

Holding tightly to eternal life

Opening text: **1 Timothy 6:11-12NKJV**

NLT: “*Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you*”

Let us start by talking about “life”: without Jesus, our perspective of life would be limited: at best the measure of life would be but a few decades upon this planet. Without Him, the quality of this life would be measured only in terms of our material possessions and whatever we could gather in our brief existence.

Jesus introduced a new paradigm when He said: “*life is not measured by how much you own*” - **Luke 12:15 NLT**

What was Jesus talking about? What kind of life is this that is not measured in 70 or 80 years, a life that is not measured by what we possess? He was talking about a type of life without beginning or end and superior in quality: **John 10:10** – *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

That is why Paul said to Timothy: “*hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you*”.

Hold tightly! In other words: don't let go. Cling to it, hold firmly. Having appropriated it, keep it with a tight grip! Hide it in your heart as a choice treasure. Guard it zealously. Grasp it with gusto, passion and energy. The thief would love to steal it but you hold on to it tightly.

So, be sure to hold tightly to this eternal life! “*how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation*” - **Hebrews 2:3**

We should be careful never to neglect this eternal life but to be zealous and never let go of it. That is why Paul exhorted Timothy to hold tightly to this salvation.

In **1 Timothy 6:20** Paul wrote: “*O Timothy guard*”... In **2 Timothy 1: 13**, he said “*hold fast*” and in verse **14** “*keep*”.

At the end of his life, Paul said,

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. **2 Timothy 4:7-8**

In this same epistle, Paul spoke of Demas who somehow had left this eternal life. He said that “*he loved this present world*” (2 Tim. 4:10).

Here's what you need to do so you are never a spiritual casualty:

1. Realise that there's a thief out there

Remember what Jesus said in John 10:10: “*The thief*” ...

Jesus also told us in the ‘parable of the sower’ that when the seed of God’s word is sown in a person’s life that the devil comes immediately to steal that word (Mark 4:15)

“*We are not ignorant of his devices*” – **2 Corinthians 2:11**

2. You have to be diligent about your salvation

Hold tightly to it!

There was a time when Paul was seriously concerned with the believers in Corinth and he feared that the enemy had tricked them out of their salvation:

2 Corinthians 11:3 - *But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

“I fear” – there is an unhealthy fear and there is a good kind of fear. A biker once told me that the key to a safe ride is to keep a healthy fear of what it means to ride a bike. That kind of fear will keep you alert, it will never allow you to underestimate the dangers of riding on two wheels instead of four. He said that accidents often happen to people who become too comfortable, overconfident and neglectful.

When it comes to our salvation, we can never let our guard down.

In the natural, when our survival is at stake, psychologists say that we tend to respond in two ways: “fight or flight”. Fear will trigger that kind of response.

Well, it is so interesting because we find that right here in this passage:

Verse 11 – “*But you O man of God, flee*” ...

Verse 12 – “*Fight*” (the good fight of faith).

3. Flee anything that could interfere or compromise eternal life

Verse 11 – “*But you O man of God flee these things*”

The Bible mentions 3 things we need to flee from: greed, sexual immorality and idolatry.

- a) **Verses 9 and 10** speak about fleeing greed and the love of money: “*Some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves with many sorrows*”

God gives us all things anyway: Verses 17-19 - *17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

b) *Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.*

1 Corinthians 6:18

c) *Flee idolatry* – **1 Corinthians 10:14**

We flee these things and we change direction to “*pursue righteousness [right standing with God], godliness, faith, love, patience and gentleness*”

Sin interferes with eternal life. Hebrews 12:2 says that sin traps us. Someone said:

“The chains of sin are too light to be felt until they are too heavy to be broken”.

4. Fight

V.12 - *Fight the good fight of faith*

We flee compromising situations but we don't flee from the devil. He is a defeated foe. We submit to God, we resist the devil and he flees from us.

However, we have to fight the good fight of faith. It is a good fight because we win and it is a good fight because it doesn't involve our strength but only faith in God.

There is warfare, there is an enemy trying to take you out, there will be temptations and trials but you have to resist the devil, steadfast in the faith (1 Peter 5:9).

The fight of faith means that you are going to stand on the finished work of Jesus on the cross. The fight of faith means that you are going to take hold of the promises of God and believe His promises.

Conclusion

Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you! Don't let go, don't backslide. Cling to it, hold it firmly in faith. Appropriate it, keep it and never let it go! Hide it in your heart as a choice treasure. Guard it zealously. Grasp it with energy and vigour. Eternal life is yours, abundant life is yours, salvation is yours.