



Sermon – 10/08/2017

Verse Covered This Week:

*1 Timothy 6:14 - 16*

So I, when I was on the Executive Committee in the Convention we had, Bryant Wright, our president, brought up a suggestion that we move away from the name Southern Baptist. Part of the argument was, which was quite legitimate, was that the African American churches up in the Northeast, particularly, were struggling. They wanted to embrace our ideology, but they were struggling because obviously Southern Baptist up North was hindering their ability. And it was amazing to me, on the executive committee, we voted it down. We didn't want to change the name and that's just, there are times, OK I want to be careful how I say this. There are times I want to take the Baptist off the front. Because sometimes we just get caught up, as Paul's going to say here in 1 Timothy 6, in the wrong fight. When I came to Texas and began pastoring in '77 the big agenda in Texas, I mean I got stuff on it every week. We went nuts, we argued about it, we fought about it, we went to Austin about it, we had, I mean it was the idea of gambling. Now I don't think gambling is the smartest thing you can do, but it's not a moral issue. It's really not addressed in the Bible. Now I know somebody is going to e-mail me and say, "Yes it is. They gambled for Jesus' clothing." OK. There's your Baptist interpretation of the Bible. It is not about condemning gambling. It's just a simple statement. It's not about condemning gambling. The actual point of the passage is that Jesus died with nothing. He didn't have a car, didn't have a camel, didn't have a house, didn't have any books, didn't have any money, didn't have any checks, didn't have a credit card, didn't have a ATM account, that He died with nothing. Because the point is that His greatness was not in His possessions, but in who He was and what He did on the cross. So we're not tying His greatness to what He had. That's the point of the text. But we go off. We have a tendency as Baptists to condemn simply what we don't do. We wind up condemning alcohol, but we never say a word about gluttony. In the Bible, Jesus drank, but He was never gluttonous. We've somehow reversed this so we want to live out what Paul writes here to Timothy, as the pastor of Ephesus, and tells him to deliver to the church.

Now here it is. Going back to verse 11 he says, "You flee these things; you pursue this. Flee unholiness; pursue holiness." And then in 12 he says, "I want you to fight the good fight. I want you to take hold of your eternal life and fight the good fight." And obviously the question is, what does that mean? And remember he went through and he said, "It's the way Jesus stood before Pilate." Now here's what he said. When Jesus stood before Pilate, when we looked at that passage, Jesus forced Pilate to say, "What you're saying about me from you or from what you heard about

me?” So our first agenda is simply ask people what they believe about Jesus. And we have to do this because the millennials are not coming to church. We’re going to have to go to them. So we’ve got to ask people that we work with and we hang out with, “What do you believe about Jesus.”

Second thing, we offer a world they don’t have. They live in a world that is not what the Bible indicates. And they don’t see it and they don’t understand it and we do. So our job is to offer them a world they don’t have. When they think about taking the life of an unborn child, our job is to sit down with them and loving, not kick them in the teeth, but lovingly say, “Look that child has value. He’s in the image of God. God’s knitting him in the womb. Jesus Christ died for him. He has a purpose.” And we deal with that. We offer them what they don’t know about. And then again we trust God to convict them so if they don’t listen to the truth that’s not on us. As a matter of fact, that’s the beginning of what he says. Look in verse 14:

[14<sup>1</sup> want you to keep this commandment unspotted, unblemished](#)

Now here’s the first thing he says. This commandment of doing exactly what Jesus did, that we ask people about Him, we offer another world, and we trust God to handle their responses. We do it the way He did it. We keep it unblemished, unspotted. What does that mean? We do what Jesus did. I don’t think that when He was done with Pilate, who will say “No” to Jesus, who will wrestle with it, who will struggle with it, who will debate it, but at the end will put his hands in the water and wash his hands. I don’t think Pilate watched Jesus going to the cross thinking that Jesus was mad at him because he said “No”. Now I only know Baptists, OK. I don’t really know Methodist. I don’t know Presbyterians. I only know Baptists. Been there since nine months before birth. My blood is Royal Ambassador Blue. So I understand Baptists. Jesus was very clear and we have to make sure that when lost people that do not know what we know and understand what we understand that when they say “No” to us, we don’t get mad at them. There’s no reason to get mad at people that don’t know Jesus for doing what people that don’t know Jesus do. They do it by nature. You say, “Well Jesus threw them out of the Temple.” He through God’s people out of the temple. Now if you’re out here selling cigarettes in the foyer, we’re packing your bags. You can go to another church in town. Maybe a Methodist church. So just kidding! I don’t want any e-mails. “I can’t believe he said that. They’re wonderful people.” So we don’t want to do the Baptist thing, OK. We don’t want to get mad at lost people. I don’t think Jesus was mad at Pilate. But He did everything He could to offer him Himself and what world Pilate did not understand. So that’s what we’re going to do. We’re going to fight the good fight. We’re going to keep it unspotted, unblemished. We’re going to do exactly what Jesus did. We are not going to get mad at lost people. How long are we going to do that? Well here’s what it says.

[until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,](#)

Now listen. How long do we fight the good fight? Until He comes back. You are not allowed to stop. When I was in high school, my sophomore year, buddy and I were running track together so we were in pretty good shape. So he had an older brother, a senior in high school, and we decided, you know how you are in high school, you’re just, I can’t use the word because mother’s will be mad at me, braindead is close. We’re in the garage one day with his brother and we see two sets of boxing gloves so we said, “Look here’s what we’re going to do.” It’s back when prize fighting

was huge. So we said, “Look we’re going to put the gloves on. We’re going to go three, three minute rounds.” So he and I start. We’re busting each other. We’re popping each other. We’re going after it. At the same point both of us just stop because we’re exhausted. And I look over at his brother and I go, “Hey! Are you even paying attention to this? How long have we been fighting?” And he looked at me and he goes, “You’re a minute and a half in the first round.” That was our last boxing match in our history. I understand, and I think Jesus does, fighting the good fight can be exhausting. I mean Jesus put up with twelve guys that never understood anything He said. So it is tiring fighting the good fight. I get that. I know it is. But we fight until He comes back. And if He’s not back today, then we continue to fight tomorrow. That’s what we do. And I know, I do, I see people all the time. Had kids in the children’s choir we saw this morning. Youth, preschool, get them up, they’re in college, and all of a sudden they look at each other and they go, “Man I’m tired. We’re gone to church every day for 47 years. Let’s take a break. Let’s get off this committee. Let’s get off that committee. Let’s just, let’s watch it on TV. Let’s stay home. Let’s sleep in. We can watch it on TV. It’s live. We can do that. Let’s just take a break.” And I get that. I get the fact that you just get tired. And I’m simply telling you quitting on your calling to fight the good fight is not allowed until He comes back. In other words, He will decide when we stop. When I hear people say, “Well can’t get involved in Church Leaves the Building because we’ve served enough.” There’s a Greek word for that; *wah*. That’s the Greek word. You don’t get to not serve. You don’t get to not stand for Christ in the world until He returns.

Now, “Well preacher how do I do that?” Because the fight is exhausting. The fight is tiring. I get it. So how do you do it? You do it in the way he described here. Look at this.

until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup>which He will come at the proper time –

Now he doesn’t tell what that proper time is. So when people on TV tell you what the proper time is, they don’t know. And here’s the second thing, OK, I want you to listen to me real carefully. All eye up here. Here it is, OK. I got three words for you. It doesn’t matter. I don’t care when He comes back. I don’t know. I don’t have any idea. I knew in the ‘70s when He was coming back because I read *Late, Great Planet Earth*. I knew. I get that. I know some of you are really caught up on that and that’s great. But I’m telling you, the Bible doesn’t care when He comes back. The Bible cares what you focus on until He comes back as you fight the good fight. And here’s what you focus on. Look at this:

to keep it unspotted, unblemished, until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup>He’ll come at the right time –

And now what does he do? He doesn’t tell you a time. Now what he does is he describes Jesus. So what did we sing today? About no other name? About a great name? Listen we fight the good fight by remembering who Jesus is. Now listen to what he said. <airplane flying overhead> It’s Alabama leaving town. As a matter of fact, about the fourth quarter last night I thought, “Who can I call to preach for me in the morning.” So at any rate here’s what he says. Now look at this. Here’s the first thing.

the blessed and only Sovereign,

I love that. Trump is not the Sovereign. Hilary is not the Sovereign. The Supreme Court is not the Supreme Court. That nut case in Korea is not Sovereign. Well we're glad about that. We have one Sovereign in the universe and His name is Jesus Christ. Now here's what's really good. He's called a blessed Sovereign. That is, He's a good Sovereign. He's not a cruel Sovereign. We'd be in trouble if He was a cruel Sovereign. But He's not. He's a good Sovereign. He's a blessed Sovereign. This was the most, not it doesn't mean much to us really, but it was the most powerful evangelistic appeal they had in the first century. In the first century, if you were Roman or Greek, you believed in a bunch of different gods. And the problem is, as a matter of fact, if you remember when Paul was in Athens and he's walking down the street, as he walks down the street there's poles, there's statues on each side. There's a little base and a head photo of a god. Walked a little bit, another base, a head photo, walked a little bit, another based, head photo. All the way down this. And here's the problem if you're Roman or Greek. If Harvey happens, here's what you had to do. Obviously it happened because one of these gods that's on this street is mad at you. So what you have to do is figure out which god is mad at you and what do you do to make him unmad. And what I love is when you came to the end of the street, remember Paul even mentions this in Acts, you come to the end of the street and there's this stature to an unknown god. In other words, the statute says, "Listen, we don't know who you are, but we love you. Please don't flood us anymore. Bob." They don't know what his name is. They don't know who he is. They just add an extra statue. So they spent their time constantly having to deal with this issue. When the Christians came along and said, "Listen there's not a bunch of gods, there's one Sovereign and He's really nice. He loves you and He is grace and mercy to you." Listen that was appealing to the first century Christians. And I'm telling you, there's one Sovereign and He is good all the time. No matter what Kirk Cameron says about the hurricane coming into Houston because was punishing Houston. Listen there's nothing worse than giving a Hollywood guy a Bible. Because apparently Kirk has not read the statement that says, "The rain falls on the just and on the unjust." Now if can go to Houston and only people that didn't know Jesus had flooded homes and the Christians don't have flooded homes, I'm in. We've got a little issue here. But if you go down there and Christians have flooded homes just like non-Christians, it's the rain falls on the just and the unjust, but it doesn't matter, He's Sovereign and even if my house is flooded, He will handle the issue. Because He is a good Sovereign. So that's the first thing we understand: He's sovereign, He's the only one, and He's good.

Now look at this.

[He's the King of kings and Lord of lords, <sup>16</sup>the only one having immortality](#)

You say, "Well wait a minute preacher. I've got immortality." No you don't. Now you're going to live forever, but you don't have immortality. Immortality is no beginning and no end. Jesus never started, won't end. And so in the grace and the mercy of Jesus, here's what He does. In His Sovereignty He gives us, at birth, actually at conception, He gives us, at conception, eternal life. We have a beginning but we have no end. And here's the deal. Now I want you to hear me today. When He started this thing in Genesis, completely sovereign, the world is His, Adam and Eve are His. Adam and Eve choose to go, "I think Satan's better and I think you're lying to me." Now listen, in Genesis, listen, in His sovereignty, He gave them limited free will. So as long as we live, we can, even though He's sovereign, say yes or no to Him. We can ignore Him, we can love Him. We can praise Him, we can curse Him. We can surrender to Him, we can fight Him. We can do

whatever we want. He, in His sovereignty, has given a limited free will. Well what do you mean by limited? When I die, He picks that sovereignty back up. And now He decides where I go. You don't have any control when you die. You don't have any control at your birth. You have control now. But when you die, His sovereignty picks back up and He decides where you're going to, now listen, based on what you did with the offer He gave you. In His sovereignty, Romans 1 says He is put inside every single person a knowledge of who He is. You turn later on in the book of Acts and God, if you respond to that knowledge, will do everything He can to bring the truth of Jesus Christ into your life. He does that in His sovereignty so you have a chance. Because when you die, His sovereignty reasserts Itself fully and here's the problem or the blessing. Now you don't ever die again if all this time you look at God and you hear the offer of Jesus and you go, "No." What you can do when you get to the end when His sovereignty fully reasserts Itself, He will send you to eternity based on what you did with His son in your limited free will here. So everybody lives forever; Christian or non-Christian. So He's the only one with immortality. He's a good Sovereign. He gives me eternal life. Where I go and what His sovereignty does with me when I die is based on what I did with my limited free will that in His sovereignty He gave me. Now look at this.

He lives in unapproachable light, no one among men have seen one, no one is able to.

I can't remember, I think his name was Yuri Gagarin. He was the first Soviet cosmonaut. Goes up in space. They asked him when he got back, "What do you think?" And his response was, "I was up in space. I didn't see God." This is why the Bible says the fool says in his heart there is no God. No he didn't see Him, because our God dwells in unapproachable light. I don't care how far you go in the galaxy, even if you get near where He is, you can't approach Him, you can't see Him. So when people say to me, "Well I don't believe it unless it's proven." Then you're in trouble because God's unapproachable. Here's the amazing thing, right. He's unapproachable, but in Jesus, He approached me. I can't see Him. He came to me in the form of God the Son in the flesh so He can be tempted and die so I can find the God I can't see in my heart. And then he finishes up and he says,

To Whom is honor

Absolutely. I give Him honor. Why? Because He's sovereign, He's blessed, He's given me eternal life, and even though He dwells where I can't go, He's coming to me. He's worth honor. And then he says:

and eternal dominion!

He will rule until the end of time which does not occur ever. There is no end of time. So the reason I do next Sunday morning is because I don't quit. The reason I come to church is I don't quit. The reason with my youth gone I don't quit, because I'm not allowed to quit until He appears. And He's worth me fighting the good fight. He's worth it.

I watched, as you did, the carnage in Vegas. Vile. Just it's one of those things I, maybe it's because I've been a Christian since I was 17, but I can't process opening up a window and killing people when there just doesn't seem to be any reason. I can't process that. But one of the pictures

we saw over and over and over was heroic. You had a man laying on top of a woman so that he would take the shot. I mean that's heroic, right. My bet is you ask her, whether he got shot or not, you ask her what she will think about that man until she dies. She will honor him and bless him until the day she dies, whether he got hit or not. But what you really have there, right, is a sinner laying on top of a sinner, an equal laying on top of an equal, an equal sacrificing for an equal. We have a God who is unapproachable who has approached us in the cross of Jesus Christ. He has died on that cross, a superior for a complete inferior so that when we die in His sovereignty He can take me home. If this guy is worth honoring, our Jesus is worth more honor.

Let's pray.

Father, thank you for what You did for us. It's amazing to me that even as I speak and You dwell in a light I can't possibly see, You hear me, You honor me because of who I am in Your son. So Father I ask You today for those in this room that have never met Your Son, let today be the day they do that. Let Your Spirit convince them and Father for those of us in this room that belong to You, tired, worn out, we're exhausted, remind us that He was exhausted and stayed all the way through the cross. Let us keep our eyes on the glory of Your Son. In Jesus name we ask that.