

**** APRIL 2018 ****

THE GOOD CONFESSION

DEVELOPING A GOOD CONFESSION

By pursuing righteousness

“But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness” 1 Timothy 6:11. Previous to this charge Paul had been instructing Timothy to flee from error, from greed, which is any form of self-seeking or covetousness, from harmful lusts and the love of money (1 Tim.6:3-10). We need to repent of our involvement in sinful practices and mindsets and purposefully pursue the good things of God.

By fighting the good fight of faith

Then Paul exhorts Timothy to *“fight the good fight of faith”* (v.11). How do we fight the good fight of faith? How do we train to fight? By fleeing some things and pursuing others because you love God. The goal is to *“lay hold on eternal life”* (v.11). Always keep your focus on the goal which is eternal life.

Jude exhorts us to be *“looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life”* (20-21). We are meant to experience eternal life every day. When did you confess Christ? Sooner or later you have to go public! We need to be confessing what we know about Jesus, because this confession is a vital part of the good fight of faith.

In the sight of God

In this passage of 1 Timothy 6:11-16 Paul is speaking to Timothy *“in the sight of God”* (1Tim.6:13). Likewise, the word of God speaks to us today *“in the sight of God”*. When Adam and Eve were put out of the garden in Genesis 3, they were still in the Presence of God. Cain killed Abel in the Presence of God. It was only after he had murdered his brother and been judged by God, that Cain left the Presence in Genesis 4:16. Do not leave the Presence! Stay in eternal life! God is there all the time [YHWH SHAMMAH Ezek.48:35]. We live in the sight of Jesus!

THE GOOD CONFESSION OF MESSIAH JESUS

In 1 Timothy 6:13 Paul is referring to the good confession of Jesus before Pontius Pilate. Let us look at that confession. In John 18:36 Jesus said, *“My kingdom is not of this world ... My kingdom is not from here”*. Then Pilate asked Him *“Are you a king? Jesus answered ‘You say that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth’”* (Jn.18:37). Jesus would not deny the truth no matter what the consequences were. If anyone believes that Jesus is the king, they will know the truth and be able to come into covenantal relationship with Him.

Confessing the covenant

There are many marvellous covenantal promises in the word of God. Having a good confession is being able to state accurately and truthfully the word of God.

In **Hebrews 3:1** Paul exhorts us that we should have a “*confession*” of Jesus Christ as Apostle and High Priest. This word ‘confession’ has the connotation of ‘*a binding public declaration by which a legal relation is contractually established*’. It has the sense of bringing us into covenant with God as we confess Jesus Christ and His word. This word literally means ‘*to speak the same word*’.

Confession is powerful

Paul says that our confession is so powerful: “*that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved*” (**Rom.10:9**). This covenantal confession saves us and brings us into a righteous relationship with the King of kings. If you are of the truth you can confess that Jesus is the King, the Messiah.

WE ARE CALLED TO KEEP THE COMMANDMENT

The calling

1 Timothy 6:12 says we were called, and that calling is based on our covenantal confession. We are to confess the good confession of who Jesus is and how we have attained to this position “*in the presence of many witnesses*” (**1Tim.6:12**). Our experience in apostolic company is that each member is able to attain to this confession because they are in the presence of many witnesses who speak the same word, that is, have the same confession.

According to **Acts 13:48b** when Paul and Barnabas were preaching in Perga the Gentiles heard them gladly, “*And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed*”. The calling is to eternal life.

Ephesians 1:4-5 says that “*He chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world ... to be holy and without blame, having predestined us to the adoption as sons*”. In this passage Paul says that our calling is not only to be in Christ, but to grow up to be the adopted sons of God.

Keeping the commandment

1 Timothy 6:14 “*That you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing*”. The word commandment is also the commission; it is an injunction, calling on a higher authority; it is an authoritative prescription. What is the basic commandment or commission that we should keep, in preparation for the Lord’s coming? It is the Great Commission of **Matthew 28:18-20**. We are to be making disciples, not just doing church. We are to be training the disciples to attain to the “*good confession*” (**1 Tim.6:13**).

“*Without spot*” means with a clear conscience. God wants to cleanse us from an evil conscience, that is, a conscience remembering and accusing us of our past failures and sins. **1 Peter 3:20-21** says that baptism is “*the answer of a good conscience toward God*”. The Scripture says that baptism out of a good conscience places us in the resurrection of Jesus far above angels and principalities. We are to keep this commandment “*until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing*” (**1Tim.6:14**).

Paul commands us to live “*soberly, righteously and godly in this present age*” (**Titus 2:12**). Why? So that we will be prepared for His coming. We are to be “*looking for the blessed*”

hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (v.13). We are looking for His appearing.

WHO IS ‘HE’?

1 Timothy 6:15 says that *“He will manifest in His own time”*. Verse **15** comes after the previous verses where **God** is referred to in **verse 13**; **Christ Jesus** is referred to in **verse 13** and the **Lord Jesus Christ** is referred to at the end of **verse 14**, immediately preceding *“which”* in **verse 15**. Most have assumed that the ‘He’ is referring to God, but in the context, it would appear to be referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one who will manifest in His own time. When Jesus was on earth He said that the Father was the only One who knew the time of His coming. Now the Lord Jesus will manifest His appearing in His own time (**Matt.24:36**).

He is the “Blessed and only Potentate”

The ‘He’ we are referring to, which we have said is the Lord Jesus Christ, is now called the *“Blessed and only Potentate”* (**1Tim.6:15**).

In **Romans 9:5** Christ is referred to as being *“over all”* and the *“eternally blessed God”*. Note the significance of this, that Christ is referred to as the Eternally Blessed God.

When the High Priest was interrogating Jesus in **Mark 14:61-62**, the High Priest said, *“Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”* In this context the Blessed One is referring to the Eternal God. Jesus said in reply, *“ego eimi”* which is the Greek for *“I AM”*, and I AM is the name that God revealed to Moses in **Exodus 3:14**. Because Jesus identified Himself as the Son of the Blessed God, He was identifying Himself as God, and in so doing spoke the name of God. This is what caused the High Priest to tear his clothes (**v.63**). They agreed that Jesus had blasphemed the Name by saying I AM and by acknowledging that He was the Son of God!

Most are aware of the famous declaration of Jesus in **John 8:58**: *“before Abraham was I AM”*. Many have a very limited view of who Jesus is. The Jesus that was preached in the twentieth century was generally only referred to as the Saviour, and that is a wonderful saving revelation. But in these days as God is raising again the ministries of **Ephesians 4:11**, one of their key works of ministry is to bring the whole church to the *“knowledge of the Son of God”* (**Eph.4:13**).

“Potentate”

This word is a very powerful word, referring to a very powerful person, who has no one to compare with Him. This word means Sovereign, that is, the one and only ruler who has all authority. When Peter was testifying in **Acts 2:36**, He declared *“that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ”*. There is no one higher than Jesus; He is the ruler of heaven and earth; He is the *“Blessed and only Potentate”* (**1Tim.6:15**).

Because Jesus was willing to humble Himself and come down from heaven in the form of a man and die on the cross, *“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name that is above every name”* (**Phil.2:7-9**).

King of kings and Lord of lords

In **Revelation 19:11-16** there is an amazing revelation of Christ Jesus sitting on a white horse. In **verse 11** the rider on the horse is called *“Faithful and True”*. In **verse 12** *“He had a name written that no one knew except Himself”*. Then in **verse 13** His name is called *“The Word of God”*. Finally, in **verse 16** we find out that *“On His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS”*.

The rider on the white horse is called King of kings and Lord of lords. This is a clear reference to Jesus the Christ. Going back to **1 Timothy 6:15** the one who is the Blessed and only Potentate is also the King of kings and Lord of lords.

In all of our discussion we are seeking to present Jesus the Christ to you and bring to you a fresh understanding of that which is written by comparing Scripture with Scripture and letting the Scripture answer our questions. We are not trying to convince you of anything that is not clearly in the Scripture. Anyone of us can read the Scriptures many times and miss what is finally the simple message in the Scripture.

Who alone has Immortality

The One who is the Blessed and only Potentate is also King of kings and Lord of lords, *“who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see to whom be honour and everlasting power. Amen”* **1 Timothy 6:16**. In this Scripture we could easily say that it is referring to God Almighty, the Eternal One, but in the context, we have shown that this awesome Scripture is actually referring to Jesus the Christ who is God manifest in the flesh. While Jesus limited Himself in a human body when He was on the earth, for the predetermined purpose of God, when He returned to the Father He returned to the glory He had with the Father before the world was (**Jn.17:5**).

God is ONE

God is always one (**Deut.6:4**). Jesus Christ is God; before He came to earth He was *“in the form of God”*. Paul says He *“did not consider it robbery to be equal with God (Phil.2:6)*. In **John 5:17-18** Jesus called God His Father and according to the Jews was *“making Himself equal with God”* and therefore was worthy of death.

In **John 10:30** Jesus said, *“I and Father are one”*. In **John 14:7** Jesus said, *“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him”*. Again, in **verse 9** Jesus said, *“He who has seen Me has seen the Father”* and in **verse 10** Jesus said, *“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me”*. And in **verse 11** Jesus said, *“Believe Me that I in the Father and the Father in Me”*.

Why do we need a good confession?

Why are we talking about all these things from **1 Timothy 6**? So that you may have a good confession, just as Jesus had a good confession before Pontius Pilate.

A good confession is:

- firstly repenting from evil works and practices and pursuing righteousness and all the good things of God;

- secondly by having come to that place of covenantal confession, that is, agreeing with and speaking forth the word of God as it is written. We need to know by revelation who Jesus is, and speak forth that revelation and knowledge in a good confession.

A good confession changes everything!

A good confession such as **1Timothy 3:16** reveals who Jesus is.

A good confession can save us as Paul teaches us in **Romans**.

A good confession is a vital part of fighting the good fight of faith.

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