

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

St. Timothy was born in Lystra, his mother Eunice a Jew, his father a heathen. Timothy was a companion of St. Paul on his 2nd missionary journey. He was the recipient of two Pastoral Epistles, canonical, divinely inspired Scripture that bears his name.

He was circumcised by Paul, not because it was necessary, but to aid in his preaching of the Gospel. In Seven Epistles of the New Testament, as Paul greets the recipients, he names Timothy as being with him. Timothy was the first Bishop of Ephesus, a corrector of false doctrine, an appointer of Pastors and Deacons.

St. Paul warns: “But you, O man of God, flee these things.” What things? The Apostle writes “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

To say that we live in an overindulgent consumer culture would only be to state the obvious. Even our poor have flat screen televisions and cell phones. And with the wealth of our country comes the entitlement mentality. Men believe that they are owed what others have, and if they lack them, they see themselves as victims. Men who live in trailer parks covet the nicest trailers, men who live in gated communities lust after bigger mansions.

And in many cases, that lust, that greed, pulls men away from trust in God and tempts men to put their trust in the material.

So the Apostle writes that the pursuit, indeed the love of money results in men being pierced through with many sorrows. Perhaps you have known such sorrows. Perhaps a tight family budget has caused you great concern, leading to worry, and even to bitterness or despair.

Perhaps in that bitterness and despair you have experienced remorse over past uses of the provision that God so graciously provides. And then remorse has given way to guilt, and so you have felt the piercing sorrow that comes from greediness.

So St. Paul warns St. Timothy that we should be content with what we have. And the Apostle writes that the desire to be rich is a temptation and a snare. But the other pitfall St. Paul warns St. Timothy against is the love of money – the insatiable desire for more.

Instead of these things, which Paul admonishes Timothy to flee, writes that the man of God should pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. He does not write that the man of God should acquire these attributes. He does not write that the man of God should passively receive them. He writes that the man of God should pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

That means an active, purposeful pursuit – not of money, but of the fruits of faith. For that is what faith does. The Apostle describes the vocation of a godly man, or of a godly woman. It is a daily exercise.

St. Paul calls Timothy a “man of God”. And he writes that Timothy, and you, should pursue righteousness, godliness,

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faith, love, patience, gentleness. This is not a description of fallen man. It is a description of Christ. He who had everything in heaven and earth gave it all up for you.

He made Himself a helpless babe, defenseless, reliant on His creatures for his very life. And that they took from Him. He whose footstool was the heavens forsook the glory and had nowhere to lay His head. So they gave Him a stone tomb.

By His death He atones for the sins of all men – for selfishness, for greed, for jealousy and covetousness. He Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses. But more personally, He removes your sins. You are born from above of water and the Spirit, born anew from the womb of the font, born not kicking and screaming, but believing and confessing Christ.

In that rebirth you receive faith. You are made a child of God. And, like a child, you are completely reliant on Him. He feeds you His Word. He feeds you the Body and Blood of His Son. And your faith lays hold of eternal life, that everlasting life to which you were called.

In Christ, the righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness of the Lord Jesus is declared to be yours. As His Spirit fills and leads you, you extend that love and patience and gentleness to those around you. By faith you are made an heir to the riches of heaven.

Standing steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine, St. Timothy opposed the sinful and promiscuous worship of the pagan goddess Diana, which was called in Greek *Katagogia*. And for his opposition to that way of death, for his clear proclamation

of the Way of Life, tradition records that Timothy was stoned to death by the pagan worshippers.

But we know that Timothy, who received the admonition to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness, did so by believing in the One who is truly righteous, truly God, truly faithful, truly Love, and who even in the face of suffering showed patience and gentleness. That is the good fight of faith. And all who, by God's grace, fight that fight, lay hold on eternal life.

And that you fight that fight, in His great mercy, God brings you to Holy Baptism. He strengthens you by Holy Absolution and the preaching of His Word. He showers you with the Gifts of the Divine Service. He gives you His Body and Blood to eat and to drink, which is to say that He bestows upon you true riches, heavenly riches.

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we carry nothing out. For when the Lord is pleased to call you home, at His appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, it is He that will carry you out of this world, O Christian, He that will bear you up in His gleaming train. He will call you by name, and you will leave the poverty of this life for the imperishable splendor and treasures and everlasting joy of life in heaven.

For soon comes the blessed appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, to whom be honor and everlasting power.

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