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Campbell Chapel Free  
Will Baptist Church

Bob Bradley

# Flee, Follow, Fight

**CAMPBELL CHAPEL FWBC - SERMON**

**Flee, Follow, Fight**

*Sunday, December 6, 2009*

Bob Bradley

**I Timothy 6:11-16**

***11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.***

***12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.***

***13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;***

***14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:***

***15 Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;***

***16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.***

Paul is writing to Timothy. Timothy is a younger fellow, although I do not know how old he was here, but he was not very old. As you read the books of Timothy, we know the Apostle Paul calls Timothy his own son in the faith. Therefore, Timothy and Paul had a very close relationship. As you read the books of Timothy, they teach me that not only was he a young fellow, but he also had some confidence issues.

Many times young people and young preachers have trouble having any confidence in themselves. I went through that when I was a young fellow. I wondered if what I preaching was right, or if what I was doing was right. I had all kinds of issues in lacking self-confidence. There is no doubt in my mind, as I read the instructions that Paul gave to Timothy that he was a young man in the same condition. He had many problems with self-confidence.

Paul has told Timothy that he was going away very soon.

**2 Timothy 4**

***6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.***

***7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:***

***8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.***

Timothy knew that Paul was about ready to leave. Timothy knew that Paul said, "Hey, I'm about ready to let loose in this life. My ship is about ready to set sail; loosed from the dock here and set sail for glory land." Timothy understood that. Since he understood that, I think that there was more pressure on Timothy. Timothy understood that he was going to have to take the responsibility of overseeing all the churches that were around. "Not only am I lacking confidence in my own self, but now my Paul, my mentor, my father in the gospel is going to be leaving me. I am going to have to take care of all of this. I am going to have all of this responsibility."

I can understand why Timothy would be a little bit timid. Timothy would be concerned about what was going on. We understand that.

Timothy, if we understand things correctly was written somewhere in the early 60s and we know that the Apostle Paul was the writer. He wrote to Timothy to encourage him not only in his everyday walk of life, in his Christian life, but also to encourage him as he ministered and as he dealt with people and the situations that a pastor was going to be dealing with to encourage him and help him to understand some things. Not only that, but also, he warned him about false teachings, about false doctrines that had been taught and preached all over the place. The doctrine errors were going on even back then. Paul warned him about those things. Furthermore, he wanted to teach him about the qualifications for the officials that would be working and those officials that would be in the church and have positions of authority in the church. Paul wanted to teach Timothy and to tell Timothy what their qualifications would be if they were going to hold these positions then they had to be qualified.

Not only that but he wanted Timothy to understand what the order in the church was and how that people need to behave themselves in church. All these things are great. If we have a church that has no order, then we have no church. If we have people who do not know how to behave themselves when they get to church then we are just having a social gathering.

Paul, knowing Timothy and who he was, what he was doing, and all that was going on; he wanted to teach him all these things. I and II Timothy, and Titus are called the Pastoral Epistles. We know that in these I & II Timothy and Titus, he will give us the qualifications for preachers, deacons, and for all the officers in the church and how that they were to conduct themselves, as well as, the qualifications that they needed to have to be able to hold the position. Therefore, we know all these things are in there.

Someone named them the Pastoral Epistles a long time ago. I don't think that is fitting, but in these things were a lot to do with organization, pastoral care and all kinds of things like that.

Timothy had a lot to learn and he had to learn it in a short period of time, because Paul was about ready to leave. When we get to chapter six, verse 10 it says:

***10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.***

That is very plain. Is it not?

***9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.***

There was a problem here in the area and the people of which Paul was dealing, in that the people were trusting in riches and loving money. They did not necessarily have money but they had a craving, a love to have things. Because of that, Paul said that many of them had departed from the faith. They have gone away from the truth. Since that is the case, and no doubt in my mind, some of the false that were there were people who coveted their money. They were people who were abusing the people. There were people who were making merchandise out of those that were listening to them.

All you have to do today is turn on your TV set and if you watched probably any Christian program on TV today very much at all, you probably saw someone wanting you to send them your money. Many of them—not all of them—but a lot of them on there do not care anything about you. They do not care anything about teaching the Word of God. They do not care anything about saving people and seeing people's souls saved. They do not care anything about that. The only they want is your money. They covet it. They want it. They desire it. Do you know what they will do? They will manipulate you and do anything they can to get it. They will make you feel bad. They will try to condemn you. They will put all kinds of sad pictures on the TV set and show you all kinds of sad things to try get you to commit to send them your money.

Paul wanted Timothy to know and to be very aware of these that had a great love for money, these that had a great desire to be rich, and these that had departed from the faith; he told Timothy, "You need to be aware of them." That is the reason that Paul is going to say what he is about to say—that we are going to talk about tonight—is because so many that Paul had been dealing with and so many the Timothy would deal with had a great love for money. They coveted it. They had a great burning desire to have money. There is nothing wrong with money.

I heard someone say the other day, "Money is the root to all evil." That is not true at all. Money is not the root of evil. We need money. We must have money. People must have money. Churches must have money. That is all good, great, and fine. However, the "love" of money is where the problem comes in at; the desire to have it, the craving to get it, the covetness that goes along with all these things is where the problem is. Paul says, "Timothy, you need to be aware."

***11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.***

Was it not great that Paul called Timothy, "O man of God"? When you read back in the Old Testament, you will find out that Moses was called, a man of God. Eli was called a man of God. Elijah and many of them back there were called "a man of God." That is a great title.

***11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.***

The things that he is talking about here are what he was talking about in verses 9 and 10 was the love of money and the love to have things. The word “flee” means “separation.” In other words, “Timothy, you need to separate yourself from those folks who are in love with money; you need to separate yourself from those folks. You need flee from that. You need to stay away from that.” Not only that but he also says here, “You need to separate yourself from those who are sinning, those who are teaching these false doctrines, those that are trying to say that money is godliness.” In other words, if you have a lot of money then you are very godly.

Someone said a minute ago, God with contentment is great gain. Do you know what the great thing is in life today? The great thing in life today is that you do not have to have any money to be saved. You do not have to have any money to be on your way to heaven. You do not have to have any money today to be happy. You do not have to have any money today to have the joy of God deep down in your soul. You do not have to have money to have a good attitude. All that you need is Jesus Christ. If we have Him then we have all that we need. When we are around, or when our paths cross with those individuals that are teaching false doctrine, those who are in love with things and loveth money; we need to flee from them. We need to separate ourselves from them. We need to stay away from them because they are trying to use you. They are trying to get something off of you that does not belong to them and they do not care a thing about you.

Paul says, “Timothy, stay away from them. Flee from them. Separate yourself from them.”

***11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.***

#### **Follow after**

The word “follow” is a great word when you look at what it means. It means, “to run after,” “to run after, swiftly,” or “to pursue hotly.” In other words, hotly pursue something, or be in a very fast pace about following something. It also means “to never give up,” “never quit pursuing” even though times may get hard, “don’t ever quit pursuing.” He is saying here that we need to separate ourselves from the false teachers. He also says that we need to follow after something.

It is one thing for us to separate ourselves from sin. It is one thing to say, “I’m not going to be around that. I’m not going to participate in that.” Many times people want to do that and they come over and sit down in a seat then never do anything. Friend, you have not gained any ground because you have separated yourself from that. When we separate ourselves from something then we need to be following something.

The Apostle Paul says to Timothy, “You need to flee, you need to separate yourselves from all these false teachers, but you also need to follow after something. You need to hotly pursue something. You need to run after something.” He is going to tell us some things that we need to run after.

## Righteousness

The first thing he says that we need to run after and that we need to swiftly pursue is righteousness. That means being right with Almighty God. If there was ever anything that you and I need to be pursuing today, it is a right relationship with Almighty God. That is important! That is more important than the meals that you may eat. That is more important than the home that you live in. Having a right relationship with God is all that you and I need to have right relationship with HIM.

Righteousness—is a right relationship with God.

Righteousness has to do with my character and your character. It has to do with living a righteous life, living a life of honesty, living a life of integrity, living a life where we can be honored because of how that we live. That has to do with my character and your character. We ought to be living a life like that. When we live a life full of honesty, a life of integrity, a life that is full of truthfulness, a life that is full of honesty. Do you know what we can do? Then we do not have anything of which to be ashamed.

I have said this many times in life. It is great to be able to lay your head on a pillow of the night and know that you have not lied to anyone that day. It is great to be able to lay your head down and know that you have been truthful in all of your transactions that you may have had this day. It is great to be able to lay your head down and know beyond any shadow of a doubt that you owe nobody any apologies. It is great to live like that. That is the kind of people that God wants us to be and we need to be following, we need to be pursuing hotly righteousness, and honesty. We need to have a character about us that becomes Christian people. It is sad but many church people do not have that. Many church people are not honest. Many church people have no integrity at all. They will do anything.

Paul tells Timothy to stay away or to flee from those who are teaching the error and run towards or follow after righteousness, which is a right relationship with God.

## Godliness

The next thing he says that we need to be pursuing is godliness. The word “godliness” has to do with our character. Just as we need to be honest, just as we need to have integrity, and just as we need to live an honorable life, we also need to be godly people. Godliness has to do with our conduct. Just as righteousness has to do with my character, godliness has to do with my conduct.

Do you know what we should be doing? Since we are saved and when we look at what God has done and when we look at the Bible and read the Bible, when we look at the life of Jesus Christ and when we see all the things that He has done then since we know what kind of a life that he lived, we should be pursuing godliness. That means that we are going to live a life like God is living. Today, we should be pursuing the same kind of character that God has. The same kind of conduct that we saw in Jesus while He was here on planet earth; is what we should be following. We should be pursuing that. The very nature of Almighty God; we should be pursuing after that and trying to do our very best just to live as God has lived and to live as Jesus Christ lived here. We need to live, follow and pursue godliness. When we do that, there will be some things that we will not do.

Godliness has to do with conduct, just as righteousness has to do with character.

If I am living a godly life, then there is a line that I will not step over. If I am pursuing godliness, then I have no problem about being honest. I will not have a problem with lying if I am pursuing godliness. Truth!?

I do not know why we have so many problems with some of this stuff. If we are living a godly life and if we are pursuing, hotly pursuing godliness then we should want to seek to live as Jesus Christ lived. Seek to possess the very same character, and the very same nature, and the very same behavior as God. That is what we should be pursuing. We will be pursuing it if we are following godliness.

### **Faith**

Not only do we need to follow after or pursue righteousness and godliness, but also faith.

Do we really believe anything? The word faith actually means to believe and be faithful. Do we really believe anything? What do we really believe?

The thing we forget sometimes is what we believe does matter, and who that we believe does matter. We think sometimes that we can believe anything that we want to and everything is just fine. Friend, listen. That is not the case at all. We need to be pursuing faith. We need to have faith. We need to be faithful in our relationship with Almighty God.

This word "faith" actually means, "to be faithful." The thing here that we forget sometimes is that we think that faithfulness only comes on Sunday morning, or only happens on Sunday night every now and then, or on Wednesday night. When he is talking about that we need to be pursuing faithfulness, or pursuing faith is something we do day in and day out, week in and week out...and so forth. We need to be faithful to Almighty God 24/7 every day. Every moment of every day, we need to be pursuing faithfulness. Truth!?

A very smart fellow once said is the greatest ability that you and I have is dependability. The greatest ability that you and I have is being dependable.

Many times, we are not very dependable. Many times, we are predictable that we are going to be undependable. Truth!?. Many times, we can see that. We can predict people sometimes that they are going to be very undependable. However, being faithful has to do with being dependable. Can God depend upon you? Are you going to be faithful to God through thick or thin, whatever comes and whatever goes; are you going to be faithful to God?

"Well, if it does not cost me anything, preacher. If I can do what I want and when I want to then I'll be faithful." If that is going to be your attitude, then you are wasting your time.

We need to be following; we need to be in hot pursuit of righteousness, godliness, and also faithfulness. We need to be in hot pursuit of that.

## Love

Not only that, but also we need to be in hot pursuit of Love. "Love" is the "agape" love. The Greek word is "agape." It is a love that sacrifices for the sake of others. It is a love that seeks to give and not to get.

Are we doing that? Are we pursuing a path where we can actually sacrifice? Are we pursuing a path, road, or an avenue that we will make some sacrifices ourselves for the sake of others? Are we doing that?

Many times, it is all about self. It is all about me. It is all about number one. It is all about us many times. He says that we need to be in hotly pursuit of the love that will sacrifice for the sake of others. Jesus Christ became a sacrifice, and was a sacrifice for our sake. He did not come here to die for Himself. He did not need to do that. He came here and was sacrificed for our sake. He is talking about that love here. It is the same kind of love Jesus had when He went to the cross, suffered, bled, and died for my sake, and your sake. That is the same kind of love that we need to have for one another.

We want to have it for a little group. We want to have it for a few handpicked ones, but that is not what he is talking about here. He is talking about having a love that will sacrifice for anybody. It does not matter whether you are this color or that color, whether you go to this church or that church, or whatever you call yourself does not matter. Jesus died for everybody. It does not say that you have to be this race, or nationality. Jesus Christ died for everybody. His sacrificial love was for the sake of everybody. Are we living that kind of a life?

Paul says to Timothy, "That is what you need to be doing. You need to be pursuing this kind of life style."

It is great to live that way. When you just live for self, it is bad because you get very selfish. It is so bad when we get selfish. We live such a horrible life when we get selfish. I am not necessarily talking about with the things that we do not want to give away. There are many different ways to go about being selfish.

## Patience

We also need to be pursuing patience. We need to be in hot pursuit of patience. "Patience" means "endurance." Do you know what happens to many folks a lot of times? When things get rough, when the battles and storms are raging, the storm clouds are very low; many just throw in the towel and quit.

Paul says, "Timothy, you need to be in pursuit of patience or endurance. Timothy, you need to stick to it even in hard times."

Life is not always going to be easy. Life is not always fair and life is not always easy. There are things that come my way and your way that are hard. They are hard to deal with sometimes. However, I am glad that there is a way that we can live when we are living in the will of God, when we are pursuing patience and endurance, God will help us through any trial comes our way. We throw in the towel too quick many times. Right when we are about to see God do some great things in our life that is when

many throw in the towel and quit. That happens a lot. You have seen it in your family. You have seen it in different churches. I have seen it everywhere. I have seen it in many different places. People make shipwreck of their lives. I am not going to say that they go out here and commit murder and all that stuff. However, they just give up on God. There is not a day, when I am pursuing patience, when I am waiting upon God, I will wait upon God. I will not throw in the towel. I will know that my life is in the hands of Almighty God. I will know that whatever has come into my life had to come through Him first. He knows all about it. I also know that He is going to take me through that. I will not be throwing in the towel and quitting.

### **Meekness**

Not only do we need to be in hot pursuit of patience, but also of meekness. Meekness has many different meanings. However, this is a good one. We need to flee the false teachings that were going on and we need to follow or hotly pursue these things. There is something here that Timothy was going to need to follow after, or hotly pursue after was “self-control.”

I do not care who you are today. The greatest way to make a complete idiot out of yourself is to lose control of your mouth. The greatest way to ruin your testimony in a crowd, around your family, around those you work with is to lose control of your mouth. Truth!? Have I done that in my life? Absolutely! Have I said things in the spur of the moment and say something? I sure have. I still yet have a ways to go. Some people can make my blood boil. They can. I have learned that it is always better to take time to think before you speak. Self-control, not only of our mouth, but also of all the functions of this flesh, we need to have it in control. There are many things that we can do, a lot of things of this flesh that we can do that will destroy us, destroy our relationship with God, destroy our testimony in the community; we need to be pursuing meekness.

The Greek word for “meekness” actually means “power under control.” You and I have great power. God has given us great power. However, that power needs to be under control so that we do not destroy with that power of meekness.

The Ohio River is used to make electric down at the dam. The water runs down through here, and it runs in goes down and turns the turbines, generators, and makes the steam. It does all that stuff. They make electric. It just flows along. There is great power that is there. Back in 1937, there was a tremendous flood here. That great power that was in that river was out of control. It destroyed many things.

In my life and in your life, we have great power but that same power that we can use to be a blessing is the same power that we can use to destroy people. That is why we need to be meek, or to have self-control in our lives. There is a lot of power in the tongue.

Follow after these:

- **Righteousness** – a right relationship with God
- **Godliness** – live a life like God is living
- **Faith** – dependable
- **Love** – sacrifices for the sake of others
- **Patience** – endurance
- **Meekness** – power under control

## Fight

Not only that, but he says there are some things here that we need to fight against.

***12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.***

Not only do we need to flee, we need to follow, and we need to fight. The idea of fighting here is as a soldier would go and fight. He needed to fight the good fight. He needed to lay hold of eternal life. There are some things worth fighting for. Eternal life that can be given to everyone is worth fighting for today. Since we have eternal life today, we should be fighting for others to have eternal life.

The Bible, the truth is worth fighting for. Standing up for the truth is worth fighting for. The Word of God in its purity is worth fighting for. If you and I do not fight for it, then when these kids come along, they will not know what truth is. The truth will be lost. It is worth fighting for. Your eternal soul, my eternal soul, and the eternal destiny of so many folks hang on the truth and us preaching and teaching the Word of God.

- **Flee** – flee the love of money and desire for things
- **Follow** – righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness
- **Fight** – the Word of God is worth fighting for

So many people just want to throw in the towel and say it is not worth fighting for. If there was ever anything worth fighting for in this life, fighting for the truth is worth it.

***12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.***

***16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.***

## Immortality

He talks about Jesus Christ and how he had a good profession before Pontius Pilate. We know Jesus did that. He goes down here and starts talking about God who only has immortality. Do you know what

that means? He is not subject to dying. Since that is the case, we need to be pursuing godliness, righteousness, meekness, faith, and all these things.

***16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.***

### **Potentate**

Verse 15 uses this one word.

***15 Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;***

He uses the word that He is the only Potentate. Do you know what that means? We have many folks in our world today who think that they are great rules, think that they are powerful, and think that they have great authority. However, He is the sovereign. Jesus Christ is the One who has all the power both in heaven and in earth. The word "Potentate" means "ruler," but it also brings out the idea of great power. He is the One that is in control. He is the One that dwells in the light where no man can approach. He is the One that has immortality. He is the One that is immortal. Death does not affect Him. He is not subject to death. Since that is the case, that should encourage us. We are saved. He has saved us. We belong to Him. He is our Savior. Since He is all-powerful, since death cannot conquer Him then that should encourage us to follow Him.

We need to pursue many things. First, we need to make things right with Him if we are not saved. If we do that, then all these other things will come into play.

We need to be asking ourselves, "Are we saved?" If you know that then that is wonderful. If you know that then we need to be following the things that we have talked about. We need to be fleeing and staying away from all the sinful teachings and all the sinful things of this world. We need to be following after some things and we need to be fighting for some things.

If you are not saved tonight, then you do not know what we are talking about. You need to come tonight and follow Jesus Christ. He is the One who went to Calvary, suffered, bled, and died. He is the One that was sacrificed. He is the One that was killed so that you and I could live. Come and follow Him tonight.

**Come—**