CHRISTIAN WORKER

"We are workers together with Him..." (2 Corinthians 6:1)

VOLUME 112, NUMBER 11

"I Have Fought the Good Fight"

Tom Wacaster

> *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 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* (1 Tim. 4:7-8).

Death was imminent. He may even have been able to see the guillotine upon which his head would be severed from his body, as he peered through the bars in his prison window. From the time of his conversion to his death, the apostle Paul served his Lord less than 30 years. But in all that time he never wavered, he never shirked his duty, and he never gave up, gave in, or gave over to the enemy. He had been a stalwart soldier of the cross. Now he could boldly say "I have fought a good fight, finished my course," and "kept the faith." Paul's triplet description of his faithful service to Christ speaks volumes regarding what is involved in fidelity to God and Christ. In the Greek text, each challenge mentioned is followed by Paul's response. The first of these is better translated, "The good fight, I have fought." Another interesting feature of this verse is that in each of the three phrases there is a sense of finality. For emphasis, I have arranged the order of Paul's affirmations to help us see a good *steward* ("kept the faith"), a good *soldier* ("fought the fight") and a good *sprinter* ("finished the course"). Consider each of these.

He was a good steward – "Kept the faith." "The faith" is a reference to the gospel system rather than personal faith. Paul does not say, "I have been faithful," though certainly he had done that. He is using the Greek word ('*pistis*') in the same sense that Jude used it when he told his audience to "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3). The word "kept" is from the Greek ('*tereo*') which means to "guard from loss or injury by keeping the eye upon" (Strongs). And what is it that he has kept? It is the faith, the revelation and doctrine given to him by Christ. From the very moment that Paul became a Christian he took upon himself the responsibility of promoting and preaching the faith, i.e. the gospel. Every successive generation has that same responsibility to be a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

NOVEMBER 2026

SIGNIFICANT QUOTES FROM THE WRITINGS OF PAUL

"I Have Fought the Good Fight"
TOM WACASTER.....1

"And Whatever You Do..."
ROSS HAFFNER 2

"Prove All Things..."
DON WALKER.....3

"For to me..."
CALEB NASH..... 5

"I Am Not Ashamed..."
JOHNNY MCCAGHREN.....6

"Love suffers long..."
SAMUEL DILL.....6

From the Director's Desk
TRENT KENNEDY.....8

FROM THE EDITOR:

"And Whatever You Do..."

Ross Haffner

How do you view your Christianity? Is it something that occupies only a portion of your life, like a slice of a pie chart, or does it influence everything you do? Sometimes we are tempted to separate our spiritual responsibilities from our everyday activities. We may think of worship, prayer, and Bible study as serving God, while viewing our jobs and other daily responsibilities as merely necessary parts of life. However, Scripture teaches that our service to God extends into every area of our lives, including our work.

Paul writes in Colossians 3:23-24,

> And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

These words remind us that our work is not simply about earning a paycheck, pleasing an employer, or fulfilling an obligation. It is an opportunity to serve the Lord.

Work Is a Gift and Responsibility from God

Work was not originally a consequence of sin. Before Adam and Eve disobeyed God, the Lord placed Adam in the Garden of Eden "to tend and keep it" (Gen. 2:15). God created mankind with responsibilities and gave humanity the privilege of exercising dominion over His creation (Gen. 1:27-28). Work was part of God's original design for human life.

Following the fall, work became more difficult, involving sweat, frustration, and hardship (Gen. 3:19). Nevertheless, it remained an important part of God's purpose for mankind. The Bible describes work as a normal rhythm of life. Solomon instructed God's people to labor six days (Exod. 20:9), and the psalmist observed that man goes out to his work until evening (Ps. 104:23).

God intends work to accomplish several important purposes. Through our labor, we provide for ourselves and our families (1 Thess. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 5:8). We also find satisfaction in the fruit of our efforts, recognizing that the ability to enjoy our labor is a gift from God (Eccles. 2:24). Furthermore, work allows us to serve others. Paul instructed those who had previously stolen to labor honestly so they would have something to give to those in need (Eph. 4:28). Our work can become a means of blessing others rather than simply benefiting ourselves.

Work Is an Opportunity to Glorify God

Colossians 3:23 challenges us to change our perspective about our daily responsibilities. Notice the breadth of Paul's instruction: "whatever you do." This principle is not limited to preaching, teaching, or other religious activities. It applies to every legitimate task we undertake. Paul similarly wrote, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

Our occupations can become part of God's providential care for others. God provides food for the hungry and watches over those in need (Ps. 146:7-9). Often, He accomplishes these purposes through the ordinary labor of people. The farmer grows the food, the truck driver delivers it, the grocery employee makes it available, and countless others contribute along the way. Our daily work can participate in the blessings God provides to the world.

Work Requires Diligence and Faithfulness

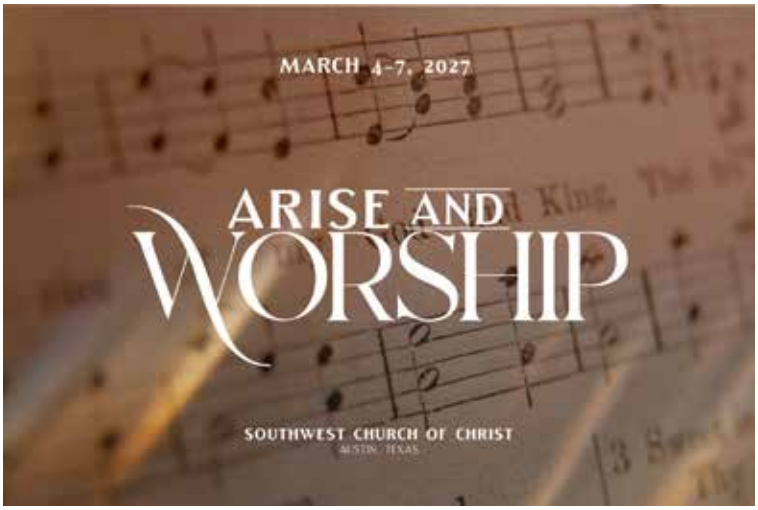
Recognizing work as service to God should change how we approach it. Scripture consistently condemns laziness and encourages diligence. Proverbs points to the ant as an example of preparation and industriousness (Prov. 6:6-10). Solomon likewise instructed, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Eccles. 9:10).

Paul addressed those who refused to work in 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, instructing them to work

quietly and provide for themselves. There is an important distinction between those who cannot work and those who simply will not work. Christians should strive to be productive, responsible, and helpful rather than unnecessarily dependent upon others.

Ultimately, Colossians 3:23 reminds us that no honest work is insignificant. Whether our responsibilities seem important or ordinary, visible or unnoticed, we have an opportunity to honor God through them. We should not divide our lives into what belongs to God and what belongs to the world. Instead, everything we do should reflect our commitment to Christ. After all, as Paul reminds us, "you serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:24).

CW



"Prove All Things..."

Don Walker

The title of this article is a direct quote of the apostle Paul as it is found in the KJV. As is the case with every passage we study, we do well to consider the passage in context. The two verses prior to this one set the context in the area of the miraculous gifts and specifically the giving of God's revelation. Paul wrote, "Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesying" (1 Thess. 5:19, 20). It is essential that we consider this context first as we examine the passage before us.

When we consider the church in the first century, their teaching was no different than ours, if we are teaching from the Bible and the Bible only. The major difference was not in *what* was revealed, but rather the largest difference was in *how* it was revealed. God's message in the first century was given miraculously as men exercised the use of the gifts they received by the laying on of the apostles' hands. Today, we have the completed product of their work in written form—in the 66 books that make up the two testaments that comprise the Bible.

However, just as it is true today, there were those who went out making claims to be proclaiming the message of God, yet they were not. Therefore, brethren were commanded, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 John 4:1).

The message must be examined, tried and tested and it must be consistent with the whole of what was taught by the inspired men of the first century. Today we have the same responsibility to receive "the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Thus we see Paul's admonition to "prove all things." Paul wrote,

> And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. (Phil. 1:9, 10)

Notice that both knowledge of God's will and personal discernment were essential to determine the fitness of a teaching for our approval. This was true in the first century where we see the miraculous employed to give God's Revelation. It is also true today.

Once a doctrine had been taught and tested, the recipient was responsible, depending on the result of the "trying." There was the responsibility to either reject or accept what had been proclaimed or taught. In the latter portion of 1 Thessalonians 5:21, Paul tells us that our approval must be very specific. In his words, we see that we must "Hold fast that which is good." Not only must there be acceptance of that which is good, but we must also bring it in close to ourselves. Paul wrote to the Philippians, we must "approve" those things that have been proven excellent. It must become a part of our lives and our beings.

Things are no different today as far as our responsibility is concerned. Teaching must be received with a ready mind,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Second Quarter Class Schedule/October 2026- Jan 2027

Southwest School of Bible Studies

Chapel @ 8:30 AM / Lunch @ 11:50-1:00

Time	First Year	Time	Second Year
		Monday	
9:00-9:50	English Grammar II – Matt Gibson	**9:00-9:50**	Greek III – Trent Kennedy
10:00-10:50	Hermeneutics II – Steve Lloyd	**10:00-10:50**	Matthew II – Matt Gibson
11:00-11:50	Congregational Dev II – Steve Lloyd/Trent Kennedy	**11:00-11:50**	Congregational Dev III-Steve Lloyd/Trent Kennedy
1:00-2:20	Numbers – Clay Bond	**1:00-2:20**	GSP
2:30-3:50	Introduction to Preaching-Matt Gibson	**2:30-3:50**	Jeremiah/Lamentations – Clay Bond
		Tuesday	
9:00-11:50	Luke – Trent Kennedy	**9:00-10:20**	1 Corinthians – Matt Gibson
10:30-11:50	GSP	**10:30-11:50**	Isaiah II – Trent Kennedy
1:00-3:50	Godhead – Steve Lloyd	**1:00-3:50**	Psalms 2 – Clay Bond
		Wednesday	
9:00-9:50	English Grammar II – Matt Gibson	**9:00-9:50**	Greek III – Trent Kennedy
10:00-10:50	Hermeneutics II – Steve Lloyd	**10:00-10:50**	Matthew II – Matt Gibson
11:00-11:50	Congregational Dev II – Steve Lloyd/Trent Kennedy	**11:00-11:50**	Congregational Dev III-Steve Lloyd/Trent Kennedy
1:00-2:20	Numbers – Clay Bond	**1:00-2:20**	GSP
2:30-3:50	Introduction to Preaching-Matt Gibson	**2:30-3:50**	Jeremiah/Lamentations – Clay Bond
		Thursday	
9:00-11:50	Luke – Trent Kennedy	**9:00-10:20**	1 Corinthians – Matt Gibson
10:30-11:50	GSP	**10:30-11:50**	Isaiah II – Trent Kennedy
1:00-3:50	Deuteronomy – Mel Hutzler	**1:00-3:50**	Church History – Steve Lloyd
		Friday	
9:00-9:50	English Grammar II – Matt Gibson	**9:00-9:50**	Greek III – Trent Kennedy
10:00-10:50	Hermeneutics II – Steve Lloyd	**10:00-10:50**	Matthew II – Matt Gibson
11:00-11:50	Congregational Dev II – Steve Lloyd/Trent Kennedy	**11:00-11:50**	Congregational Dev III-Steve Lloyd/Trent Kennedy
1:00-3:50	Leviticus – Jim Lloyd	**1:00-3:50**	Rhetoric – Justin Guess

See Academic Calendar for Special Events

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

but it must also be put to the test by searching the Scriptures to see if these things are so. Upon proper validation, there must be an approving of the message in what we teach and what we live. If the message proves to be contrary to the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, then we are to reject it and put it far from us.

When all is said and done, the teaching is clear. We must put our approval on that which proves to be the Word of God and we must reject that which does not pass the test. May we strive for the nobility of the Bereans (Acts 17:11) as we study our Bibles more and more.

CW



"To Die is Gain . . ."

Caleb Nash

My father, Jim Nash, recently spent his last day of life on this earth. He was a preacher for over thirty years, working as a pulpit minister in seven different local congregations across Texas and Oklahoma. In his later years, he faced health struggles that made his efforts as a minister much more difficult. Though it would have been easier for his pain to be over, he persevered for the sake of his physical and spiritual family. For him, to live was Christ, but to die was gain. This inspiring truth is one first stated by the apostle Paul in Philippians 1:21, where he wrote, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain…" (NKJV).

Paul's statement is powerful, but is given even more power by both the text before and after it. Earlier in the first chapter of Philippians, Paul, with Timothy, gives a beautiful introduction of grace, love, joy, and peace to the Philippian Church. They knew that he was in chains and had been through quite a lot. When we get to Philippians 1:12-18, he writes about the fact that his suffering led to "the furtherance of the gospel" (12), the confidence of other Christians (14), and Christ being preached "whether in pretense or in truth" (18). He was sharing with them that his suffering was leading to the growth of God's kingdom.

As we move further into the text, notice that verses 22-23 are an explanation of what Paul meant in verse 21. In verse 22 he wrote, "…if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor…"; then in verse 23 he is conflicted because he had "…a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." Here is the simple point: Paul was torn between his need and desire to help the church and his desire to go on to a place which was "far better."

Now, let us back up and look more closely at Paul's statement, and consider some lessons. "For to me" - Paul is speaking a personal truth. This is not true for everyone, but it should be true for all Christians. Are you living in such a way that you make Paul's following statement about yourself? "To live is Christ" - This was a declaration that Paul's time on this earth was spent bearing fruit in the kingdom of God. He was not a passive or inactive Christian, but a hard-working and dedicated one who could not be swayed from the path. "To die is gain" - What people typically think of as life's greatest foe, Paul saw as the door to God's greatest gift—to be with Christ.

If we are in Christ, we can have confidence in Him no matter what obstacles we face in this life. No hardship we face in this life is greater than the confidence and assurance we have in Christ. Additionally, sometimes, working in the kingdom will bring hardship, and that is okay.

We are blessed to have examples of people who persevered through hardship for the sake of others and the kingdom of God. We may have personal examples, like my father is

to me, or Bible examples like Paul is to everyone. In either case, let us follow those examples so we too can say, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

CW

"I Am Not Ashamed..."

Johnny McCaghren

> "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." (Rom. 1:16).

In the first-century Roman world, the gospel of Jesus Christ looked like anything but a winning proposition to human pride. Rome boasted of military might, imperial decree, and cultural sophistication. What did the cross offer? A crucified carpenter from an obscure province—a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks (1 Cor. 1:23). Standing in the heart of Caesar's empire to declare allegiance to a crucified Savior invited ridicule, marginalization, and even death.

Yet the Apostle Paul, writing to the brethren in Rome, did not flinch. He proclaimed with bold conviction: *"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."* Why would an educated man refuse to back down before a skeptical world? Because he understood the source, scope, and urgency of the message he carried.

Divine Power, Not Human Philosophy. Paul does not call the gospel a helpful philosophy or a traditional heritage. He calls it *"the power of God."* In Greek, the word for power is *dynamis* – the root of our English words *dynamite* and *dynamic*. The gospel is not a museum piece of ancient history; it is an active, transforming force. Where human wisdom could neither change a hardened heart nor conquer the grave, the gospel entered history to rescue mankind from sin. When we are tempted to water down God's word or stay silent about our faith at work or in our neighborhoods, we forget what we hold. We are not carrying a fragile opinion; we are carrying the divine remedy for a dying world.

Universal Salvation. Notice the reach of this power: *"to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."* The ground is level at the foot of the cross. In a fractured world obsessed with social standing and division, the gospel tears down every wall. It does not ask whether a person is rich or poor or educated; it asks for a submissive heart and an obedient faith. Salvation – complete rescue from the penalty and power of sin – is offered to everyone who will hear, believe, repent, confess Christ, and be buried with Him in baptism (Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 2:38).

The Danger of Quiet Compromise. If Paul stood among us today, what would he say to the church? We live in an era where overt persecution is often replaced by something far more subtle: apathy and the quiet temptation to feel embarrassed by plain Bible truth. We might never publicly deny Jesus, yet we show shame for the gospel when we:

- Refuse to open our Bibles with a neighbor or coworker.
- Soft-pedal New Testament teaching because it sounds "too narrow" to modern ears.
- Treat worship and faithful living as a Sunday obligation rather than daily devotion.
- Silence the truth just to stay popular in a culture drifting from God.

To be ashamed of the gospel is to misjudge the tragedy of sin and undervalue the blood of Christ.

A Call to Bold Fidelity. Paul's declaration in Romans 1:16 is not a boast in his own courage, but in God's grace. Paul once hated Christ's followers enough to drag them to prison. Encountering the risen Lord and grasping the value of redemption changed everything.

Let us cast aside hesitation. Let us study the Scriptures without apology, speak the truth in love without wavering, and live transformed lives that prove the gospel is still God's saving power today. May the world look at our congregations, our homes, and our speech and see a people echoing the apostle without reservation: *We are not ashamed.*

CW

"Love Suffers Long..."

Samuel Dill

Our service for the Lord's church can last for decades, be exhausting, demand everything of us, and involve important tasks. Yet if this service is

done without love, it profits nothing. A service without love shows itself when we view the service of other brethren as useless and feel that we could get along just fine without Sister So-and-So or Brother So-and-So. Above all, however, a service without love shows itself when our goal is not the edification and the profit of the church, but rather our own self-interest. God has composed us into one body, that there should be no schism among us, but that we should have the same care for one another. Through baptism we have become one in the body of Christ. We are to suffer with one another, and we are to rejoice with one another.

1 Corinthians 13 is known to us as the *love chapter*, written by the inspired Apostle Paul. Yet the love chapter does not stand alone; after all, chapter 12 ends with the words, "And yet I show you a more excellent way." In the broader context of chapters 12–14, he addresses a problem among the Corinthians: that spiritual gifts, faith, and benevolence, when exercised without love, profit nothing. It seems the Corinthians were arguing over who was more important in the congregation, measuring it by the different spiritual gifts. Paul makes it clear and shows them that all these spiritual gifts come from God and were given for the profit of the church and for evangelism. Paul speaks of how God has set the members in the body, and that those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. God composed the body and appointed them to different ministries. Yet without love, these spiritual gifts, these gifts of grace, and these ministries are nothing. Paul emphasizes that even if one possesses the greatest spiritual gift, prophecy, understands all mysteries, and has all faith, one is nothing, if he does not have love. He adds that though one bestows all one's goods to feed the poor, if it is done without love and for one's own glory, it profits nothing. Then follows his famous and inspired list of the characteristics of love:

> Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

The miraculous works of the Holy Spirit through man in the first century have ceased, as foretold in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. Yet the problem of a service without love and without the edification of the church in mind unfortunately remains. If we measure ourselves by 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, our service in the congregation will not be in vain. Such a service sees the church of God as the one body of Christ, into which God adds the individual instruments. This service, together with love, desires no schism, but rather mutual care for one another. This service keeps the edification of the church in view, and not personal advantage. When we align our service with the love of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, we will bring eternal profit to our spouses, our families, our congregations, and lost souls through God's Word and our service for Him.

Let us continue to do our service with all diligence and zeal, while never losing sight of love according to the will of God.

CW

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

good steward of what God has given unto us.

He was a good soldier – "Fought the fight." We are at war with the devil and his allies. We must "suffer hardship as a good soldier of Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3). It is a good fight in that its cause is worthy and its outcome of eternal consequence. While Paul encouraged Timothy to fight the good fight, he now declares that his fight was, for all practical purposes, over. He had "suffered hardship…as a good soldier on service" (2 Tim. 2:3). He did not allow himself to become "entangled in the affairs of this life" (2 Tim. 2:4). Now he could confidently say he had successfully fought the battles along the way.

He was a good sprinter – "Finished the course." Paul likens the Christian life to running in a race. He had used the same metaphor in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. For his part, Paul had run the course and was now nearing the finish line with full confidence in the reward that awaits him. Although he had not yet departed this life, he could look back with full assurance that he had run that course to the best of his ability. Now he would trust in the Lord to carry him across the finish line.

Dear reader, if you would take the faith (the gospel) in full belief, fight the battles along life's way, then you will eventually reach the finish line and the reward will be yours. It is only then that you will be able to express the sentiments of the apostle: "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day" (2 Tim. 4:8).

CW

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From the Director's Desk

SWSBS: A Worthy Cause



Trent Kennedy
Director
SWSBS

As the calendar year comes to an end, let me take the opportunity to encourage you to consider giving a charitable gift to the Southwest School of Bible Studies. Rest assured that your gift will be used to train preachers, teachers, evangelists, and servants in the Kingdom of God.

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