

TITLE: THE CHRISTIAN WAR

TEXT: 1 TIMOTHY 1:18-20

THESIS: The purpose of this sermon is to introduce 1 Tim 1, focusing on the Christian's responsibility to war a good warfare.

INTRO: NFL players often use the analogy of war to describe their jobs on Sunday afternoons ("going to battle," "the war on the gridiron," etc.). However, when real war began in Iraq, these players were criticized for making these comparisons. Most of them then recognized the insignificance of a football game in comparison to fighting in a war and stopped using this analogy. I'm sure Paul also realized the significance of war and comparing things to it. Yet that's what he did in 1 Tim 1:18. This shows the seriousness of what he was trying to communicate to Timothy.

I. OVERVIEW OF 1 TIMOTHY 1:

- A. Purpose of writing (v. 3-4)
 - 1. The charge – Timothy is told to charge some there (he is commanded to command)
 - 2. The instruction – they weren't to teach something different (**Gal 1:6-9** – apostles & angels weren't to teach otherwise)
 - 3. The distraction – fables (fictions) and endless genealogies (tracing genealogy mattered in the old law, but not now)
 - 4. The goal – "edification of God" or "stewardship/dispensation of God." Either way, myths & genealogies were useless!
- B. Goal and intended recipients of the law (v. 5-11)
 - 1. Goal of the law (Mosaic, law of Christ) is love (from a pure heart, good conscience, faith unfeigned/sincere). The law, therefore, is supposed to go into the heart and conscience, and then result in love.
 - 2. Intended recipients: anyone who is not righteous (that's everyone! **Rom 3:10** – "there is none righteous, no not one")
- C. Paul, the initial example of God's patience (v. 12-17)
 - 1. He was the chief of sinners ("blasphemer, persecutor, injurious"). Persecutor of Christ & His church (**Acts 8:3; 9:4**)
 - 2. But even he obtained mercy, as a pattern for everyone afterward who believe (obedient belief – **John 12:42**)

II. WAR A GOOD WARFARE (v. 18-19):

- A. War a good war (noun & verb form of the same word)
 - 1. Fight a good fight (1 Tim 6:12; **2 Tim 4:7** – "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course...kept the faith")
 - 2. Is this a strange thing for Paul to say? Should he really be comparing Christianity to a fight?
 - 3. **2 Tim 2:3** – "Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" – Do we experience hardship as Christians?
 - a. Remember, Timothy's charge had to do with taking care of this congregation in Ephesus. This brings hardship!
 - b. Correcting false teaching is not easy. It can bring opposition (Christians don't always act like Christians)!
 - c. It may result in having to withdraw from other Christians (**1 Tim 6:5** – "from such withdraw thyself")
 - 4. The Christian life MUST be lived with a 'soldier' mentality. Do as we are commanded, even if it brings suffering. How? Not as those who are out to kill unbelievers or disobedient Christians!
 - a. War a good warfare, having FAITH.
 - The faith (**2 Tim 4:7; Jude 3**) – the system of faith (Christianity)
 - Personal faith (**Heb 11:6; Rom 10:17** – our battle instructions are given in God's Word)
 - Biblical faith is obedient faith (**James 2**). So, being obedient, war a good warfare.
 - b. War a good warfare, but do it with a GOOD CONSCIENCE.
 - Conscience (co-perception; knowing with). My conscience knows with something else (whatever trained it). So if my conscience won't allow me to do something, it's because I'm violating what I know (with) to be wrong. Something else trained your conscience to know good from bad. What was it?
 - "Follow your conscience," "let your conscience be your guide" – only works if your conscience is trained by God!
 - **John 8:9** – the accusers of the 'woman caught in adultery' were "convicted by conscience"
 - **Acts 23:1 (24:16)** – Paul lived in good conscience (even though he was wrong).
 - The 30+ New Testament passages teach the idea of a conscience being trained by God in right & wrong
- B. How do Christians "war a good warfare" today? Let's make some practical applications. **A GOOD SOLDIER:**
 - 1. Knows the enemy – if there is no enemy, there is no war! (**1 Pet 5:8** – Satan is the enemy; **2 Cor 2:11** – his devices)
 - 2. Knows his weaponry (**Eph 6:17** – "the sword of the Spirit is the word of God"), and is never caught without it!
 - 3. Works as a team – Christian brethren are part of one body (**1 Cor 12; Rom 12**). Common mission; different roles.
 - 4. Never leaves a man behind – LOVE – if a brother falls, help him up. If he is caught in sin, restore him (**Gal 6:1**).
 - 5. Is prepared with strategies – Look for opportunities to reach the lost (Col 4:5) and strengthen your fellow soldiers
 - 6. Follows his commander / rules (shined shoes, uniform, order)
 - 7. Doesn't let fear get the best of him – (**Mt 10:28** – "Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul")
 - 8. Is proud...always wears the uniform (**Mk 8:38** "whosoever shall be ashamed of me & my words in this adulterous & sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of His father"; **Rom 1:16** "I'm not ashamed..."; **2 Tim 2:15** "Study to show thyself approved, workman that need not be ashamed")

CONCLUSION: It is sad that most Christians today do not even know there's a war going on...much less are the interested in fighting in it! They don't know the enemy; they don't know their weapon; they don't care for their fellow soldiers. These are all ingredients that will win or lose the war. Where do you stand today in this war?