who will win.

32:21

We need to know when to run, when to fight and we need to know who will win. So I wanna encourage you to follow along in your copy or follow along on the screens. We're gonna look at first Timothy chapter six verses 11 through 16 together.

32:32

And he says in verse 11, but as for you, oh man of God, flee these things, these things that he was just talking about a few verses earlier. He says to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness and gentleness.

32:47

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you are called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God who gives life to all things and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time.

33:12

He who is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, who no one has ever seen or can see, to him be honor and eternal dominion.

33:26

Amen. These are the words of the Lord. Would you pray with me? God, we're thankful for your word. We're thankful for the opportunity to gather together this morning and God to humble ourselves before what you have to say to us.

33:39

God, we pray that as we look at this passage and kind of tie it together with last week's passage, we pray that you would help us to know when fights are worth fighting and when things are things that we should lay aside.

33:50

When we need to run from things and when we need to stand up and fight for things. And God, we pray that you would fill our hearts with the hope of knowing that ultimately this is a fight that you are going to win on our behalf.

34:01

So God, we give this time to you. We pray that you would use it for your glory and for our good. And it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. All right. Well, as we jump in, the first thing that we see in verse 11 is Paul's telling us it's important for us to know when we need to run.

34:16

You know, as I was writing this week, as I was kind of putting all the thoughts together for this message, I could not get an old song out of my head. So I know many of you guys know I grew up in the South, right?

34:27

I was born in North Carolina, lived in Virginia for most of my life. And so while I wasn't a country music fan, believe that if you will, my family was, right? And so I would go, I love spending time with my grandfather and we'd go down and sit in his wood shop and we would do all kinds of little projects.

34:42

He'd help me with little pine derby cars or we would work on building a bird house or this or that, whatever it was. And he always had country music on the radio. And so Johnny Cash and some of those old guys are just, they're burned into the back of my mind whether I like it or not.

34:55

But this week, as I was writing all this, when we were talking about how we need to know when to run, I could not get, some of you guys are probably already singing it in the back of your mind, right?

35:04

The song, The Gambler by Kenny Rogers, you got to know when to hold them and you got to know when to fold them. You need to know when to walk away and you got to know when to run, right? You got to know when to run.

35:14

And so I think Paul, maybe, I don't know if Kenny Rogers ever footnoted Paul in his credits, but I think he's kind of saying the same thing for us here, right? Christian, you need to know when it's time to walk away.

35:27

You need to know when it's time to run away, right? And he says in verse 11, but as for you, Timothy, oh, man of God, flee from these things. He's telling him to run away from the stuff that he was talking about last week.

35:37

Paul's exhortation is for Timothy to run as he refers back to the vices of these false teachers that he was talking about in the previous paragraph. He mentioned things like the false teachers had conceit, they had greed in their hearts, they had this desire to be rich, they wanted to stir up controversy, they wanted to create all these fights and they were causing people to wander away from the faith.

36:02

If we look at that, that looks like a dangerous list, especially for people who would live inside of this church family, this church community there in Ephesus, Timothy's telling him, Paul is excuse me, telling Timothy, there's no place for this in the house of God.

36:18

There's no place for all of these things. Paul is telling Timothy to flee, to run away. It's not good enough to just tolerate the presence of sinful habits of selfishness and all these things that are mentioned in the prior paragraph.

36:31

We have to actively avoid them. We cannot just allow them to sit quietly in the corner to just be these little polite pet sins that we, you know, a little bit of conceit is okay, a little bit of pride is okay.

36:42

That's not one that anybody's got big problems with. So it can just kind of sit in the corner quietly and we're okay with it. Now eventually that sin, whatever sin it is, if we allow it to take root in our lives, it's not a cute little kitten forever.

36:55

Eventually it's going to grow up into a big mean lion. It's going to eat you one day, right? Sin is never, never a safe thing for us to keep around. And so Paul is telling Timothy, run away, get away from these things, these sinful habits of selfishness and conceit and slander and evil suspicions, envy, dissensions, all these things that are mentioned in the prior paragraph.

37:17

We have to actively get away from them. You know what? He's talking about this and he's talking about fleeing from evil, but fleeing from evil is of little value if it's not accompanied by also having the active pursuit of doing the right thing.

37:32

We see this idea, there's numerous passages all over the Bible, especially the New Testament, especially in Paul's different writings, talking about the importance of taking off the sinful habits and putting on the godly habits.

37:44

We see it in Galatians chapter five that talks about the works of the flesh that have no place in the Christian's life and the works of the spirit that God should be continuing to foster and to create in our lives.

37:56

Colossians chapter three talks about how we have to put to death what is earthly within us and we have to put on the new self, right? The same thing, we have to get away from the bad things, from the sinful things and we have to run towards the good habits.

38:10

We have to put on the new self. In fact, Ephesians chapter four, I love this section. Ephesians four verses 22 through 32, it talks about this same idea of putting off the old self, but then it compares very directly, it compares the old negative sinful action and then it gives you a redeemed, holy, godly action that should take its place.

38:31

So if he's going through this list, I don't want to read all of the passages, but in Ephesians chapter four, Paul tells the believers to put away falsehood, flee from that sinful practice, don't be a liar, but instead speak the truth to your neighbor.

38:48

Don't just run away from the bad, but instead do the right thing. He also continues in that same passage. He says that a thief must no longer steal, he must stop stealing, but instead he must labor. He says, let him do honest work with his hands so that he might have something to share with anyone in need.

39:06

He continues on, he says, let no one wholesome talk come out of your mouth. It's good to reel those words in, to reel in the way that we use our words, but instead let no one wholesome talk come out of your mouth, but instead use your words to edify and to build others up, to say only those things that are encouraging and profitable for the person who hears them.

39:28

He continues on, he says, let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you along with all malice, but instead be kind and be tenderhearted and be forgiving to one another.

39:41

Don't be angry, be kind. Don't be a person who continues to slander and hold grudges against people. Be forgiving and be tenderhearted towards one another. By this point when we get to 1 Timothy, it shouldn't surprise us that Paul is telling Timothy, hey, no, no, these things have no place in your life.

40:00

They have no place in the life of a believer, someone who says, I belong to Christ, but instead do these things in your life. Instead he says it's not just enough to run away from these sinful things.

40:12

Flee these things, but pursue righteousness, pursue godliness, pursue faith, pursue love, pursue steadfastness. I love that word. It's just a beautiful word picture, right? Steadfastness, it means to have your feet set strong so that nothing can knock you around when the winds of life start blowing around.

40:32

You got a good base underneath of you, right? Be steady in the way that you stand in your faith. He says to pursue gentleness as well. God's spirit is at work in us. When we

give our lives to Jesus, when we receive his offer of salvation, the Bible tells us there's lots of things that happen in that moment when we become a child of God.

40:52

It tells us that we're adopted into God's family. It tells us that our sin was placed on Jesus in that moment, and Jesus' righteousness that he earned before the Father was placed onto our account. The Bible tells us that we are justified in that moment, that God looks at us and says, no longer guilty, you are now clean and forgiven and right in my sight.

41:11

The Bible also tells us that the Holy Spirit comes and lives inside of us, that we are made a new creation like we talked about last week during baptism. As we become a new creation, as God's Holy Spirit comes and lives inside of us, the Bible tells us that that Holy Spirit that lives in us starts to work in us and starts to change us, that our habits start to change, that our affections start to change, that the things that we see ourselves doing, that it doesn't happen immediately.

41:38

It doesn't happen in an instant where every angry moment, every evil thought, every sinful habit, that those are immediately gone, right? Anybody that's ever lived the Christian life for more than about two minutes can tell you that's not how it works.

41:52

But God does continue to work in our lives day after day after day that His Holy Spirit is sanctifying us. It's that process, the big word that Romans uses to talk about how God is cleaning us up, that He's making us a little bit more into the person that He wants us to be day after day after day.

42:09

So God's Spirit is producing many of these things in us that if we pursue righteousness and godliness and faith and love and steadfastness and gentleness, this list that Paul lays out, God is at work creating those things in us.

42:23

Galatians chapter five talks about the fruit of the Spirit. That's evidence of how God is at work in our lives, that if you are a believer and if the Holy Spirit is working in you, your life will be seen as loving, as joyful, as patient, as kind, as all those things that are mentioned in Galatians chapter five.

42:44

The Spirit is at work in us and by doing so, He is creating those things in us. But you know what? While it tells us that the Spirit is working in us to produce those things, we are also told to actively pursue them.

42:58

This isn't something that we just get to sit back. The Christian life is not a passive one where we say, alright Jesus, my life is yours. I'm going to go take a break in the lazy boy and if you want to do some stuff to me, that's cool.

43:10

Right? We have to actively pursue these habits. We have to actively pursue the life that God is inviting and calling us to. God will work in us. God will, through the power of His Holy Spirit, make us more and more into the person that He wants us to be.

43:25

But that's not an excuse for us to just sit back and go, alright do your thing and I'll just be here laying around waiting. God will do some of the work, but we also have work to do. Philippians chapter two verses 12 through 13 kind of really beautifully balances this responsibility that God is at work in us and we have responsibility in pursuing God.

43:46

Philippians two, it says, therefore my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now not only as in my presence, but 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 work for His good pleasure.

44:03

Did you hear that? It's the same sentence. There's not even a period or a question mark or anything in the middle of this. It says that we are supposed to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, comma, for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

44:18

We both have a responsibility to do, right? God is at work in us and God ultimately is sovereign over us and God is ultimately in control of all things and we cannot, cannot ignore the fact that God is in control, right?

44:30

You read the Bible for about two minutes, you're going to come across place after place where God is in control and we can trust Him with whatever it is that's going on. But that doesn't mean we just get to sit back and be lazy.

44:42

We get to just sit back and say, God, it's your job to clean me up. I got nothing to do with it. We should also pursue all of these things. We need to actively run after what God is inviting us to run after.

44:54

That we need to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Work out your salvation and God is at work in you. I think that gives us a responsibility that we need to step up and also hope that it's not just us that needs to figure it out for ourselves, right?

45:11

So we need to figure out, we need to know when to run away from those sins and run towards those righteous things. We also, verses 12 through 14, talk about how we need to know when to fight. Verses 12 through 14, Paul tells Timothy to fight the good fight of the faith.

45:26

He says to take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God who gives life to all things and of Christ Jesus who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

45:48

Yeah, maybe this isn't the encouraging thing that you came to church to hear this morning, but sometimes following Jesus is a fight. Sometimes following Jesus, sometimes living the Christian life, sometimes doing the things that you're supposed to do, it's difficult at times, right?

46:03

Anybody ever experienced that before in life? If you know that you're supposed to do something, it seems like thing after thing after thing are going to get in the way, right? Following Jesus is not something that the enemy just passively sits back and says, yeah, go for it.

46:21

If you want to love Jesus, if you want to do things the way that he tells you to, go for it. See, we're not just walking on a path unhindered in any way. Christian walk is an active fight. It's an active war zone that we're living in.

46:34

And so we have to fight, we have to stand firm and we have an enemy, we have an adversary, that the devil who wants to see us fail, that when things start to go well, spiritual warfare is not far behind, right?

46:48

And so when we see this, when Paul warns Timothy and encourages him to fight the good fight, the reality is he's telling Timothy there are gonna be many trials that tempt the man of God or a woman of God to abandon faith in Jesus.

47:04

There's gonna be many temptations that try to knock us off the straight and narrow. Things that we know that we're supposed to do, things that we know that we're supposed to be kind of identified by in our lives.

47:15

Those good habits, eventually there's gonna become moments where temptation tries to knock us off that path, left or right or wherever it may be. But the man of God must fight to maintain his faith. You know, this is a call to stand strong against the flesh, to stand strong against temptation and that can be temptation that comes from around us, or that can be temptation that comes from inside of us.

47:38

Because we have that enemy inside of us as well, right? And not the devil, not some external force, but we are sinful people and we constantly are at war with the desires and the cravings and the things that are living inside of us as well.

47:54

What Paul's inviting Timothy to hear, he's calling on Timothy to persevere to the end, to stand firm. But I want you guys to look at this verse again. In verse 12, he says, fight the good fight of the faith.

48:06

And I want you to notice what he doesn't say, right? He is not saying anywhere in that, he does not say fight a good fight in the church. He says fight the good fight of the faith. It seems like if you've lived around church, if you've been really around any people, but it seems like especially in the church, in my experience, I've spent a lot of time in my life around the church, and there's always someone who wants to fight in the church.

48:30

Somebody always wants to pick a fight or be upset about something yet. Sometimes it doesn't even make sense why they're upset. I don't like this, I'm mad, why? I don't know! I wanted something done this way, I don't like that person.

48:43

I think we should be doing this instead of that, whatever it is. And a lot of the times it's kind of irrational, right? I don't want blue chairs, we want green chairs.

48:55

Paul orders Timothy, I charge you to keep the commandment, to boil this whole section down, fight the good fight, take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

49:10

Then he says in verse 13, I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach. What he's talking about here, to keep that commandment. He's talking about fighting the Christian fight for the faith.

49:28

And he's talking about defending Orthodox Christianity. The things that we talked about just last week that we described as the sound words, the sound teachings of Jesus Christ. Verse three, back in our same chapter.

49:41

This fight has to do with doctrine. This fight has to do with standing up and guarding the truth. It's kind of a banner that goes over first Timothy and second Timothy and Titus. It's this whole series that we're gonna be looking at this year.

49:55

It's this same idea. He's saying, don't let enemies come in and pervert what I've given you. Stand firm in the truth. Stand up and fight when you need to stand up and fight. What Paul is telling Timothy and what Paul by extension is telling us is that we need to stand up and defend the absolutes of Christianity.

50:14

We actually, our church, with this kind of idea in mind, we wrote our statement of beliefs with this kind of set aside as an important subheader in the whole big document. If you're unfamiliar with our belief statement, I stuck a QR code in that you can pull out your phone and scan that.

50:31

It's gonna take you to our website. We are just loud and proud about it. We put it out on the website and there's different headings or classifications in our belief statement because there are some things that we describe as absolutes.

50:43

This isn't a negotiable thing that we can agree to disagree on. If you don't believe that God is one God in three persons, if you don't believe in the Trinity, we have a problem. You don't believe in the same God that we do.

50:55

You don't believe that Jesus was fully God and fully man that he came and lived among us and that when he died on the cross, he was the only uniquely qualified person to pay the sin debt and to absorb the wrath of God so that we could be forgiven.

51:08

If you don't believe those things, we're not the same. We don't believe the same things. We're not of the same faith. You have some other religion. You're a part of some other thing because it is through Jesus and Jesus alone.

51:20

It is through our faith in Jesus alone that we are saved. There's no negotiating on that. That's not something that we can just be okay to agree to disagree on, right? We believe that the Bible is perfectly inspired and breathed out by God.

51:38

We believe that there are no errors in the Word of God. We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, not that it contains the Word of God. That's an important differentiation that some people would say, yeah, yeah, there's some good stuff from God in here.

51:51

No, no, no, no, it's all from God in here that it is breathed out by God. It is inspired by God and there are no errors. There are no mistakes. There are no disagreements. There's nothing in there that we need to correct or modify.

52:02

Paul didn't understand where our society was gonna be a couple thousand years later. We need to modify and cross out and fix some things in here. No, no, we believe that the Bible is God's Word and if God gave it to us, that's the authority in our lives.

52:16

No matter what anybody else has to say, we stand on the absolutes. What Paul is telling Timothy to fight for, he's telling him to stand up firm and to defend the absolutes. But there's also a lot of arguments, there's a lot of things, there's a lot of fights that are not worth fighting about.

52:35

Anybody that's ever been in church has realized that there's fights that pop up all the time that maybe we should probably learn through wisdom to let some of those things go, right? If we're gonna repaint the hallway, everybody's gonna have an opinion about what color it should be.

52:48

It's not a fight worth fighting about. Whether the chairs are blue or green, whether the instruments, we play this instrument or that instrument, whatever the song choices are that we're singing in church, that's not something for us to fight about and for us to divide about.

53:03

Whether we pass the plates and receiving offering or whether we have boxes at the back, that's not a fight that's worth fighting about. There's some things that God has instructed, has told his church that we are supposed to be unified, that we are supposed to live under this banner of the way that you will know that you are my disciples, the way that the world will know that you guys belong to me is by the way that you treat each other, is by the way that you love each other, is by the way that you are united in the midst...

53:31

Guys, there is no assembly anywhere in the world that we could get 200 people together and we could get them all to agree on anything, right? That is a supernatural thing. If we can get a church to be united under the banner of Jesus and stand firm on the things that we're supposed to stand firm about and then just offer grace and acceptance to the

things that maybe we don't really, I don't care if you listen to the same type of music as me.

53:55

If you like Kenny Rogers, do you, right? You do your thing. It's okay for us sometimes to be united and to also disagree on some things as long as we know which fights are worth fighting and which ones, it's time for us to put our weapons down.

54:11

You know, this same group as Paul had established the Ephesians church, Ephesian church. He had been in Ephesus years earlier and kind of been there as this church was started. And he had left and gone away and he wrote a letter, the book of Ephesians to this church.

54:26

And then he sent Timothy there and now he's writing another letter to Timothy and by extension the Ephesian church. But in the first letter that Paul wrote to the Ephesians in the book of Ephesians, Paul talks in Ephesians chapter six about how there's a war that's happening around us.

54:44

There is spiritual warfare that is happening. And so Ephesians chapter six talks all about how we need to be prepared for that war. And it talks about the armor of God about how we clothe ourselves in armor to be prepared so that we're not running out naked onto a battlefield exposed and ready to be shot from all sides, but we need to be ready.

55:04

We need to have a breastplate of righteousness. We need to have our feet shot with the preparation of the gospel of peace that we need to have boots to protect our feet. We need to have a breastplate to protect our vital organs.

55:14

We need a helmet of salvation. We need a shield of faith. He talks about all these things. He tells us how to be prepared for the fight that is coming, right? There is a fight that is coming. And he's telling us be prepared because spiritual warfare is a very real thing.

55:31

One primary weapon that the enemy uses is causing fighting and dissension among God's church. That's why Paul is instructing Timothy here. It's important for us to know when we need to fight. It's important for us to have the wisdom to know on the things that we don't need to fight about when it's time to lay those weapons down.

55:48

It's never a pleasant thing to fight, but there are some things that are worth fighting for, right? There are some things that are worth fighting for and an important skill for us to develop as we mature in our faith, as we grow up and as we learn more and become more wise.

56:03

An important skill for us to refine is knowing which fights we should fight. There's some important fights that are worth fighting, right? Defending the faith, no, no, no, no. No, salvation is not any other way.

56:14

Salvation is through Jesus and Jesus alone. Jesus is the only way that salvation comes. That's a fight worth fighting. You don't get to follow some other religion. It's, oh, no, no, all roads lead to heaven.

56:24

It's okay. No, Jesus is pretty clear. I'm it, right? That's a fight worth fighting. But there's some fights that have no place among the family of God. And so I think it requires wisdom to know when to fight and for us to know when to unite on things.

56:40

It's important for us to know when to run. It's important for us to know when to fight. But finally, Paul offers this encouragement for us in the last couple of verses of our passage because he says it's important to know who's actually gonna win the fight at the end.

56:53

As Paul's reflecting on this battle, on this spiritual war that is going to happen around us and is inviting us, is encouraging us to persevere and to stand strong in our faith. You know what he does?

57:06

He breaks out in worship. In this spontaneous worship, he starts just talking about how awesome Jesus is. That's kind of a perfect interjection, isn't it? Verses 14 through 16, he's telling Timothy, keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time.

57:27

He who is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, who no one has ever seen or can see, to him be honor and eternal dominion, amen.

57:43

You know, this section is being placed at this point in Paul's argument. I don't think that's an accident. You know, Paul is telling Timothy, it's hard to be united at times when we all wanna fight, when the fleshy sinful man says, no, no, I'm right.

57:58

And everybody else needs to know that I'm right. And so we start arguing over different things. Being united at times when we just wanna get all up in ourselves, it's hard. And fighting for things that we need to be fighting for, that's exhausting sometimes too.

58:13

It's really difficult sometimes to keep fighting day after day after day. To stand firm in the basic doctrines of Christianity, it was difficult back then where Paul is writing letters to these churches and in this Roman world that Paul was living in.

58:29

Christians were not popular people. Maybe they were cheered for every once in a while, but it was because they were being hunted, they were being drug out of their homes, they were being thrown into coliseums, and they were being fed to lions for sport.

58:42

This was something that they did in the Roman society for fun. They hunted the Christians and fed them to lions. They laid them out before the gladiators. They were exterminating Christians. And so in that culture, Paul's saying, oh no, stand firm, keep fighting, keep standing against this onslaught of attack that's coming from all sides.

59:06

And while we're not in danger of being fed to any lions today. We can publicly assemble, we don't have to hide in our homes and keep our faith secret. We do live in a society that is constantly attacking Christianity and basic beliefs in who God is, basic beliefs that God has laid out for us, right?

59:27

It seems like every day, every week, every year, somebody has decided that something that we commonly accepted and believed for generations past, now actually we figured it out, you get to just be whatever you want to be, right?

59:39

Truth is all relative. You get to just do whatever makes you happy, just follow your heart and just do whatever it is that you believe is right. No, God said what's right. If we believe in absolute truth and we believe in what God has said, if we want to stand up firm and to fight for the things that God has said are absolutes, that is an exhausting fight that we are going to have to face day after day after day.

01:00:03

Those waves are just going to keep coming over and over and over again. But in the midst of all of that, Paul is saying, hey, stand strong, stand firm. Paul drops this little worship intermission in the middle of our conversation here.

01:00:19

Paul, I think, is encouraging Timothy with some really important words for us to hear this morning as well. Because if I could summarize what he's saying here, he's telling Timothy, hey, Timothy, keep fighting, but you know what?

01:00:31

Jesus is coming back one day. Jesus is coming back. God's going to set all things right once and for all. Right now, you're fighting, but you remember Jesus, right? We talked about him a little bit. Jesus, you remember him, the sovereign, the one that's in control of everything in the world, the king that is above all kings, the Lord that is above all lords, the only one who is immortal.

01:00:51

He's kind of getting a little dig in at the Roman leaders in that comment, right? Because the Roman kings and the Roman Caesar, they believe that they were immortal, that they were above all the common men.

01:01:03

When Paul is saying, no, no, no, you remember Jesus, the actual only immortal, the one who possesses all majesty, who dwells in unapproachable light. No one can even see. We cannot even look at him. Or we, you know, Indiana Jones, the whole face -melting thing?

01:01:19

You can't look at God in his glory. We can't even approach seeing how incredible God is. Jesus is worthy of everything that we have to give, to him be all honor and all dominion. You remember Jesus, right?

01:01:36

Well, that Jesus, he's coming back one day. And what Paul is encouraging Timothy with is, hey, stand strong, keep fighting, but this encouragement for us, keep fighting until the end. But he's telling us, you're not just fighting a fight that you're going to lose because reinforcements are on the way.

01:01:56

Help is coming. Hang on just a little bit longer, right? Because when Jesus comes back, when Jesus says enough is enough, and he's sitting patiently by right now, God is holding back, reserving the judgment that is destined for the world one day, because God's going to come back and God's going to set all things right one day.

01:02:17

All of the sin that we see, that we bemoan, that we look at and go, man, our world is broken. God feels the same way. God looks at those things and God's heart is broken in the same way. Judgment is destined for all of those sinful things one day.

01:02:31

God's going to return one day, and he's going to bring total triumph for the people of God. We're not on a suicide mission. We're not destined for destruction. We're not forsaken. We're not abandoned.

01:02:43

We're not sent out as sheep to the slaughter and wished, hey, good luck, figure it out for yourselves, right? On the contrary. Our King has promised that he's going to come again, and that before that last battle, when Jesus comes back, he is going to come with heavy reinforcements.

01:03:02

The armies of heaven are going to come with him, but you know what? They're not going to have to lift a finger. We're not going to have to lift a finger, because the King of the universe, God, who spoke and universes flew out into existence, that God, with that level of power, is going to come back and say, enough, boom, war over, right?

01:03:24

It's going to be an epic sight, but it's not really going to be an epic battle, because Jesus is going to come back and say, enough is enough, and it's over. But in the meantime, every soldier in God's army must keep fighting, must keep fighting, must keep fighting the good fight of the faith, like Paul's talking about here.

01:03:44

You know, I found a quote this week from John Calvin talking about this idea of spiritual warfare. It's just perfect for this. So I think this kind of summarizes my thoughts on the whole conversation.

01:03:54

Well, John Calvin, he said, for if earthly soldiers do not hesitate to fight when the outcome is uncertain and they are in danger of death, how much more bravely ought we to fight under the guidance and banner of Christ, where we can be certain beforehand of victory, more especially since a reward awaits us, far beyond the rewards usually given by commanders to their men, a glorious immortality and a heavenly blessedness.

01:04:19

We need to keep fighting the right fights, but we're not fighting as if we don't know what the outcome is gonna be. We're not sitting here worried, wringing our hands going, I hope things are gonna turn out right for us.

01:04:33

We're not fighting some earthly adversary that side A or side B might win. No, we know the outcome of this fight. I think that should strengthen our hearts a little bit. It should straighten that spine a little bit, stiffen up that upper lip.

01:04:49

It's gonna be okay because God is gonna come back. And while we are fighting now, there's gonna come a day where the battle's over and our side will win. Game over, end of story. So as we put all this together, tie a little bow on top of all of this.

01:05:06

What do we do with this? What do we do with these reminders? Hey, run at times, stand up and fight at times? What's our takeaway? How do we apply this in our daily lives? Well, I think there's three things that I think are important for us.

01:05:22

The first two are just prayers for us to pray. The first one is that we should pray for wisdom. We need to have wisdom that God needs to provide for us. What are the fights that are worth fighting that we need to stand up and fight like Paul tells us?

01:05:34

And what are the fights that we need to lay down our weapons and be united? That we need to lay down our fighting and just be the people that God has told us to be. That we should love one another, that we should care for one another, that we should give of ourselves for one another.

01:05:48

Which ones are the fights that fight and which ones are the fights to lay down? We need wisdom. So we need to pray for wisdom that God would help us to know when to fight and know when not to. We also need to pray for endurance, right?

01:06:01

Because fighting this fight is a difficult one. And so we get tired at times. There's times where temptation wins in our lives. Because day after day after day, you wake up and fight the same fight. Eventually, there's gonna be days where you just go, I'm tired, I'm over it, I don't wanna fight anymore.

01:06:18

We give up on those days. Can't give up on those days. We need to pray for endurance in those things. Finally, we need to be encouraged. We need to be encouraged and we need to fight the fights that we're supposed to fight and we need to fight them with hope because help is on the way.

01:06:36

We don't just fight on our own knowing that this is our responsibility. In fact, we fight knowing that ultimately God is going to come back and is gonna restore all things. Help is on the way. So be encouraged, right?

01:06:49

Pray for wisdom, pray for endurance and be encouraged. Our prayer team is gonna be down here after the service. They would love to pray with you with whatever it is that's going on in your life. Our prayer wall is gonna be back at the end of the hallway as well.

01:07:02

If you don't wanna come down and pray with somebody, but you would like us to pray for you, go back there and drop your prayer request in the box or roll it up and stick it on the wall. We would love to pray for you in that way as well.

01:07:12

But with that said, I wanna invite you guys, would you pray with me now? God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for this encouragement, this reminder that it's important for us to know when to fight and to know when to lay down our weapons.

01:07:24

God, we pray that you would give us wisdom, that we would know when to fight and when not to. God, we pray that you would help us to know when to run away from sins, that we need to flee from these things, as Paul was talking about last week in the passage.

01:07:40

But instead, we need to run and pursue godliness and faith and love and the character traits that are supposed to identify us as people that belong to you. God, we pray that we would run from the things we're supposed to run from, that we would run to the things that we're supposed to run to, that we would fight for the things that we're supposed to fight for and not fight over the things that we're not supposed to fight over.

01:08:06

And God, we pray, God, we pray that you would encourage us, that you would fill our hearts, that you would strengthen our spines and give us the endurance to stand and to fight for another day. God, we need you.

01:08:21

We need you to be the one that carries us through because we get tired, we get weak, we get selfish, we get greedy. We think that we know better than you do. We think that we know what we should fight over and what we shouldn't.

01:08:45

God set our steps. God direct our words. God give us wisdom to know when to stand and when to sit down. We need your help and we love you. That's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.