



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Timothy 6:1-21

"The Temptations of Riches

and the Contentment of the Godly"

TRANSCRIPT

[Starts Abruptly] A different mike tonight and I hope it is satisfactory and that it is not either too loud for your or too weak, but that's why it sounds different.

[Prayer] Our Father we are grateful to thee for the study of thy Word and we do ask again for the help of the Holy Spirit as we read and study the scriptures we pray that for each one of us there may come his enlightenment in such a way that we come to know thee more definitely and more clearly and more deeply. We pray for each one present and we ask Lord that through the Scriptures thought will minister to our own individual needs. May Jesus Christ be honored and glorified in all that is said we pray in His name. Amen.

[Message] Tonight we want to finish up our study of first Timothy so we are turning to the sixth chapter and seeking to expound this entire chapter.

Next Wednesday and the following two or three Wednesdays we want to have -I want to have- a special type of study in which we take up a series of three or four recent

“The Temptation of Riches and the Contentment of the Godly” by S. Lewis Johnson  
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

important evangelical books and I want to review these books and seek to be as critical of them in the true sense, not necessarily negative always, as critical of them as is true to Holy Scripture and among the books that we want to review are Mr. Linsell's recent book, *The Battle for the Bible*; Professor Jewett's book, *Male and Female* and Clark Pinnock's, edited work, *Grace Unlimited* and so the next three or four weeks before we begin our Fall series of study will be devoted to reviews of these important evangelical books.

Now, I think that all of us who claim to be evangelical ought to be acquainted with the literature that is being written concerning the bible by evangelicals and especially those books by reason of their subject some special appeal and have demonstrated a special appeal among evangelicals and these books have. As you probably know one of the books pertains directly to one of the great issues within the evangelical church, the nature of the scriptures and their inspiration. Another pertains to the place of women in the ministry of the local church and the third pertains to the continuing everlasting conflict between Arminism and Calvinism. Our grace unlimited being one of the latest attacks against the Calvinistic view of the word of God so we're going to take each one of these in these series of studies and we'll devote one night to each one of them and we're beginning next week with a review for, *The Battle for the Bible*.

I've always felt that if you attend Believers Chapel you ought to be acquainted with the theological issues not only of the broad spectrum of Christian as a whole of Christianity but also with the issues that relate to evangelicals -- those who do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. So the aim of this is to review some of the recent literature.

Now, we're turning the sixth chapter of first Timothy and our subject for the night has to do with the temptation of riches and the contentment of the godly. Now, Paul in the sixth chapter of first Timothy continues his words of instruction to young Timothy whom we have been saying all along is an apostolic legate that is he is a representative of the apostle he and Titus were apostolic legates. There's nothing in the bible to suggest that they were Pastor's in the sense in which that term is used in modern language. They

were representatives of the apostle Paul. So these are instructions that the apostle is giving to his young legate, his own ambassador they were servants of the apostles and in the sixth chapter after giving a series of instructions that began with the fourth chapter he now comes to some instructions concerning servants then some advice to Timothy in relation to false teachers again, in the third through the tenth verses. And finally in some advise concerning his own commission from the Lord through the apostle. Let's look now at the first two verses in which we have some brief words from the apostles concerning servants. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed."

Now, you can see from this opening verse that the apostle is speaking about Christians who are slaves. They have been converted in the status of slaves. It is very interesting in the New Testament to read what the apostle Paul has to say about such. Now, we know it has been estimated by Gibbon about sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire around the time of the apostle Paul. Now, it is rather striking that in the New Testament epistles there is not positive instruction from the apostle for slaves to seek freedom. In fact, the exact opposite advice is given by the apostle; in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 he states that it is a principle that men are to abide in the calling in which they were called. And specifically slaves are mentioned so the word from the apostle is to abide in the calling in which you were called. If you are a slave he said do not seek to be free. If freedom is offered to you take it. But abide in the calling in which you were called. So it is not surprising then to see the apostle write here: "As many as are slaves under the yoke count your own masters worthy of all honor that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." Because if a Christian who is a slave were to behave in such a way the he brought disgrace upon himself and also legal difficulties it would reflect upon the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ and so the apostle says, "I want you who are servants and under the yoke to count your own masters worthy of all honor that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed."

"The Temptation of Riches and the Contentment of the Godly" by S. Lewis Johnson  
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

Now, immediately the question would arise now what shall we do about believing masters? Evidently, in the first verse he's thinking unbelieving masters and the Christian slaves. But suppose the master is a Christian he says in verse two, "And they that have believing masters let them not despise them because they are brethren." Now, evidently, that word despise means because you know that you are on the same level with them in the body of Christ you're not to take advantage of that relationship and the fact that you enter into by virtue of your Christian relationship into a much closer relationship with your master than any other slave would you are not because you may come to see some weakness or other faults in your master despise them. But rather remember that they are brethren and further do them service they are faithful and they are beloved by God and they are partakers of the benefit. Incidentally that last expression has given some the impression that it means that together we partake of the benefit of Christian salvation, that probably is not the apostle's meaning. He says because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit and the benefit is the special service of a Christian slave to his master so he says then that those who are slaves if they have unbelieving masters they are to serve them and serve them acceptably and with acceptance by the master in order that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed and in the case of slaves who have believing masters they are not to despise them they are brethren they are to do them service because they are faithful and beloved and the beneficiaries of the service of the slave.

In other words then the apostle is stating that there is to be no social revolution as a result of Christianity directly. Now, in other words, all social revolution according to the New Testament is revolution that should arise by virtue of the permeation of society of the Christian principles. I am sure that if the apostle were here in our society he would say the same thing that Christians are not to be responsible for social revolution, but as more and more are brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus then the principles that are set forth in Holy Scripture may well provoke a legal and proper revolution. The

apostle would welcome that all Christians would. But they are not to foment revolution. That seems to be the plain teaching of the New Testament it may seem distasteful to some but nevertheless I challenge you to take a look at the word of God and if you don't like it don't jump on me jump on the apostle Paul and the others who have given us these instructions.

Having said then a few words about slaves and their relationship to their masters now, the apostle advises Timothy in connection with the false teachers again. You'll remember that in the first chapter he also spoke about the false teachers and in that chapter he particularly stressed the influence of false doctrine and the false doctrine of the false teachers. Here you will notice that the stresses rest upon the effect of ungodly conduct from false teachers. So let's read on with verse 3 and I'm going to read on through verse 10:

"If any man teach and consent not the wholesome words even to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the doctrine which is according to godliness he is deprived knowing nothing but dotting about questions. (Now, that means something like having a morbid desire concerning questions and disputes of words) from which or of which cometh envy, strife, railings, evil suspicions, perverse disputing of men of corrupt mind and destitute of the truth supposing that gain and godliness is a means of gain from such withdraw thyself."

[Message] Incidentally, those last words, "from such withdraw thyself," in the authorized version are not found in the most ancient manuscripts of first Timothy and probably not genuine. That's why if you have a modern translation you will probably not have them in your text. Those words, however, are found in 2 Timothy, chapter 3, and so the scriptural principle is in the word of God.

"From such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment or self-sufficiency is great gain, for we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us therewith be content but they which will be rich (some of you are turning your pages I have not got to the end yet [Laughter]) but they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lust which drawn men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil."

Now, this could be render is the root of all kinds of evil, the root of all evils or even a some translations have it, "a root of all evil" because there is no article before the word root there are however, reasons from the Greek text for translating it still as, "the root" even though the article is not there due to it's position of the sentence due to the use of the adjective "all" afterwards, in a sense it is the root of all evils, it is not really too far from what the apostle has in mind. "For the love of money is the root of all evils or all kinds of evil. Which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Now, coming back to verse 3 the apostle expatiates upon the relationship of Timothy and the false teachers and he gives him some advise about these wicked men who teach things contrary to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. The last few words of verse 2, "these things write or teach and exhort," probably belong to the following so these are the things that Timothy is to teach and to exhort, if any man teach and otherwise and consent not to wholesome words.

Now, that is very striking because the word wholesome is a word that means really healthy and of course, as we notice from the context and as we know from the effects of false teaching which leads to unhealthiness of life it's natural that he should say with regard to truth that it is healthy; in other words, for spiritual health what we need is the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wholesome words. Now, when he says even the

words of our Lord Jesus Christ I take that "of" to mean "from" in the sense that they are from the Lord Jesus through his apostles. So what he is saying is that if any man teach contrary to what we have been teaching and does not consent to the healthy teaching that comes from the Lord Jesus through us, it is a claim on the part of the apostle, and for others who teach the same kind of doctrine that their teaching comes from the Lord Jesus. And since it comes from him it is healthy teaching. It is teaching that is designed to bring us to spiritual health and on the contrary, of course, that kind of teaching that is false teaching leads to spiritual sickness.

Now, that is why it is important for us to attack heresy, we do not attack heresy in order to make you curious about truth or to excite your or to be sensational, Dr. Johnson is going to attack Reinhold Niebuhr next Wednesday night, or something like that. That is not the reason why you speak out against heresy and false teaching you do because this kind of teaching is contrary to the healthy condition of the saints, it promotes spiritual sickness, and people who yield to false teaching becomes sick spiritual, inevitably. So these words that the apostle is speaking about are words that are speaking about the truth that comes from our Lord Jesus through the apostles. We can also add of course, this truly that by way of application from the prophets too, it is that system of truth that is the healthy teaching.

He goes on to say, "And to the doctrine which is according to godliness." Now, that's the source; it is wholesome teaching; that is, it's substance; it is from the Lord Jesus, that is it's source; and it is according to godliness, that is it's standard. So the teaching that he refers to is the doctrine that is according to godliness. Now, that means that all of the Christian teaching is teaching that is judged by the standard of godliness and judged by the standard of godliness it is acceptable to our great triune God in heaven. Christian teaching is teaching that is to result in godly living. Any kind of Christian life that is not godly is not in accordance with the life that is set forth in scripture.

“The Temptation of Riches and the Contentment of the Godly” by S. Lewis Johnson  
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

The Christian teaching is to be accurate, true to the apostles, accurate as much as we can possibly make it, but it is teaching that must issue in holy living. So if there is unholy living, if there is ungodly living and Paul will speak about some of the specific sins in a moment. It is either because the individuals do not have the Christian teaching or the Christian teaching is not having its true effects in their lives. So it's the doctrine that is according to godliness.

I must confess I love that expression because it stresses the importance of doctrine and it expresses also the importance of the practical outworking of truth. You can go to extremes it is possible to get so interested in doctrine, so interested in the propositions of the Christian faith that the practical outworking of it is neglected. That's possible, it is possible, and it's certainly possible for individuals to explain doctrine is unimportant and be so interested in the practical that the Christian teaching is neglected. The idea is to have the teaching from the Holy Scripture and the product of the godly life, the teaching that is according to godliness.

Now, if a man does not teach in this way Paul says, he's proud, knowing nothing. Isn't it how frequently this combination is found? The companion of conceit is often ignorance. He's proud knowing nothing. But rather he is having a morbid desire concerning questions and disputes. Now, what does that mean? Well, that means if a man doesn't teach these doctrines he is proud, he doesn't really know anything but since he's speaking about false teachers and men who are false teachers are teaching something. Generally, he is a person who has a morbid craving for argument about spiritual truth, questioning and disputes of words. That's the kind of things that issue from morbid activity not grounded in the word of God.

Now, I've got a word for my Calvinistic friends. Now I know you know that I'm not going to attack the Calvinist too harshly; but nevertheless, we ourselves are and must be to the exhortation of the word of God too. It is possible for a man, particularly a young Calvinist who has come to an understanding of the doctrines of the grace of God

to be excited about them that he goes out as a kind of heresy hunter looking for every manifestation of Arminianism that he can possibly find. [Laughter] Now, that's all right, that's perfectly all right. Just keep a lot of it to yourself [Laughter] it's perfectly all right to hunt heresies but do not let that so get hold of you that your spiritual life is harmed by it. You can because you see some truth that others do not see become proud the Holy Spirit has revealed this to me he hasn't revealed it to them I see it in Holy Scripture and so you can just go around picking arguments over biblical doctrine. That's a very simple thing to do, pick up every kind of statement and have an argument over it and then things become unpleasant because you must remember in the final analysis all truth is revealed truth. You cannot cram even the best of truth into the minds and hearts of individuals who are blinded. The Holy Spirit is the one who unveils the truth of God you can give the finest kind of argument for a biblical teaching and if the Holy Spirit does not give light you will be unsuccessful; you should know that. And so you should not because you have seen some things, engage in this morbid kind of activity about disputes of words and questionings. Easton says, "Having a morbid craving for arguments." Because from this will come envy, and strife, and railings, and evil suspicions, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness.

That of course, is in the context here in reference to false teachers, they are the ones who listen and out of their listening seek to overthrow the saints with their questions and their arguments and they have this morbid desire for arguing. If you've ever been around members of false cults you'll find that this is true. They have all, if they have ever known anything about Christianity they know all of the difficulties of Christianity and they seek to bring them up they will introduce text that you yourself may not have ever considered and they will seek to overthrow you. I am constantly answering questions like this through the mail writing me about such and such a verse that some Jehovah's Witness has thrown up before a Christian friend or some Mormon or others.

"The Temptation of Riches and the Contentment of the Godly" by S. Lewis Johnson  
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

Now, it is true that they are here in view but this same tendency exists in us. Now, it's not just for the Calvinist either but with the Premillennialists also. And with the Dispensationalist too; in fact, almost every kind of body of spiritual truth that is unveiled to the understanding of Christian; he can become proud in the understanding of it, in the acquirement of that information and he can go out seeking to overthrow others who don't yet understand what they do in a perverse spirit and in that way in their disagreeable spirit bring reproach upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Most of us who have been won to truth have been won to truth not by people who were carrying out their ministry in that spirit but who were firm, yet carried out their spirit in a true sense of concern for us, we were not won by their concern but by the Holy Spirit but the combination of the two is prominent.

But now the apostle, having said that, states in the sixth verse, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." Now, he has said that these men supposed that godliness is a means of gain. What does he mean by that at the end of verse 5 that godliness is a means of gains? Well, he alludes to the fact that many of the false teachers, and this is true today too, many of the false teachers are men who are teaching with the view of making money out of their teaching. They suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

What were these men about whom Paul is warning Timothy? Well, they were professors of Christian truth evidently. We saw when we first looked at the first chapter of Timothy that they were related to the heresy of Gnosticism but they didn't claim to have a different religion they claimed to have the same religion so they were professors of the truth. Furthermore, they claimed pay for their teaching. That's evident; they claimed that because they were teachers of the word they ought to be paid. Now, that's not un-Christian we saw in the fifth chapter, "Let the elders that rule well be counted of double honor especially they who labor in word and doctrine for the scripture says thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the grain and the laborer is worthy of his reward." Now,

this is in Christian teaching and so that is proper, but these men evidently claimed pay for their pay.

Incidentally, I don't know of anything in the word of God that justifies a person claiming pay for the exposition of the word of God. I don't know of anything in scripture that justifies that. I don't know of anything in scripture asking for money in the Lord's work for ones self. Now, it is true that in the New Testament the apostle Paul took up a collection but it wasn't for Paul, it wasn't for the apostles, it wasn't for his legates, though that's conceivable. It was for the church in Jerusalem.

Now, we must be very, very wary of those who would ask for pay for the preaching of the word of God. Now, this room has a number of preachers in it I hope I haven't stepped on any toes, but I have a hunch that most of you in this auditorium has done a great deal of preaching for nothing. Well, that's the way it ought to be, because you were interested in it enough to proclaim the scriptures for the sake of the scriptures, for he sake for the Lord, and for the sake of those for whom they were sent. So those who claim pay for their teaching, beware. They were professors they claimed pay for their teaching and evidently they were motivated very prominent by this moneymaking.

There was one of the Popes who lived in Luther's time that said God has given us the Papacy, now, let's enjoy it. And he spoke of enjoying the fruits of the Papacy, it was great temptation in evangelicalism today because evangelicalism has spread over this country and many of you know that in evangelicalism the sales of Christian literature has skyrocketed there are great temptations, literature, there are great temptations in tapes, their great temptation in many ways for evangelicals to ask for money. This is one of the reasons why the elders at Believer's Chapel have given their tapes a way free because they feel that that's in harmony with scripture it isn't that they wouldn't like to have the money it's because it's a scriptural conviction with them. I certainly am in harmony with it.

"The Temptation of Riches and the Contentment of the Godly" by S. Lewis Johnson  
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

But he states, turning to the spiritual side of the matter in verse 6 he states:

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." They suppose that gain or that godliness is a means of gain. But great gain is godliness with self-sufficiency. Now, self-sufficiency is used in two different ways in English. When we speak of one man as being self-sufficient we would incline to think of him as being -it has a bad sense sometimes in a sense of being pride, but if we speak in the other sense of self-sufficiency it has a good since and that's the since in which the word is found here it simply means contentment. Godliness with contentment, content with the things that we have is great gain so the self-sufficiency is the sense of the possession of peace with God by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ. The contentment is the contentment of the joy of our salvation. The contentment is the contentment that comes from the assurance of having believed in the Lord Jesus we do have everlasting life. The contentment is the contentment that having become one of the saints, all things work together for good to us who love the Lord, who are the called according to his purpose and godliness with such contentment is a great spiritual gain. Now, the First National bank in Dallas does not recognize this. But it is great gain and the proof of it follows in the apostle's arguments now because the next verse says "for."

Now, that "for" is very interesting because it introduces us to some reasons why godliness with contentment is great gain. "For, we brought nothing into his world and it is certain we can carry nothing out." You can't take it with you. Now, I know things have changed since Howard Hughes. I don't know whether any of you have seen any of the Howard Hughes Will kits [Laughter]. It has been said by some that evidently, Howard Hughes did take it with him. [Laughter] But if he did he would be the only man and of course I know that he didn't. I wonder if wherever he is he doesn't get an occasional smile out of what's happening now here on earth and my wife, she has a perverse mind every now and again [Laughter] she is wondering if he didn't do it on purpose [Laughter].

Now, that is one reason why to seek to gain money is unsatisfying because we brought nothing into this world. The apostle's thinking about the way we came in, we

did come in without anything we came in naked. We didn't bring anything into the world; he's still expounding Genesis I guess. We brought nothing into this world and it is certain that we can carry nothing out.

Further, and having food and raiment let us be therewith content. So in other words, we give it all up by death and then in the ninth verse he goes on to say that they who will be rich fall into temptations and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lust which drawn men in destruction and perdition. This is a very interesting statement because what he is saying is that the money-grubber is the man who winds up in ruin, but in the course of it he describes the situation here that is seems to me extremely interesting. They that will be rich fall into temptation. Now, notice the steps here in the desire of the individual for money. First of all he is lured by the possibility of possessing a lot of money. You know there is one thing that you never get tired of doing. You know what it is? Counting your money. Have you ever noticed that? And some of you haven't, well, when you have a little money like the rest of us, you'll know that, you sit up and count your money you never get tired. Of course you're disappointed when you stop [Laughter] but you never get tired of counting. Isn't the interesting that's perpetual motion. [Laughter] that is a great temptation, the love of money they that will be rich fall into temptation. Oscar Wilde said, "I can stand anything but temptation." [Laughter]

That's the first thing temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts; that's the second thing; temptation, lusts, desire and finally, he goes on to speak of the ruin and unto many and foolish and hurtful lust which drown men into destruction and perdition. That's the picture, temptation, lusts and finally, destruction and perdition.

Now, when the apostle uses the term perdition he of course is referring to eternal perdition. And so obviously he's not referring to a Christian who has believed in the Lord Jesus and who falls in the trap of putting money before the Lord after he has come to true faith in Christ. He's not suggesting we loose our salvation if the love of money overcomes us. He's talking about a way of life and the false teachers are in his mind and the others

who follow their false teaching. And if you make your way of life the love and the pursuit of money you will wind up in destruction and perdition. Now, Christians who put money before the Lord will discover that when the time comes for use to stand before the judgement seat of Jesus Christ then we shall suffer there we shall lose rewards. As a result of a failure to put things in their proper perspective.

The apostle is not saying that Christians shouldn't be rich; all of us would like to be rich. If you put all his teaching together he would say to you that everything that we have is really the Lord's. Money is a trust and it is to be used under the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that the Lord's interest are first. There are many Christian businessmen who are wasting their lives in the pursuit of filthy lucre and often they rationalize by saying, "Well, it won't be long before I'll have a large amount of money so I can support evangelical ministry." And I am sure there probably are a few who have been able to pull that off, but I don't know. Many that I know have confessed that they were unable to pull it off after they followed that particular bent of life for a lengthy period of time. These are very serious words the apostle speaks here. And after all life is very short those of us who are old know how true that is.

The apostle goes on to say that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. What does he mean by that? Now, of course he does not mean that money is evil. He does not say that money is the root of all evil, it's the love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil, but there is a great deal of truth in this principle that at the bottom of a great deal of our evil in the world is debate and dispute over finances. In marriages, in business, in every day life the effects of the temptation and lure and lust after money are manifold.

There are several of you in this audience that are lawyers and I know you know only too well how true this is. Alcohol and money they are great occasions for manifestation of the evil of the human heart. The love of money is the root of all evil which while some have coveted after they have erred from the faith. That word is the

word from which we get in its root the word planet. *Planao* means to wander. Planet was given the name planet because it has characteristics that could be described as wondering. They have wondered from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Of whom is the apostle speaking? Well, he could be speaking of the rich man in our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which probably is not a parable at all, but a story. Since in all of the parables of our Lord he never does give a name to an individual and the fact that a name is given seems to suggest that that's a true story, but you think of the rich man. [Indistinct] as we say in English, or is he speaking about Ananias and Sapphira? They are two Christian people who came and in hypocrisy; misused their positions in the Christian church and in order to give a lesson they were struck dead in a Christian church. Or is he not probably speaking of Judas? He is the prime illustration, Judas, was the only cultured man among the apostles, if we may judge simply by his place of origin; he was from Judah. The rest of the apostles were from Galilee, and Galilee was like Arkansas [laughter], and Judah was like cosmopolitan Dallas of course. I was just kidding you. We've got a lot of Arkansans in the audience, evidently. I take it back, like Oklahoma. [Laughter]

Now, Judas was evidently a very cultured man. Isn't it surprising that out of all the apostles he was chosen to carry the common purse. You would expect Matthew to because he was a publican, a tax gatherer. He was use to handling large sums of money. When you read through the book of Matthew you discover that he uses large sums like talents and speaks of thousands of talents and whereas the other gospel writers do not. He knew all about the handling of money, but he was not asked to be the treasurer of the apostles. It was Judas. And furthermore, Judas had great influence upon the apostles because whenever he spoke evidently they listened to him.

For example, when Mary of Bethany took her ointment of Spikenard -- very precious -- and wasted it on our Lord according to Judas. He spoke up about it and all

the rest chimed in. They followed Judas in his objection to this expression of love and devotion on Mary's part. So he was a man of great influence. But in the gospel of John it is stated that he carried the bag and further they said all of these things because he was carrying the bag and he was a thief. And evidently that had a great deal to do with the reason why he became one of the apostles in the first place.

Evidently, he accepted our Lord's invitation because he thought that being one of the Twelve, and the Lord might come and establish this earthly kingdom that the Pharisees and the scribes and the lawyers and other teachers spoke about. Perhaps if he were really the Messiah able to overcome the Romans then he, one of the apostles, would have a lofty place in the Kingdom and thus have a great deal of financial gain as a result of it so he became one of his apostles.

And when the Lord Jesus refused to become a king in John chapter 6 at the feeding of the five thousand when they came to make him a king and he refused it. At the end of that chapter we have an indication that something has happened in Judas' mind, he sees that he was not the kind of king that he was thinking about after all. And so it wasn't long before he makes an agreement for thirty pieces of silver to betray our Lord and the result is that he erred from the faith and in his suicide in which he fell from a branch of a tree and evidently, fell on the sharp rocks which tore open his body so that all of his bowels gushed out -it's an R-rated chapter. [Laughter] That's exactly what we have here. Into many foolish and hurtful lust; which drown men into destruction and perdition they've erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Perhaps the greatest illustration of the love of money is over against the principles of our Lord Jesus Christ and the person of Christ if Judas, apostle of Jesus Christ, what apostate.

Now, then the remaining verses of the chapter have to do with some advice relative to Timothy's commission and you will notice there are four parting exhortations. I'll read through these verses rapidly and just make a few comments because our time is

almost out. But thou old man of God flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faithfulness, love, endurance, meekness. Very striking I think that Timothy is called a man of God. In the Old Testament that's a title reserved for the prophets. Men who had a special relationship to God, it's almost like an official kind of relationship. But in the New Testament this term evidently has a more general application. Oh man of God, flee these things. Flee these things that he's just been speaking about the love of moneys. Flee these perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, abandon the false teaching, abandon these false priorities in your life, flee them and and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance. That's very striking that endurance is here because according to tradition Timothy was clubbed to death so if that's true of Timothy he was a person who did in his own experience learn endurance, meekness. Then he says fight the good fight of faith. Notice the three "F's", flee, follow, fight. Fight the good fight of faith lay hold on eternal life.

Now, that seems strange doesn't it we had this idea of dotting about questions and disputes of words after the apostle gave this message we'd rush up to him and say, "What was that you said Paul, lay hold on eternal life? Have you too fallen into Armenism?" [Laughter] Lay hold on eternal life. Don't the scriptures say that we have eternal life when we have believed in the Lord Jesus? How can we be told to lay hold of eternal life when we already have eternal life? Paul's weak in his doctrine. Not only that he says it twice over at the end of verse 19: "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come that they may lay hold of eternal life."

Now, there it's clear that lay hold of eternal life has to do with the future so it is evident that this expression does not mean that we are to grasp eternal life as if we never had it but he means to lay hold of eternal life in the sense that he wants us to have a perfect appropriation of that which we already have in principle so to lay hold of it is to enter into the full possession of all that it means to possess this new quality of life that comes through relationship with the Lord Jesus he's found after all.

“The Temptation of Riches and the Contentment of the Godly” by S. Lewis Johnson  
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

Now, the second exhortation I commend thee in the sight of God who maketh all things alive and before Christ Jesus who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession that you keep this commandment without spot un-rebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. What is that commandment? Commentators have wrestled with that question this commandment, what is it? And the mass of them have finally come to the conclusion that what this means is the commandment is a reference to the Christian life and all of the obligations that flow out of it. So keep this commandment and all these things that we've been saying about the Christian life without spot, un-rebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his times he shall show.

Now, who is the He? Now, the He is God the Father of course, who is the blessed and only Potentate the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Now, we think of our Lord as being called King of Kings and Lord of Lords because he is called that in Revelation, but this is also the term that is applied to God the Father he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The Godhead, our God as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who only have 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.

Now, there are a couple of things that are stated about God here that we want to notice, first of all he is one who possess immortality. The Greek text this is deathlessness, he does not die. This is the text that scripturally says, "Our God does not die." He possesses deathlessness, he cannot die and secondly, he is inscrutable, incomprehensible. Now, this does not mean that we cannot know him, but we cannot know him fully.

Husbands you understand this perfectly I know. You know your wife don't you? But do you know her fully? No. Your wife knows you, does she not? Unfortunately, yes. [Laughter] Does she know you fully? Well, not by her own confession, because often she says I just don't understand you. Did your wife ever say that to you? Mine can really ring the changes on that. [Laughter]

"The Temptation of Riches and the Contentment of the Godly" by S. Lewis Johnson  
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

Now, God is known by us, we know him. We know this person the Lord Jesus, we know the Father, we know the Spirit. We don't know the triune God perfectly, in fact, we never shall. All throughout eternity we shall learn and learn and learn and see and see and see things about our great God and shall marvel and marvel throughout all eternity; makes you want to go to heaven doesn't it? Inscrutable and invisible whom no man can see; you cannot see him. Nice of course, if we could see God but we can't. He dwells in a house of light and that light, is a light, which we cannot approach; we cannot look upon him unless we shall die.

And that's true throughout all eternity the brightness and the holiness of God is such that we shall never be able to see him but we see the perfect manifestation in the Lord Jesus. And we shall not feel disappointed by that because we see God in Christ we cannot approach the Father.

Now, one of my favorite occupations for a long time was asking older men about preachers that they had heard that I had never had a chance to hear. I've often asked people about just any number of preachers whose books I have read. I remember asking a man about Campbell Morgan he described Campbell Morgan's method of preaching and then I said well, what was the outstanding thing about him that came home to you? This man said he spoke with authority. And once I was speaking with Carl Armerding, one of the loveliest Christian men that I know Mr. Armerding is eighty-five to ninety years of age, I'm giving him a few years when I say ninety. He's in his eighties. He's been a great influence on me personally and in many other ways too. We were talking once about a man named C. Crane some of you who read a lot of books you know about Mr. Crane he's written a book on first John and other things too.

And I asked Mr. Armerding about him as a preacher. He said, "Oh he was a great bible teacher." And I said, "Well, give me an illustration." And in the course of our discussion he gave some illustrations but one of them the said one time I heard him give a very impressive message. He first turned to John chapter 1 when John the Baptist

appeared and said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." You'll remember the two disciples that were followers of John the Baptist turned and began to follow the Lord. Andrew was one of them. And so as they began to follow the Lord he turned to them and said, "What are you seeking?" And they said, "Master where dwellest thou? And Mr. Armerding said he took that expression, where dwellest thou concerning the Lord Jesus. And then in answer to the question he turned over to 1 Timothy chapter 6 and he read the text: "Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto." And sought by that to show the ineffable deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Where dwellest thou?" In the light to which no man can approach.

Now of course that's a great truth and it is true that as far as our Lord's essential being he dwells there but the text really does not have to do with the Lord Jesus here, it has to do with the Father. It's a great sermon nevertheless, it just doesn't happen to be exessuate and accurate. This refers to the Father and not the Son. And anybody who pulls out a Greek text and examines it will see.

Now, finally, the third exhortation -I must stop- charge them that are rich in this age that they be not high minded nor trust in uncertain riches. Oh, what a great testimony to the uncertainty of riches has been the last two or three years. Some of our great banks could give evidence of that. All of those that have invested heavily in real estate, investment trusts. The president of the Chase Manhattan bank could take over at this point and tell us a great deal about the uncertainty of riches and why they've lost millions and millions of dollars.

Riches are uncertain where you can have it one day and loose it the next. But in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, that they do good that they be rich in good works, that's the right use of our time and money; ready to distribute, willing to share laying up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come that they may lay hold of eternal life.

"The Temptation of Riches and the Contentment of the Godly" by S. Lewis Johnson  
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

The passage concludes with the final charge to Timothy, "Keep that which was committed to thy trust." I do hope that as a result of these words that all of us, those of us who don't have much money and those who have a lot, will learn to put our priorities where they ought to be. Remembering that money is something that is given to us by God as a trust.

Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to thee for these wonderful...

[TAPE ENDS ABRUPTLY]