

A Bigger Issue

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[0 : 0 0] Now this sixth chapter, we'll try and take the whole chapter in a one of this evening, because really it deals with one single subject. And that is really the subject of the danger of seeking to abuse one's relationship or supposed relationship with the Lord, to abuse the gospel for a lesser worldly end.

In other words, to try and make that which is divine serve that which is earthly, that which is earthbound. It is, in one sense, the ultimate idolatry, to take that which is holy and not simply disregard it or disbelieve it, to try and sort of make use of it for our own earthbound carnal ends.

And that, although that might seem like a sweeping generalisation, is what we actually find throughout the different sections of this chapter. But it is all much of a single topic, really, as it brings this letter to a close.

Verses one and two might appear on the surface to be addressing the subject of masters and slaves. And indeed, they are addressing that particular topic. But you'll notice that in the context here, unlike, for example, what we've been looking at in the latter chapters of Ephesians, and also in its parallel letter of Colossians, where these subjects are addressed, masters and slaves and so on, it's not falling on from the teaching about the respective relationships and responsibilities of husbands and wives and children, and then about masters and slaves, which you'll notice in Ephesians and Colossians, that's what it is.

It's masters, it's husbands and wives and children, and then masters and slaves after that. But that's not the case here. The business about slaves and masters, it comes almost immediately after teaching about, you know, health and well-being and faithfulness, and who you ordain and don't ordain and so on, and maintaining the ministry and the church and so on.

[1 : 5 8] And then suddenly we've got this teaching about masters and slaves. So it's coming in a completely different setting, a completely different context here. And one reason why in Ephesians and Colossians it's not tagged on the end of relations between husbands, wives, children, and then masters and slaves.

But rather, in that context, it makes perfect sense. Because in Ephesians and Colossians, Paul is giving his teaching about the family unit.

And unlike hired servants who did their job and received their pay and whose relationship to the family ended when they had finished and been paid and gone home, slaves were regarded as part of the family unit.

I'll say that again. Slaves were regarded as part of the family unit. Their home was the family home. They belonged where the family belonged.

They didn't have the same status as the free-born members of the family, but they were part of the household, part of the family. And evidence for this we can find way back, for example, in Genesis, where in chapter 17, when God gives to Abraham the covenant under circumcision.

[3 : 14] There we read from verse 10. This is my covenant which he shall keep between me and you and thy seed after thee. Every man child among you shall be circumcised, and ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin.

It shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations. He that is born in the house or bought with money of any stranger.

In other words, bought and paid for. Not a hired servant doing a job, doing a contract, and then going home. It's somebody who you bought and paid for who belongs to you. Which is not of thy seed, but nevertheless belongs to you now.

He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised. And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. An uncircumcised man child whose flesh and his foreskin is not circumcised.

That soul shall be cut off from his people. He hath broken my covenant. He doesn't belong, in other words, to the covenant people. But a slave, regardless of what his ethnic origin or background might have been, if he belonged to Abraham, he was part of Abraham's household.

[4 : 22] Part of Abraham's family. And slaves were regarded as part of the family, even in pagan context. Part of the household. So Paul's teaching in Ephesians and Colossians about slaves and masters coming as it does after the respective relationships and responsibilities and the duties that husbands owe to wives and wives to husbands and children to their parents and parents to their children and slaves to masters.

It's all about the different relationships within the household. Whilst the family unit is the issue in the context there in Ephesians and Colossians who say, here in Timothy it's a different issue being addressed.

And that is, as we said, the all-too-human desire to use the gospel and the Lord as a means of worldly advancement or benefit.

In other words, that which is divine and heavenly and purchased at the highest price ever paid, because remember the death of Christ upon the cross, God the Son giving of his lifeblood there, so that they're paying the highest price, so that the gospel that is offered to us can be offered free, regardless of who we are or our background or how much sin we've committed or whatever age or colour or race we may belong to.

It's offered to us totally free because somebody else has picked up the tap, somebody else has paid the price, the highest price ever paid, to take that holy divine thing and then use it as a tool or an instrument simply to further our own ends and a worldly level is part of the ultimate abuse.

[6 : 01] It's almost breathtaking abuse of God's free gift. They make it a tool, a means to an earthly end in the hands of worldly men.

So whilst, yes, they take the issue of master and slave here, whilst having a believing master might say, oh, that's great, if I've got a believing master and I'm a believer in that, that means he's going to set me free.

If I'm free, well, I'm my own man and then I can make my own money, I can get on in the world and so on, whether that's what's crossing in our mind or not, clearly there is a danger here, or there is a potential issue that Paul is seeing, and maybe Timothy has come across, that it's possible that if slaves and masters both happen to be believers, there will be an expectation among some that this will cause the advancement of the slave, either to the status of a free man or a paid servant or, or, you know, being set in a different status, and the potential for abuse, of course, is huge.

And people then would simply say, oh, well, yes, well, I'm a believer too, I'm a Christian too, why has he been made free and I haven't been, well, that's because he's a Christian. Oh, I'm a Christian too. And the potential for abuse is huge.

And also the idea that some particular people, let's say, oh, my master's a Christian too, then we're brethren, so I shouldn't have to serve him anymore, we're equals now, so I shouldn't have to serve him like a slave anymore.

[7 : 26] That's no different in a sense from one saying, oh, because the boss of the company I work for happens to be a Christian, and I'm a Christian, I shouldn't have to work hard, I shouldn't have to turn up on time, I shouldn't have to sort of bust a gut in order to do my work or fulfil my duty, I should just get paid regardless, because he should be nice to me, because he's a brother in Christ, and he should look after me.

And the idea of our work ethic just going out the window, because those whom we are working for are fellow believers, the potential for the complete undermining of the gospel is huge, and it's massive.

What we find here, then, is the potential, although it seems to be just talking about masters and slaves, it's talking about the advancement of our economic situation, and seeking to use the gospel as a tool for that, to take God and make him a stepping stone to our raising ourselves up.

And that's the case whether you see three groups of people here in this chapter. First of all, we've got the slave, who doesn't have freedom, and his master, who obviously will have freedom, but he might be richer, the slave has nothing.

Then you've got three men, who maybe are tempted to grasp more for themselves, and love our bodies, the root of all evil, and so on. And then towards the end of the chapter, you've got people who are already rich men, and they might think, oh, well, I'm already rich, God has blessed me, obviously I must be special, and so on.

[8 : 53] That's the danger. There is a danger in whatever economic bracket or category we find ourselves. And if we're at the bottom of the heap in the socioeconomic spectrum, I'm a slave, what can I do, and so on, we still have a responsibility to the Lord.

And to our master, our employer, whatever the case may be, the gospel is something, the objects, the prices of which, are way bigger, and way higher than any sort of making a few extra pounds, or maybe getting the legal status of freedom, or making myself a bit richer here, and so on.

Whatever riches you get here, it's only for a little while, and you can't take it with you. Even if you could get people to say, yeah, yeah, we'll fill your coffin with gold, as we bury you.

What good is that going to do you? And if you rise to the highest office, or the greatest power in the land, or in the world, what should it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

You see, this is the danger here. But rather, there's nothing against a slave gaining his freedom. You know, Paul makes reference to that. 1 Corinthians chapter 7, verse 21, aren't that called being a servant?

[10 : 06] It means slave. Care not for it, but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. If you can get your freedom legitimately, that's great. Serve the Lord as a free man or woman, that's fine.

But he that is called in the Lord being a servant, is the Lord's free man. Likewise, also he that is called being free, is Christ's servant. We are, in a sense, the slaves bought and sold, by the blood of Christ.

We are bought with a price. And we haven't been bought into greater slavery, it's rather, we have been redeemed, bought back from our state of darkness and lostness, by the blood of Christ.

And we are free now, because the master we serve now, is benign and loving and merciful. He owns us, body and soul. But that, for us, is good news.

Because it means we are part of his, not only household, but part of his family, part of the covenant. Just as Abraham's slaves became part of his covenant family, and had the token of that covenant, the circumcision.

[11 : 18] So we, by the blood of Christ, by the remembrance of it, and his table, and bread and the wine, by the waters of baptism, we have the tokens of that covenant now, under the new dispensation.

And we are part of his family, his covenant family. Whatever our status, whichever of these three brackets we fit into, servants on the one hand, okay, we're not slaves now as they were then, but we all have to work for somebody.

Or free men, who have some money, but want more. Or those who are already rich, as we see from verse 17 onwards. These three brackets of people.

But either way, the thing to guard against, is not only covetousness in this world, but above all, the abuse of seeking to use the Lord, as a means to enhance, our own economic wealth, or position, or our own covetousness, or some lesser, carefully end.

To take that which is divine, and make it serve that which is earthbound. That which has cost the blood of Christ, and trade it in for, and you have 30 pieces of silver.

[12 : 27] It is the ultimate betrayal. You see that the unbeliever, the complete unbeliever, says, I don't believe in all that stuff about God, and so on. He rejects the Lord, and that at least is straightforward rejection.

Straightforward honesty. It's the equivalent of a warfare situation, of somebody honorably serving their country, in uniform, in the country that you're fighting against. You know who your enemy is, they're at least taking that position against you.

Whereas, the position of somebody, who is seeking to belong, with the Lord's people, but really just so for what, they can get out of it, is like somebody, who pretends to be on your side, and in your army, but is really undermining you, from the inside.

And that's what they are doing here, if they're seeking to use the Lord, simply as a means, to feather their own mess. And these things teach and exhort, that they should, that whatever our status, we should be faithful in our service, whether slaves, or masters, or whatever.

And if we have believing employers, or masters, love them even more, serve them even more faithfully. These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine, which is according to godliness, he is proud.

[13 : 49] And the translation of the words, he is proud and fruit, he is literally wrapped up in smoke. Not only can he not see, can he not breathe properly, knowing nothing, the doting about questions, and stripes of words, would all come of envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, perverse disputings of men, of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness, from such withdraw thyself.

Now of course, in the modern day, you get people, who will point to the New Testament, or the apostolic church, and say, oh but look, see the Bible approves of slavery, that just shows what a load of rubbish it must be, that just shows how evil, and how bad and twisted it must be.

As I've said so many times in the past, slavery is not something of which the Bible approves, or disapproves. It is simply recognised to be the reality, as it was for thousands of years, in the world, all over the world.

It is the reality. And it is the reality, for thousands, millions of people, that they were, in fact, slaves. Now your 21st century armchair critic, would like people to say, well what the Bible should teach is, you know, free all the slaves, or rise up and have a demo, against the rulers, and make sure you, to overthrow them by the, demand your rights, and so on.

And that's what they would like to pretend should be written into the Bible. But, what does that say to you? Well, if you get your freedom, that's, that's the end of your problems. That's you sorted.

- [15 : 21] The human problem is far greater than our economic status, or even whether or not we are legally or technically owned by another person. Somebody, whether bombed or free, is going to go to heaven or to hell, not depending on whether or not they could vote, or whether or not they had their freedom, or whether or not they were a master or a slave, but rather, whether or not their sins are paid for by the blood of Christ.

What we have in Scripture, when we find the opening of this issue, we find that at the end, where it says that all manner of men, whether kings, and generals, and soldiers, or people, every bondman, and every free man, they all hid, they all wanted to hide themselves before the wrath of the Lamb, and those who needed to escape from that, which the Lord revealed.

Because whatever our status in the world, the Lord doesn't say, well, it's okay, you're a slave, so you don't have a choice. Even a slave needs to have their sin forgiven, and the reality that the Bible seeks to address, is not, oh, well, free all the slaves, that's what you should do.

You can free a slave, and he's destitute on the streets then. He can't, he's got nothing to eat, he's got no shelter, he's got no clothing, no one to look after, he might be worse off than he was, when he was looked after by his master.

That's not an argument for slavery. It's an argument to say that the issues which the Bible addresses here are far bigger than simply the question of our economic status.

- [16 : 58] The slave, the free man, the king, the rich man, the poor man, whatever, our problem is the problem of our separation from God. It is our sin.

That is what has to be dealt with. Yes, of course, the Lord cares about the plight of the poor. He cares about the needs of the body and the world. And the New Testament is plenty of that too.

But the issue here is the danger of taking that which is divine and applying it to simply earthly gain. And this is what he says, what Paul is saying here.

If anybody teaches something different, it teaches that, well, the gospel is really just about a political advancement. It's just about political gain. You know, setting the world throughout, making a utopia here.

This world is all good, as Peter tells us, melt, burn up with fervent heat and melt away. This world is passing away, like, you know, the grass and the wind, as Isaiah tells us.

- [17 : 55] Whatever we build in this world is not going to last. Whatever we gain in this world is going to be gone before we know it. What the Lord offers us is a kingdom in heaven.

A kingdom of glory which will last eternally. He does care for our needs here. He does provide for us here. But, this world is simply the passing show compared to the eternity that is yet to come.

He is proud if he tries to teach something. He doesn't know anything. He doesn't know what the gospel is really about. Doting about questions and stripes of words. Trying to tie in knots those who are simply seeking to present a simple gospel.

Oh yeah, but what about slavery? Oh yeah, but what about economic status? What about the fact that the Christians didn't say, well, we should all have a vote in the first century? And so on. What about all the things that matter now to us that the Bible wasn't addressing in the first century?

Because the issue it is addressing is bigger than all of these things. Perverse disorientation of men of corrupt minds. Destitute of the truth.

[19 : 02] Supposing that gain is godliness. From such withdraw thyself. We still have this kind of abuse in some of the worst, you know, televangelists, whether across the Atlantic or here, who would make out that, oh well, you know, if you're really blessed with God, then you'll be rich.

And, you know, it's okay to have a private jet to flit about from one congregation to another. And you drive a big Cadillac or your Rolls Royce and so on. The so-called health and wealth gospel. Or prosperity gospel.

And if you're trusting in God, he's going to make you rich. And if you've got needs, you just ask God in. Hey, he provides. And this is how you get wealthy. This is how you get rich. You just tell God what you want.

And he does it. And this health and wealth gospel, this so-called prosperity gospel, is an abuse of the free grace of God.

because it makes out that this world is where our riches are meant to be piled up. This world is where we are meant to be building our mansions, as opposed to laying up a treasure for ourselves in heaven.

[20 : 09] But rather, it was this godliness with contentment is great gain. Now, the word translated contentment, it means sufficiency, having all we need.

I'm not a huge fan of the good news Bible. But, however, I think the opening line it gives for the 23rd Psalm is beautiful in its simplicity.

And it translates it, the Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need. And it is so much greater simplicity and clarity, even though the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

We may say, oh, we don't want the Lord, and we get confused with the language. But it puts it in such beautiful simplicity. The Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need. Sufficiency.

Godliness, that relationship of the Lord, with contentment, is great gain. Because, whatever our economic status, we brought nothing into this world.

[21 : 11] We were all born naked babies. And we'll take nothing out of it. As we said, even if you fill your coffin with gold, you can't take it with you. We can carry nothing out. Having food and raiment, now, we would normally understand the word raiment to mean clothing, but it actually means literally covering, which can take in the idea of covering over your head, a roof over your head.

As it were. Which, in a sense, is a fuller explanation of this verse. Having food and shelter, raiment, covering, let us be there with content. But they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction, and perdition.

Now, how do you drown? You drown because your lungs cannot get air, because there's too much water, or something else coming in that chokes you.

When you can't breathe, when your lungs are flooded, or covered with smoke, or something else which is stopping you from being able to breathe, that's how you asphyxiate, that's how you drown.

Drown men in destruction and perdition. Now, what is it about riches? Riches, of course, the desire for riches is literally insatiable.

[22 : 28] Because it doesn't matter how much we have, there is always somebody else who's got more. And no matter how much we have, it never seems to be quite enough.

If I've told you this illustration before, then I apologise, but I think it illustrates it quite well. When I was still very young, just in the late teens, I had an aunt that died, and she left me a certain amount of money.

She decided that amongst her nieces and nephews, and she left me, and my sisters, several thousand pounds. Now, with this several thousand pounds, I could, you know, buy a small car, or invest it, or put it in a bank, whatever.

And I was genuinely appalled when I got the cheque, because I said to my father, I can't accept this, I'm going to be so, this is huge, this is more money than I've ever had in the world.

And I said, well, you know, because you left it, in the rest of the day, she left it for you, you can't really send it back, and there's no one, not his point in trying to refuse it. But it's, it's far too much.

[23 : 31] I can't possibly take it. I don't know what to do with all this money. It's more than I've ever had in my life. I said, well, you'll just have to accept it. And another thing, he said, is that just now, it seems like, oh, it's way too much.

And after a little while, it will begin to seem as though, no, it's just about right. And after a little while, after that, he began to regret it. What a pity, it wasn't just, just a little bit more.

It's never enough. No matter how much you have, or accumulate, or pile up, it's never enough. The people who have the biggest headaches and worries are the chief executives and board chairmen of the biggest companies in the world.

And they drive around in beautiful limousines and private jets and so on. And they have heart attacks early on because they're worried about the share price dropping here, or losing one of the subsidiary companies, or so many billions going down the drain, or losing an investment.

They've got billions. But it's never enough. Because the riches of this world, as the Bible says elsewhere, they make themselves wings.

[24 : 40] They never satisfy. They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many souls.

Now, when it says the root of all evil, what it actually translates as is a root. It's our root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith.

They've fallen away from the faith. And they've caused themselves problems. They've pierced themselves through with many sorrows. Now, when it says sorrows, then it's a root of all evil and sorrows.

It's like torment, as it were. Thorns. As in, if you think of the parable of the sword, where the thorns and thistles grew up and they choked the seed, that's the kind of piercing through that they suffer with.

And the contrast from the some who have erred from the faith is, but thou, O man of God. This is what some have fallen away from. But you, man of God, flee these things.

[25 : 47] Now, all manner of evil, insofar as it destroys the faith, this love, desire, this insatiable desire for more and more riches, it destroys faith.

Because it's, in destroying faith, it destroys the root of all that is good in this world, is our relationship with the Lord. And when that has been destroyed, when the root of all that is good is destroyed, then what you're left with is a root of evil, a root of bitterness.

Now, as we'll see a little bit further on in the chapter, there's nothing wrong with having riches as long as they're rightly used. But rather, Timothy, thou, man of God, flee these things, follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

In other words, you, Timothy, I know you've stood your ground before. Many people have come against you. You've stood fast in the faith. And so I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth, that makes alive all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession.

You know, you think you're witnessing a good confession? You are, that's good. Christ already witnessed a good confession before Pilate, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[27 : 13] And then Paul goes on almost at a tangent, because once he starts to talk about Christ, he can't stop himself, which in his times he shall show is the blessed and only potentate by this powerful one, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, who only have the mortality dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man has seen, nor can see, to whom the honour and power have everlasting.

It's almost like he's taken back to that experience of Damascus Road, where heaven's open and the Lord spoke to him. He's had this glimpse of glory. Having had this glimpse of glory, how can you be satisfied?

Just counting out your money in the counting house and all the money and so on and all the advancement you can get here. And if the gospel helps with that, so much the better will. It's so, it's so low on end.

It's so earthbound. It's so dead end compared to the glory the Lord has laid up for those who fear him. Keep this command without spot, unrebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And again at verse 20, if we jump ahead slightly, it's the same theme. Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science, falsely so-called, with some professing of error concerning the faith.

[28 : 30] This supposed knowledge that people have, that's what the word science literally means, prescience, pre-science, is knowledge beforehand. Omniscience is the knowledge of all things.

Only God is omniscient, of course. But people love to think, oh, we've got more knowledge and new theories and new ideas, which is really, when you get down to it, whether it's the higher criticism of the 19th century, saying, oh, the Bible, of course, it's not really inspired by God, it's just these ancient Hebrew people, they decided to make these writings and it's written in all these different languages.

And of course, they didn't have Hebrew language until years after they came out of Egypt and so on. All these criticisms that supposedly clever men make are just ways of seeking to undermine and attack the divine inspiration of what the Lord has given.

and so they think they're so clever and filled with knowledge but the only knowledge they have is the denial of God, of that they are certain, that there is no God.

And everything from supposedly the ancient age of the earth, the so-called evolution and all these things, all these things, the science, the actual empirical science does not stack up with these things.

[29 : 45] The theory is not backed up by the evidence but they cling to these theories because they must predicate the ideology that there is no God. It cannot be that God has given and inspired and revealed the things the way he says in scripture because if he did, they would have to change all their lives and the way that they perceive everything and the way the evidence is interpreted.

So whether it's science falsely so-called claims of knowledge which is really just ideology, it's just theory. You know, take evolution, it's a theory and the facts do not back it up.

So-called knowledge, so-called science is usually what men call science, not true science of course, that it's always going to back up what God has revealed but it's an attempt to undermine or to deny what God has revealed and 99 times out of 100, in fact, 100 times out of 100, when the knowledge becomes more complete then people are saying, oh, their theories ended up being rubbish and what God says in the beginning ends up being proved to be perfectly in line with the evidence.

Whether it's money, whether it's so-called science or knowledge, some people seek to use the gospel or the relationship with the Lord or the church to further their supposed reputation or knowledge.

Now, of course, this happens with churchmen as well. There used to be, of course, in the 80s, the Bishop of Durham who was famous for publishing books that denied the existence of God. A few years later, there was a Bishop of Edinburgh who, Richard Holloway who, after years of publishing statements and so on, which constantly poured scorn on this or that aspect of biblical teaching, eventually came out and admitted he didn't actually believe any of it anyway.

[31 : 37] but it was news because he held a bishopric just like for the Bishop of Durham. It was news because he was a bishop supposed to be upholding the truth of God where he was denying it and that enhanced these men's reputations in the eyes of the unbelieving world.

But Timothy is to hold fast that which is good. Timothy is to hold clearly to the teaching he has received. Bear in mind, they wouldn't have had a whole Bible in those days.

They wouldn't have had the whole entire New Testament. They'd have the Old Testament but they'd have the teaching which Paul had revealed to Timothy, the teaching of the apostles which had to be preserved intact.

And you see why he's emphasizing it before us. I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ which in his time witnessed a good confession, the only potent before him. I charge you to keep this trust which is committed to your charge.

Why? Because if Timothy, who is meant to be leading the church, is seen to buckle or seen to wobble or hesitate in the face of all this supposed unbelief or heresy or long teaching, his people, the true believing people, are looking to him to lead them.

[32 : 54] And if he says, well, actually, I don't really know, I'm not sure if this is the case or not, then their faith will be shaken. Used to be in the old days when generals and so on rode on horseback in the battle that they always had to sort of steal themselves that as they rode out amongst all the flying bullets and cannonballs and so on, that they would stay absolutely erect and supposedly completely calm in the saddle.

and when they're so and so on, how does he manage to do it? He's not jumping this way and that way, the bullets are coming and flying because this is the inspiration to his men. If they could see, oh, he's a bit scared of getting hit.

If he's scared, he should be scared too. But he was meant to be firm and rock-like so that his men would be likewise inspired. Timothy is to hold fast to the faith so that the ordinary Christian will be strengthened by his witness and example in the absence of a complete Bible.

Or even, as we see for the last 2,000 years, in the presence of a complete Bible, a lot of people will still take their cue ultimately from not what they see written in God's Word, but from what they see Christians doing and witnessing.

So those who are already rich, what are they to do? Well, they've already reached the top of the pile. Sure, it must be good for them. Charge them that are rich in this world that they be on high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

[34 : 35] Just as we saw that in verse 12, fight the good, fight the faith, lay hold on eternal life. Those who are rich, it's not wrong to be rich, but why have you been given these riches? So that you can do good with it, so that you can give to those who are poor, so that you can give to those who are nothing, so that you can distribute to those in need, so that you can show the mercy and compassion and grace of Christ in action.

Because God does care about the needs and the physical requirements of the poor and the needy and the slave and those who are his children in this world.

He does care about their needs. He entrusts some people with an abundance of this world's needs so that they're in a position to help others. This is what we are charged to do.

Whether we have been given much or whether we have been given little, we can use it for the furtherance of God's kingdom, for the relief of the needy and oppressed and those in difficulties.

We can show and live out the gospel. Like Timothy, we are to hold fast in the doctrine and that which we believe and we are to live it out and put it into practice.

[35 : 45] Oh, Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust. Avoiding profane and vain babblings, don't get distracted, and oppositions of signs falsely so-called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith.

Just as we saw in verse 10, some with the riches have erred concerning the faith. These things, the desire for reputation with the world, the unbelieving world, the desire for riches, the desire to be a big man in this world, causes some people to err from the faith, to seek to put God at the service of their worldly ambition.

It is the ultimate idolatry. It is the ultimate betrayal. It is that which we could say Judas was guilty, although that problem wasn't his motive, but still.

It is to put God at the service of the world instead of the world which he has created into the service and glory of God. This is what Timothy is to hold fast against.

This is what we are called to hold fast against, to put God first, and everything else falls into its proper place, to serve his cause, his purpose, his keeping, and we benefit, and are truly enriched because of it.

[37 : 08] Let's go.