

“WAGING WAR AGAINST THE MONEY MONSTER” – 1 Timothy 6:5b-12 **CWBC – July 22, 2018**

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INTRO – Good morning, everyone! I’m so glad we are here to worship Jesus together today!

“Scooby Doo” – Great cartoon as a kid. Crazy “monsters” who scared Scooby & his friends.

“Monster movies” as a kid – Boris Karloff as “Frankenstein” – Bela Lugosi as “Dracula” – Lon Chaney, Jr. as “The Wolf Man.” These movies were actually released in the 1930’s & 40’s. But we watched them as kids. Not necessarily innocent movies that I’m recommending, but the monsters in them were not really realistic or believable.

Horror movies have morphed into much darker, sinister movies w/ very disturbing themes & subjects, many of them w/ overtly spiritual overtones. Lots of evil, occultic, Satanic subjects & characters. The “monsters” in these movies are usually deviants, sexual perverts, & psychopathic killers, & the violence & gore in them is nauseating & extreme. This is not a sermon against these movies or against this movie genre, but I will say that allowing these types of images & subjects into your mind opens you up to all sorts of evil, demonic, Satanic forces that a Christ-follower shouldn’t pursue. There are some truly scary monsters out there that you & I don’t need in our lives.

There’s another monster that most of us have faced or are facing right now in our lives. It’s the monster of money. Money itself is not bad. But it can quickly morph into a big, ugly, scary monster that has the potential to attack us, hurt us, & even bring death into our lives in certain areas. When debts mount up; when spending gets out of control; when greed takes over; when tithing & giving to the Lord’s work slows down or stops – all signs that the monster of money is beginning to attack. As we continue our sermon series on “Fighting for Your Family,” we need to look at the importance of “Waging War Against the Money Monster.”

So open your Bibles or your Bible app to 1 Timothy 6:5b-12 (page ____ in the pew Bible).

1 Timothy 6:5b-12 (ESV)

...imagining that godliness is a means of gain. ^aBut godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷for we brought nothing into the world, and ⁸we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁹But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ¹⁰But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹¹For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Fight the Good Fight of Faith

“But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. “Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

EXPLANATION –

Paul wrote 3 letters that are known as his pastoral epistles – 1 & 2 Timothy & Titus. These are letters that Paul wrote to 2 men who would carry on his work after he was gone. Whereas his other letters were written to specific churches (to the church at Thessalonica, the church at Colossae, etc.), these 3 letters were written to individual men, pastors who were leading churches & dealing w/ the issues that faced them in these churches & communities.

When Paul wrote 1 Timothy in the mid-AD 60’s, he wrote it to give young Timothy advice & counsel on leading the church at Ephesus. They needed direction in leadership issues, worship issues, & doctrinal issues. Timothy also needed Paul’s counsel & experience in addressing some false teachers who were trying to sway the believers in the church at Ephesus. Right off the bat, Paul tells Timothy that the reason he was in Ephesus was to *“charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine”* (1:3b). This “different doctrine” that Paul was referring to was the Gnostic heresy that the Church battled against for centuries. The Gnostics claimed to have a much deeper understanding of spiritual things than the average Christian. They separated God as spirit & man as matter, & claimed that they only want to bridge the gap between God & man was through a multitude of angels of different ranks, levels, & appearances, instead of through the one Mediator, Jesus Christ. According to the false doctrines of the Gnostics, salvation was achieved by finding favor w/ these angels, rather than through grace alone, by faith alone, in Christ alone.

One of the components of the heresies that Paul was writing about was that the false teachers viewed religion as a means to make a buck. Nothing wrong w/ preachers getting paid a decent salary. But there’s a whole lot wrong w/ false teachers who use religion as a way to get rich. Lots of ungodly, un-Christlike, unspiritual false teachers in our world today.

Paul’s instruction to Timothy to help him battle against the heresies is the same instruction for us to battle against false teachings of our day: 1 Timothy 4:11-16.

APPLICATION –

Erwin Lutzer, pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, preached a sermon entitled, “Till Debt Do Us Part.” Shared this letter:

“We’ve been married for 20 years. We have young children.” I’ll summarize here. “We fell into debt. I took a second job because I lost some of our money in what I thought was a solid investment. Even though we are making it financially she wants out of the marriage because she feels that I have neglected her emotionally, which I have because I took a second job trying to make up the extra money that I lost. She spends hours on the Internet and is corresponding with a man she dated before we were married. She’s

helping him with his issues but I think I know how this is going to end. I feel helpless to stop it.”

After hearing this letter, do you see what I mean by the danger & destruction & death that the out-of-control monster of money can bring into our lives? According to a Gallup poll, about 50% of all divorces happen b/c of money issues – usually related to overwhelming debt & the burdens it brings. See how it’s a monster that will attack us?

So to protect our families & wage war against this monster, let’s learn or relearn 3 essentials when it comes to the financial area of our lives:

Learn the principles of contentment – v. 5b-8

Ben Franklin – *“Contentment makes poor men rich. Discontentment makes rich men poor.”*

This Greek word for “contentment” occurs in the NT in a few other places:

- 2 Cor. 9:8 – *“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.”*
 - NLT: *“And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need & plenty left over to share w/ others.”*
- Hebrews 13:5 – *“Keep your life free from the love of money, & be content w/ what you have, for He has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”*

The word for “content” or “contentment” means to be satisfied in one’s circumstance or position in life.

Paul certainly had learned to do that. Phil. 11b-13 – *“...I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself. ¹²I know both how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. ¹³I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me.”* (CSB) So how can we learn to be content?

- Be more concerned w/ spiritual profit than worldly profit – v. 6
- Have an eternal perspective on life – v. 7
- Realize how truly rich we already are – v. 8

Learn the possible dangers of wealth – v. 9-10 – We know that there is nothing inherently wrong or sinful about a person having wealth. But there are some dangers that come w/ the accumulation of wealth.

Tunnel vision – the tendency to focus exclusively on a single or limited goal or point of view.

That’s what happens to us when we become consumed w/ the desire to be rich. We develop monetary tunnel vision. That’s all we can see, all we can think about, all we are concerned about. Everything else fades out of focus in our lives. And it’s a DANGEROUS

place to be! Look at the dangers the Paul lists here in v. 9-10. Let's just do a little word study here in these 2 verses.

- Verse 9:
 - “desire” – intend, plan
 - “fall” – experience
 - “temptation” – trial, given for the purpose to make one stumble
 - “snare” – trap, danger
 - “senseless & harmful desires” – foolish, without understanding; spiritually & morally hurtful; lusts, craving, coveting
 - “plunge people” – to sink; drown
 - “ruin & destruction” – state of utter destruction & death; waste, loss
- Verse 10:
 - “love of money” – one Greek word that means greed
 - “root” – basic cause, primary reason
 - “evils” – wicked, bad, immoral, wrong
 - “craving” – yearning, longing, striving to attain
 - “wandered” – strayed away
 - “pierced” – to be put on a spit
 - “pangs” – distress, grief, intense anxiety & anguish

“Money is not the only cause of misfortune and evil, but it is a powerful one. Love of money is the root, the life support for a variety of wrongs and destructive behaviors.”^[u]

Learn to pursue the things of God – v. 11-12 – The Christ-follower must do these 3 things if he/she is to successfully defeat the money monster:

- Run –
 - Run away from some things (“flee”) – Lack of contentment; the Love of money
 - Run to some things (“pursue”) – righteousness, faith (TITHING & GIVING), love, steadfastness (perseverance & endurance), gentleness
- Fight – *agonizomai* – struggle, contend, compete – Fight **against** some things & fight **for** some things
- Live – “Take hold” – seize, experience beyond the “good confession” that you make. Don’t just SAY you’re a Christian – **LIVE THE LIFE!**