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I Timothy 6:6-16

6. “But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

7. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

8. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

9. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

10. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with man griefs.

11. But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness.

12. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

13. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate,

14. that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15. which He will bring about at the proper time--He who is

the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

16. who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen.”

As the apostle Paul closes this, his first letter to the young evangelist Timothy, he charges him to “fight the good fight of faith.” In context this includes fleeing from the love of money, and the temptation to amass riches. Instead Paul directs Timothy to “pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.” Paul then charges the young evangelist to “keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

These lofty standards of attitude and conduct, which Paul sets before Timothy are prefaced with the simple statement of fact given in verse 7 of this morning’s text: “For we have brought nothing into this world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.” This is the foundational understanding which all godliness here on earth must be based upon.

This past week many of us witnessed evacuation scenes on the TV news, as people left their homes in Texas and Louisiana--fleeing from Hurricane Rita. One scene in particular remains imprinted on my mind: a six or eight-lane highway filled with vehicles bumper-to-bumper stretching for miles as viewed from above. Just imagine

being one of those folks; having to pack up your family and decide what to bring with you in your vehicle. Certainly food, water, and a change of clothes. And possibly an extra container of gasoline.

Last night at dinner we had a family discussion on what we would bring with us, if we had to evacuate like those people on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I immediately thought of our family picture albums, and everyone heartily agreed. Our one daughter would take her books and drawings, another her guitar. Our youngest son decided he'd take his own car, and stuff it with as much as he could.

But you know, the Bible brings us to the sober reality that some day God will evacuate the entire earth. Then a hurricane of fire, rather than water, will utterly destroy the earth and all the physical universe. We will not be able to pack our vehicle full of things. Instead, we will be stripped down to our very essence, down to our very soul, and stand before God.

And we will be judged not by what we have, but by what we have done while here on earth.

Jesus Himself sums it up this way in Matthew 16:26-27: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds."

Are you ready to evacuate?