

## **"I Charge Thee, Keep The Commandment"**

*"I charge thee in the sight of God, who giveth life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession; that thou keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ ..."*

Different words for "charge" are found in this letter to Timothy. The English word is found repeatedly; not only in this first epistle, but also the second letter to Timothy. The word "commandment" is singular, as of one command, and while having special regard to the command "*flee these things; following after righteousness, fight the good fight of faith*" (vs. 11f), it is certainly right to understand that by "commandment" the apostle has in mind all the different instructions he has already given and will further give.

Paul calls Timothy in remembrance of God, who gives life to all things. Not only is Timothy reminded that he is "*in the sight of God*" and that nothing escapes His eyes ("*all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do,*" Heb. 4:13), but he is also reminded that God giveth life to all things. Timothy was soberly impressed with the truth that "*In him we live and move and have our being;*" that just as creatures live because God wills it to be; they cease to live when God takes away the breath of life from them. Sobering thought, indeed, that our very existence depends upon God; therefore we should "*fight the good fight of faith.*"

Timothy also is reminded that he walked in the sight of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus witnessed the "*good confession*" before Pontius Pilate. That confession concerned who Jesus was (IS). "*Art thou a king, then?*" Pilate asked (Jn. 18:37). Jesus did not flinch. He confessed, "*Thou sayest that I am a king;*" in essence, "Yes, I am a king." Pilate understood such was Jesus' confession. He put an inscription on Jesus' cross with these words, in three languages, Hebrew, Latin and Greek, "*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*" (Jn. 19:19-20). Jewish leaders protested the inscription, but Pilate finally showed resolve to their request that he change it. "*What I have written, I have written,*" he said (Jn. 19:22). The confession Jesus made before Pilate involves all the claims of Jesus about Himself, certainly including Peter's confession, "*Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God*" (Mt. 16:18). Peter denied before men that he was a disciple of Jesus and thus denied the confession he had made regarding Him.

Timothy could do as Peter did, thus he needed to "*fight the good fight of the faith.*" Timothy was to keep the commandment without spot, without reproach. This charge was that in fighting the "*good fight of the faith*" it is

imperative that one live a clean, holy life. Christ desires to "*present the church to himself, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be hold and without blemish*" (Eph. 5:27). God hates the garments that are soiled by sin and we must fight the good fight of faith by following righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience meekness.

Timothy was reminded that fighting this good fight of faith was to continue until the "*appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Paul did not mean for Timothy to understand that Christ would appear in his lifetime; but because of the certainty of His second coming Timothy should be prompted to be persistent and diligent in following a faithful course of life.

The charge Paul gave Timothy is given to us all. If we deny Christ, He will deny us. Like Timothy, we must keep the "*commandment*" without reproach.

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