



Sermon – 10/01/2017

1 Timothy 6:12 – 13

John 18:28 – 27

John 19:11

So when my son was in high school, we rented, it was the second Holyfield/Tyson fight. And so we rented it, we bought it at the pay-per-view. If you know anything about those things, there were two or three fights beforehand and we're waiting and Stephen's got a bunch of high school buddies, they're all in the room, we're all engaged, we can't wait for the rematch of Tyson/Holyfield. Tyson was this bombastic fighter who just came out and terrorized guys in the ring. So we're waiting for this fight because it's going to be massive. So finally it comes on. We're all pumped. It goes three rounds because Tyson literally bites off part of Holyfield's ear. I mean part of the ear is still missing where Tyson bit it off and the referee, in a moment of brilliance, said, "I think we ought to stop the fight." So they stopped the fight because Tyson is obviously fighting the wrong fight.

Now we don't want to be Tysons as a Christian culture. So I want you to listen to me, er listen to the text, all the way through. You're not going anywhere. And if you're watching NFL football, something's wrong with you anyway. So listen carefully. 1 Timothy 6. Now listen to verse 12. This is the first thing he says. We're toward the end of the book, but he's making a lot of strong statements to Timothy. Now look at what he says.

¹²[Fight the good fight of faith;](#)

He says to Timothy, "Timothy, while you're pastor in Ephesus I want you to fight the good fight of faith." In other words, it is possible to fight the wrong fight. It's possible to do it incorrectly. I think that is precisely what we've done. Whether you're liberal or conservative doesn't really matter. The Bible does demand of us, in the book of Romans, that we go to the ballot box. We have to do that. If you don't go to the ballot box, you disobey the Scripture which said; you live under the direction of your government. If your government says you will elect us by going to the ballot box, then you go to the ballot box. The problems happen for the church; both liberal and conservative churches have fought the wrong fight because we have now not only go to the ballot box, but we literally believe the ballot box is the means of fixing our culture. And both those avenues are wrong. We're not here to fix our culture and the ballot box is not the answer. Liberal Christians wind up with the Democrats. Conservative Christians wind up with the Republicans. And we battle back and forth in presidential elections and state caucuses and we

go back and forth on all these things because we really believe if we put the right man, the right party, in office our culture will be fixed; everything will go to where we want it to go and we'll be happy people and that is not fighting the good fight. So understand; we've done it wrong. Let me be clear. Matthew 16 says, the gates of Hell will not prevail against the church. The gates of Hell will prevail against Democrats and Republicans. May have already won there. So at any rate, we're going to fight the good fight.

Now what do we do? Now look at what he says:

take up eternal life,

OK. Now listen. There are two lives. As a matter of fact, he uses *ζόέ*. So two Greek words in the New Testament: *ζόés* and *bios*. We get zoology from it and biology from it. *Bios* is the Greek word that refers to the life here. You just exist. You live. That's your *bios*. *ζόés* is this higher spiritual life that has come into you as a result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He says, "I want you to take hold of the eternal *ζόés*." So we're not going to live our lives rooted in the *bios* here, we're going to look at the eternal life that God's placed in us through the Holy Spirit and we're going to wrap ourselves around that so that what really matters is what happens after we die. We're not going to build our lives around our *bios*.

How do you do that? Look at what he says. He reminds Timothy of the beginning of his own *ζόés*.

you confessed the good confession before many witnesses.

Now he makes this statement. He says, "Timothy, you made a good confession once." At some point, we don't know how this worked in the first century church, but at some point, in front of a bunch of people, they brought him in and said, "OK. Where are you with Jesus Christ?" And Timothy made a good confession. He obviously said, "I believe that I am a sinner. I believe that He's God's son. I believe He made the payment for my sin, and I believe that's my only hope." And so he made a good confession before many witnesses. Now understand we don't get that. Our confessions are made in a private celebration among believers. Those confessions were made in public settings with unbelievers watching. I wonder how many of us, for example, walk through this baptistery, but would never walk through a baptistery in front of a high school or in front of your work. I've had people who will come through the baptistery and I find out six months later not a single member of their family knows who they are in Christ. His confession was public. And let me explain; Roman hated the Jews and they hated the Christians because they thought of the Christians as just kind of a little cultic sub-set of the Jews. So they hated them. So when Timothy aligns here, he's not aligning with the cool thing, he's aligning with an uncool thing. He's probably losing his dad in the process. His dad can't be OK with this. His dad's not a believer and when he goes to work the next day and his buddies say, "Hey, how's your son?" He goes, "Well went somewhere yesterday. Made some confession and joined my wife's goofy cult that she's a part of." So he's humiliated by his son's, what Paul says is a good confession. So this is not some small thing. This is the centerpiece of his testimony. And so watch what he does. He knows Timothy has a problem. Remember we see it in 1 and 2 Timothy, kind of backing up some, and he says,

¹³I charge you before God, who makes everything alive, and Christ Jesus,

Now listen.

who bore witness before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴the good confession to keep this commandment unspotted and unblemished until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now listen to what he's just said. Follow his argument. I want you to fight the good faith. You started out well with a good confession. I charge you to take that even one step further. I want you to make a confession exactly like Jesus Christ did in front of Pontius Pilate. That's interesting because if you read the Gospel of Matthew you don't see it. Read the Gospel of Mark you don't see it. Read the Gospel of Luke you don't see it. But if you read the Gospel of John you see what he's talking about. So we're going to go to John 18. Jesus in front of Pilate. Now this is the only place where we find what Paul is eluding to. He's in front of Pilate. He's been beaten up all night. His eyes are probably half shut. His mouth is bloodied and swollen. His nose is broken. Bible indicates in the Old Testament his beard has been practically completely pulled out. He is one beaten guy just standing there barely able to walk. These guys have been all over him. They went nuts. So look in verse 28.

²⁸They led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, it was early in the morning; and they didn't enter into the Praetorium,

I love these guys. Watch this.

that they might not be defiled and not be able to eat the Passover.

They just took an innocent man and beat the fool out of him and now they're worried about supper. I mean these are some fine upstanding people. Now Pilate hates them. It's odd he's in Jerusalem on this day as is Herod remarkably. Because Pilate's headquarters is really Caesarea. We found now, archaeologically, the name of Pilate in Caesarea. Caesarea is a cool port on the Mediterranean. It's one of the coolest things Herod the Great ever built. I mean it's got a Hippodrome, there's all sorts of cool games, and now he's stuck in Jerusalem where it's, what's the description... could be in New York, but you're in Hearne. So that's where he is at this point.

²⁹So Pilate goes out them and he says, "What accusation are you bringing against this man?"

He's already worn out. He hates these guys. And they hate him because listen to their answer.

³⁰They answered and said to him, "Well if he hadn't done anything wrong we wouldn't have him brought to you."

They're smart aleck. I mean they just don't like each other.

³¹So Pilate said to them, “You take Him and you judge Him according to your law.”

In other words, leave me alone. That’s what the Greek means.

The Jews said to him, “We’re not allowed to kill Him.”

Now Pilate’s a little startled.

³²so the word of Jesus might be fulfilled by which he signified the death He was about to suffer.

Now watch this.

³³Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and he called Jesus and he said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

Now here’s the first part of Jesus’ confession. It’s to be the first part of yours.

³⁴Jesus answered, “Do you say this from yourself, or somebody else tell you this about Me?”

Here’s the first thing Jesus does. He says, “You saying I’m the King of the Jews? I want to know. Do you really believe that? Or did somebody just tell you that and you’re mimicking what said?” What he does is he demands of Pilate an answer as to his assertion about who He says He is. Let me tell you something. Our first priority inside the Brazos Valley is to ask people what they believe about Jesus Christ. That’s it. Do not tell people when you go to work tomorrow that you went to church. You tell people when you go to work tomorrow that you went to church, you worshiped Jesus who died for you on a cross, and was raised and is coming back and He’s your only hope. It’s time to be bold about who we are in Jesus Christ. So we need to ask people the simple thing. “Well what do I do? I’m scared.” Here’s the greatest, you can buy all these goofy programs about evangelism, you do can do whatever you want, read the Bible. Here’s the simplest thing you can do. You take somebody that you work with and you take them out to lunch. And you sit down with them and you just ask them, “Hey, what do you believe about Jesus?” There’s your perfect opening. Now a lot of them are going to look at you and say, “Well I think He’s a good man. He’s a great prophet. I’m not sure He’s the Savior of the world, but good guy.” Perfect segue. You come back and go, “You know a lot of people think that, but you can’t read the Bible and that’s an option.” “What do you mean?” “Well Jesus thought He was God and He thought that His death was a ransom payment for everybody in the world. So either He’s really nuts or He’s God in the flesh that made a ransom payment for everybody in the world.” So now you have this perfect opportunity to gently and lovingly say, “What you believe doesn’t work.” So you have this great opportunity. We don’t need all these goofy programs on evangelism. Just take somebody out you know. Let me tell you something. You and I, when we die and we stand before God, I think we’re going to be stunned when He looks at us and He shows us all the people He sovereignly directed into our life that we completely ignored. See how it gets quiet? It’s time to take the people that you know at work or you recreate with or whatever, and take them to lunch, buy their lunch, and sit down with them

and ask them a simple question, “Tell me what you believe about Jesus.” Which then gives you the opportunity to tell them what you know about Jesus. So there’s the first part of the confession.

Now he continues on. He takes the second part.

³⁵Pilate answered Him and he said, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and your chief priests delivered You; what have You done?”

Now here’s the second part of His confession. Listen to this.

³⁶Jesus answered, “My kingdom’s not of this world. If it were this world, My kingdom, My servants would have fought that I might not be delivered by the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from this world.”

Now I want you to listen to what He just said, right. Pilate’s what, the Roman ruler of this area. He lives in Caesarea, one of the coolest towns on the Med, playground. What Jesus says to him is, two things, He says, “Look if my servants were supposed to fight, you’d be in a different shape right now, but I’m not here to overthrow you,” Now listen, “or to change your gambling at the Hippodrome, or to remove gambling from the state, or to remove all the things that the Roman empire believes in. I’m not here to overthrow the secular ideas of the Roman empire. My kingdom isn’t interested in changing the culture of the Roman Empire. My kingdom is from a world that is distinct from this one and I’m offering something this world does not offer. If it were about this world, my servants would fight.” That’s the problem. We go to the ballot box with a political party because we’re concerned about the world here and changing our culture and taking it back and fixing everything and we whine and we moan and we go nuts. Jesus said, “My kingdom isn’t of this world.” So our job is not to fix out culture, our job is to offer our culture a different world that they don’t understand. That’s our job. You say, “Well you just don’t care then about same-sex marriage and abortion.” If you know me long enough, you know that’s not true. But I will tell you this. Now hear me all the way. When we deal with those issues, if we boycott and we picket and we go to the Supreme Court and we vote for this particular candidate and we make sure our party is in power and we get all these things done; number one, has the political, any political party ever helped us in what we believe? No. Nor will they tomorrow.

So, number one, you ought to at least be open enough to say, “That hasn’t worked.” So what do we do? We bring the truth about another world to those living in this world that don’t know about the other world. You have a lady that you know at work that is pregnant for whatever reason. Maybe she’s had an affair, doesn’t want her husband to know, maybe she’s young, whatever the situation is. Then you take her to lunch and you sit down with her and you offer her another world. You say to her, “Look I know what our culture says. I know that our culture says that it’s a fetus, it’s no big deal. I want you to know the child in you is being created by the hand of the Creator. He is knitting your child because your child, when he or she exits the womb, will be of immense value because your child will be born in the image of the God of the universe. And the value of this child is tied to the fact that that God knows that child is being born where he’s going to sin, but He’s already, before he’s born, provided an antidote for that sin

in the blood of His own Son. Your child has immense value. Your child has a purpose. Jeremiah 1; before you were born I ordained you as a prophet to the nations. I don't know what the purpose is for your child, he or she, but I'm telling you this Creator that's knitting your child in the womb and pulling your child out in His image has a purpose for your child. Don't you dare take that life." And you can make her this promise. "If you struggle because of the money for the birth, I go to Central. We will pay, we will find the money to get you through the hospital. We'll find the money and we'll find the people to adopt that child. That is my promise to you and it's our promise to this world." So we're not going to bust them. We're not going to kick them in the ground. We're going to offer them a different world. That they live in a culture that doesn't understand. So we're going to offer them the world Jesus advocates for. You say, "Well what if they don't listen?" Look down in verse 37.

³⁷So then Pilate said, "So You're a king?" Jesus answered, "You say I'm a king. I was born for this and I've come into the world for this, that I might bear witness to the truth everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

And then Pilate said to Him,

"Well what is truth?"

Jesus says, "Look I'm not here, dude, to convince you. I'm not here to argue with you. I'm not here to prove to you who I am. I'm just telling you that I'm here to testify to the truth. And the people in the Brazos Valley that are open to the truth will hear My word." Now when you do that, if you speak about who Jesus is and you offer a different world, you will receive the three reactions that Jesus received. Number one, He's got a whole nation that no matter what He's done, no matter how much He's loved, no matter what He's proven, no matter what miracle He's performed, I mean a week before He raised Lazarus from the grave, he'd been in there four days. They hate him. And they're not going to respond. Doesn't matter what He does. So you're going to run into some people who, for whatever reason, they're not open. And you're going to pour your heart out and you're going to talk about Jesus and you're going to do it right, and you're going to offer them the world that is way beyond their world, and they are going to absolutely spit in your face. But number two, you have the Pilates of the world. Now when you finish that testimony, it looks like He's just done. But the testimony continues. Look in 19:11.

¹¹Jesus answered, "You don't have any authority over Me, except the authority that's been given to you from above; because of this to the one who betrayed Me to you has the greater sin."

Now watch this. I'm going to read it to you literally from the Greek.

¹²Out of this Pilate continually sought to release Him,

What the Greek says is now that confession, Pilate's out there trying to figure out some way to get rid of this problem. He doesn't want to put Jesus on the cross. As a matter of fact, you remember his wife will send him a letter, says "Man don't mess with that guy. I've been troubled in a nightmare," Romans were huge believers in dreams. So he's got all these issues

and he's desperately trying to get out. But he's going to turn his back on Christ because that's the second reaction you'll have. You'll have some people that will give you some hope that maybe they get a glimpse into the other world and they think, "You know this might be the way to go." And then they're going to turn from you. But then you get a third shot. You get Jesus on the cross, His disciples are gone, nobody believes in Him, He's hanging there by Himself with two thieves mouthing Him. Until out of the side here He hears one of the thieves say, "Lord remember me when You come into Your kingdom." I wonder what passionate joy our Savior had when He looked and said, "Today you'll be with Me in paradise." You get those people as well. My job is not to stop the ballot box; it's to go there. My job is not to look at it as my security. My job is not to worry about the response to what I do. My job is to bring the name of Jesus and the offer of a world they don't understand; but with the blood of Jesus they can enter into it.

We come to a table today that reflects exactly this. So I'm going to say this real gently and real sweetly and real kindly to me as well as you. If we grasp this, we'll offer His name and His world to every person He orchestrates in our life if we believe this.

Father thank You for the confession of Your Son, His strength, His credibility, His integrity, His wisdom, His words, His direction. Pour that in us, Father, so that even next year on this day there will be people that are in this room embracing this table because we made the good confession public. Drive that in our lives and into our hearts today. In Jesus Christ name. With your heads bowed, eyes closed. If you've never met Christ, today's the day to find Him. If you know Him as your Lord and Savior and you need to come down here and kneel and pray, we're glad to do that. If God's calling you to be a part of this fellowship, as He speaks to your heart this morning, before we come to the table, you respond.