

INTRODUCTION

Over the past couple of years, it has been our delight as a congregation to hear and see new believers profess a good profession, both in their words, and in baptism. Not long ago it was Audrey, then Andrew, then Alex, then Conner. Before that, of course, were others. I am very thankful for the grace of God worked in those brothers and sisters.

But, as you know, starting well is not the whole Christian life. Each one who has professed a good profession in the presence of many witnesses then must live for Jesus Christ for the rest of his life on this earth. The world, and the flesh, and the devil conspire to trip you, to trick you, to tempt you. Thorns grow up around you, the cares of this world, trying to choke you. Sometimes even persecution threatens you; you might face actual violence or the real threat of it.

We face such temptation here and now, each one of us, and all of us as a congregation. Timothy faced such temptations during his ministry in the congregation at Ephesus so long ago. For our aid in remaining faithful through this whole life, our Lord's apostle wrote to Timothy, exhorting him to fight the good fight of faith.

Already we have considered part of what the Bible says about where to find the strength to fight the good fight: Remember your own profession, that you have professed the good profession in the presence of many witnesses. Recalling that, you find strength from the Holy Spirit inside you, in whose name you were baptized, to stay in the faith.

Today we consider another truth that the apostle brings forth, by which to strengthen Timothy for long-term faithfulness in his Christian walk and ministry. Look at it with me today, and find strength for our walk, that we, also, can stay faithful to Christ for our whole lives.

TEXT

1 Timothy 6:12-15 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have ~~confessed~~ [professed] the good ~~confession~~ [profession] in the presence of many witnesses. (13) I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good ~~confession~~ [profession] before Pontius Pilate, (14) that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

BODY

From verse 13, I take this wonderful truth:

Christ Jesus witnessed, before Pontius Pilate, a Good Profession

I. Christ Jesus

- A. When speaking to the conscience of a Christian, exhorting the believer to fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold on eternal life, to keep God's commandment without spot, the primary reference is always to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
 - 1. because of how Christ has loved us, let us love one another
 - 2. because Jesus commanded us to do this, let us obey His words
 - 3. because Jesus is with us by His Spirit, and is watching over us in heaven, let us not be afraid of men
 - 4. because Jesus is coming again, let us hold fast what we have until He appears
- B. One of the main ways that our Lord's apostles have exhorted us believers is by pointing out what Jesus Christ has done, especially in suffering for our sake, as the example for us to follow, to follow His steps (1 Pe 2:21)
- C. Here, as the apostle Paul exhorts Timothy to be faithful in his service to Jesus Christ, as a minister in the congregation at Ephesus, he points out Christ Jesus as the great example of faithfulness to the end, in the face of greatest trial of suffering
- D. APPLICATION: Let us here today receive that exhortation, giving it full weight in our consciences.
 - 1. whenever we are tempted to shrink back, tempted to fear men instead of God
 - 2. let us not think what men might do to us
 - 3. let us think what Jesus Christ has done for us

II. Christ Jesus Witnessed

- A. If your Bible does not say that He “witnessed,” but that he “made” or “gave,” please understand that is a paraphrase; the word properly is that Christ Jesus “witnessed”
- B. G3140 *martureo* to witness or to bear witness; to testify or to give testimony; to bear record; to tell what you know
 1. you hear in this our English word “martyr”
 - a) we usually say that a martyr is one who has died for the faith
 - b) but originally meant one who has testified for the faith of Jesus Christ
 - c) then, when Christians like Antipas were killed for testifying to Jesus Christ, the word “martyr” took on the connotation of someone killed for his testimony
 2. it is essential to this concept that you know; normally because you have seen something; but you might know by some other way; the necessary thing is that you have first-hand knowledge
 3. then you tell what you know
- C. See this in the scriptures
 1. John 3:11a Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know, and **testify [G3140 *martureo*]** what We have seen...
 2. John 8:14a Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness [**G3140 *martureo***] of Myself, My witness is true, for I know...
- D. Note the distinction between what Timothy did and what Christ Jesus did
 1. 1 Tim 6:12 you...**professed [G3670 *homologeō*]**
 2. 1 Tim 6:13 Christ Jesus...**witnessed [G3140 *martureo*]**
 3. not an observation of mine; Johann Bengel (1687-1752); now standard
 4. APPLICATION: here get some church language straight - “witnessing”
 - a) has come to be used loosely to refer to telling the gospel to someone
 - b) properly refers only to what you know first hand
 - c) yes, you know that Jesus Christ died for sinners, but you cannot bear witness to that

III. Christ Jesus Witnessed Before Pontius Pilate

A. Oldest translations say “vnder” Pontius Pilate

1. Greek word G1909 *epi*, is not normally used to mean “under,” but there are at least two places in the book of Hebrews, where the Bible uses the word *epi* to say that before Jesus came, Israel was “under” the Old Covenant and its priesthood
2. *passus sub Pontio Pilato*
3. before the oldest English Bibles were translated, it was already very traditional for English-speakers to say that Jesus Christ had suffered “under” Pontius Pilate
4. as I understand, because of
 - a) influence of Latin “sub”
 - b) theory that the reference is to all that Jesus said in His 3 1/2 years of preaching
5. if that is how you understand this, that the reference to Christ Jesus witnessing is “under the reign of Pontius Pilate,” during the years that the Lord Jesus walked from place to place preaching and teaching, I will not try to argue that with you; some of the best classic commentaries say that

B. Since KJV, translations say “before” Pontius Pilate

1. Greek word *epi*, which is not normally used to mean “under”
2. referring to the day the Lord Jesus was crucified, when he was brought to stand before the Roman governor, and they spoke with each other
3. this is what I believe the apostle means here

C. Christ Jesus witnessed before the pagan Roman governor

1. who was corrupt, not keeping the law, but instead doing what the mob demanded
2. Pilate did not fear God, nor did he love the truth
3. he had the power given him to torture Jesus and even to crucify Him, which, of course, he then did
4. if the reference to Timothy having professed is his profession before the congregation, when he was baptized, the contrast with Jesus testifying before Pontius Pilate is drastic

D. APPLICATION

1. whenever we are pressured by the wicked around us not to hold fast our profession, let us remember that Christ Jesus held fast his testimony even before the one He knew would condemn him

NOTE: If time is short at this point, conclude here.

IV. Christ Witnessed A Good Profession

- A. John 18:31-38
 1. v. 33 Are you the king of the Jews?
 2. v. 34 In what sense do you mean?
 3. v. 35 not a spiritual sense
 4. v. 36 "My kingdom is not of this world"
 5. v. 37 "Are You a king then?"
 6. v. 37 You say that I am a king
 7. v. 37 I have come into the world
 8. v. 37 I should bear witness to the truth
- B. John 19:19-22 Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. 21 Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews." ' " 22 Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."
- C. Acts 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."
- D. Acts 28:30-31 Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.
- E. 1 Corinthians 12:2-3 You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. 3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.
- F. Romans 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
- G. Hebrews 11:13-16 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.
- H. Revelation 19:15-16 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

CONCLUSION

How do we remain faithful to Jesus Christ, through whatever this life brings us, whether good or bad?

Remember that we have professed a good profession in the presence of many witnesses.

Remember that our Master, whose disciples we are, Christ Jesus Himself, when He was before Pontius Pilate, threatened with torture and death, witnessed the good confession that His kingdom is not of this world.

Rita - Prelude

Rita - Trinity 644 "Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us" - Andrew lead

Allison - Trinity 736 "Jehovah Hear Thee"

Allison - Trinity 437 "Christ, of All My Hopes the Ground" - Alex lead

Dillon - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Isaiah 9:2-7

Jeremiah - Scripture Reading - Luke 1:26-33

Roel - Congregational Prayer

Lord's Supper

Benediction - 1 Timothy 1:17

If Jesus Testified Before Pontius Pilate, In What Sense Was He Silent?

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

1 Peter 2:21-25 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Matthew 27:11-14 And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. 12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. 13 Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? 14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

Luke 23:8-10 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. 9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

Matthew 26:51-54 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. 52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. 53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

RSV, ESV: who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession
CSB: who gave a good confession before Pontius Pilate

