

- a deliberate and conscious choice to flat out reject gospel faith and good conscience
 - the need for and positive role of church discipline
 - a shipwreck is a very serious, devastating disaster, but it is not necessarily fatal (1 Cor 11:25)
 - Philip Towner: "For some it takes being cast off into the sea to realize the advantages [of being] on board ship."
- ❖ You are a change agent for the kingdom of God
- serving in God's army is part of the package you agreed to when you responded to God's call
 - protect the faith and, if possible, win back those who have strayed from the flock

Personal Application

1. The blessings Christ gives us when we come to Him are well-known. Are you as familiar with Jesus' call for you to "fight the good fight"? How do these two things fit together with each other?
2. There is a big difference between "the good fight" and the kind of needless conflicts Paul warns Timothy about. In what ways are you drawn toward "bad fights"? What is the danger of these kinds of controversies? How can you distinguish between which is which?
3. Do you know anyone who has made a "Shipwreck of the faith"? Are there any ways in which God is calling you to be a "rescue/recovery agent" for them?

Sermon Notes

October 17, 2021

Presbyterian Church of Cape Cod

Fight the Good Fight 1 Timothy 1:18-20

Our Call In Christ

- ❖ If you believe in Christ, you are called to an abundant life of love, peace, and joy
- ❖ Alongside all the beautiful blessings and benefits you have if you are "in Christ", Jesus also calls you to a life of constant warfare
 - a lifelong fight against the world, flesh and Devil
 - we are to fight against anything that blocks our way from growing in Christ and living up to the fulness of the identity we are given in Christ
- ❖ Paul knows the realities of spiritual warfare in intimate detail
 - his own sinful flesh
 - the world and its false system
 - a messenger of Satan (2 Corinthians 12)
- ❖ We need to be prepared and geared up for battle

Battle

- ❖ Battles come in many forms, shapes and sizes: large, small, internal, external

- we are to *wage the good warfare... fight the good fight*
- this is a command, not a suggestion
- ❖ What is the **good** fight? Is there a "bad" fight?
 - needless conflicts (1 Timothy 1:4, 3:3, 6:4)
 - sadly, all too often, the church wars against itself
- ❖ The *good warfare* Paul commands Timothy to engage in is the battle for the pure, unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ
 - we are to speak the truth in love
 - there is only ONE *good fight*: defending the central teachings of the Christian faith
- ❖ How can you tell whether or not you are battling for the truth?
 - will this matter a year from now?
 - am I "enjoying" this dispute in a perverse way?
 - am I fighting for myself or others?
 - am I trying to justify my actions either to myself or others?
- ❖ We are responsible to defend all that is essential to the Christian faith (Trinity, deity of Christ, need for atonement from sin, sufficiency of Christ's death, Jesus' physical resurrection, salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, infallibility of the Bible)
- ❖ The *good fight* has been going on from the beginning
 - throughout the Bible (Satan to Eve, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Jesus, early church)

- throughout church history (early Church Councils, the Reformation, the 20th century, the continuing battle for the Bible)
- there has never been a time when God's people have not been in danger of falling into error
- the Christian faith will always need to be defended from paganism without and heresy within
- the enemies of sound doctrine will never run away, they must be driven away

How to Fight the Good Fight

- ❖ *Holding faith and a good conscience*
 - our convictions must be backed up by our behavior
 - the Christian life is as important as the Christian faith
- ❖ If we are to fight well, we must have a solid grasp of the essentials of our faith
 - but "right doctrine" is not "the whole enchilada"
 - we must hold onto a good conscience (Acts 23:1, 24:16, Rom 9:1, 2 Tim 1:3, 1 Tim 1:5)
 - John Calvin: "A bad conscience is the mother of all heresies."
 - conscious disobedience kills your spiritual life (1 Peter 2:11)
- ❖ Shipwreck
 - *some have made shipwreck of the faith*
 - Hymenaeus and Alexander misrepresent the faith