

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

(1 Timothy 6:6-19)

Intro: Fight the good fight.
-Of faith.

I. So Many Of Our Fights Are Not The Good Fight.

A. Road Rage Is Not The Good Fight.

1. Traveling down I-44.

a. Between:

- St. Louis.
- Tulsa.

b. I had gotten into Oklahoma.

- There was an 18-wheeler in the right lane.
- Another 18-wheeler in the left lane.
 - #Empty car carrier.
 - #Trying to pass.
 - *Not getting that done very quickly.
 - +At 75 mph.
- Behind the car carrier was an El Camino.
 - #Pickup truck.
 - *Looks like a car.
 - I was behind the El Camino.

c. Driver of the El Camino was impatient.

- Honking at the car carrier.
- Trying to pass on the left shoulder.
 - #I kept my distance.

d. When the car carrier finally completed its pass.

- Moved over into the right lane.
- El Camino pulled up alongside.
 - #Two drivers exchanged hand signals.
 - *I don't think they were giving the sign for:
 - +Hit and run.
 - +Steal.
 - El Camino.
 - #Pulled in front of the car carrier.
 - *In the right lane.
 - #Slammed on his brakes.
 - *Car carrier slammed on his brakes.
 - *18-wheeler behind him slammed on his brakes.

- I tried to stay out of the way.
 - #Hoping neither of those 18-wheelers would jack-knife.
 - *Into my lane.
- Road rage at 75 mph.
 - #Not the good fight.
- 2. Bike path.
 - a. In Forest Park.
 - In St. Louis.
 - #Does not have separate paths.
 - *For bicyclists.
 - *For pedestrians.
 - +Like the River Trails in Tulsa.
 - #There is one path.
 - *Shared by:
 - +Bicyclists.
 - +Roller bladers.
 - +Pedestrians.
 - +Dog walkers.
 - =Often my least favorite.
 - Person is on one side of the path.
 - Dog is on the other side of the path.
 - Leash in between.
 - b. One Saturday morning I was on the bike path in Forest Park.
 - There were other bikers.
 - There was a roller blader.
 - #More of them in St. Louis.
 - *Than in Tulsa.
 - +For some reason.
 - #Novices aren't usually a problem.
 - *They tip toe along.
 - +Trying not to fall over.
 - #But the really good roller bladers.
 - *Like Olympic speed skaters.
 - +Gracefully gliding.
 - =From one side of the path to the other.
 - Another bicyclist.
 - #Trying to get by a roller blader.
 - *Who was all over the path.
 - #They got tangled up.
 - *Both went down.
 - *Both came up swinging.
 - Road rage on the bike path.
 - #Not the good fight.

- B. Fights In The Work Place Are Not The Good Fight.
1. Our Lutheran pastors group got together this week.
 - a. For mutual support.
 - b. To study the texts for this week.
 2. One colleague told a story.
 - a. Her husband is a surgeon.
 - b. While he was doing surgery recently.
 - Anesthesiologist.
 - Scrub nurse.
 - #Got into a heated argument.
 - *In the Operating room.
 - *Over something or other.
 3. It's not just on *Grey's Anatomy*.
 - a. Fights in the OR.
 - b. Not the good fight.
- C. Fights Over Money.
1. Couples tend to fight over six things.
 - a. Household chores.
 - b. Religion.
 - c. Children.
 - d. Extended family.
 - e. Sex.
 - f. Money.
 - Who makes it.
 - Who spends it.
 - How much.
 - For what.
 2. Isn't that what often turns us off to the partisan political process?
 - a. Too many fights about money.
 - Who pays it.
 - Who spends it.
 - How much.
 - For what.
 - b. Fights about money.
 - Not the good fight.

II. Timothy Was Encouraged To Fight The Good Fight Of Faith.

A. Occasion For The Words In Our Second Reading (1 Timothy 6:6-19).

1. Sermon.
2. Homily.
 - a. Baptism.
 - b. Ordination.
 - Baptismal candidates.
 - Ordinand.
 - Those in attendance.
 - #Encouraged to remember.
 - *God calls them.
 - *God calls us.
 - +Not to be rich.
 - +But to be faithful.

B. What Is The Problem With Money?

1. Problem isn't with the money.
2. Problem is with us.
 - a. Trapped by our desires.
 - 1 Timothy 6:9.
 - b. Wandering away from the faith.
 - 1 Timothy 6:10.
3. We live in a culture that plays on our desires.
 - a. 1 Timothy encourages us to be content.
 - With what we have.
 - b. Every TV commercial.
 - Every magazine ad.
 - Every newspaper ad.
 - #Tells us we can't be content.
 - *Until we buy something:
 - +New.
 - +Different.
 - +More up-to-date.
 - c. I'm not much of a shopper.
 - Rarely will I ever go to the mall.
 - #To window shop.
 - #To see what there is to see.
 - I'm more of a buyer.
 - #If I need something.
 - *I'll go to the store and buy it.
 - +While I'm in the store.
 - =I might look around.
 - To price other items for a future purchase.

- I know that those stores.
- #Want to play on my desires.
- d. Michael Douglas has a new movie.
 - Released on Friday.
 - #I've only seen the previews.
 - Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps*.
 - #Sequel to his roll in the 1987 movie *Wall Street*.
 - *For which he won an Academy Award.
 - +For his roll as Wall Street tycoon Gordon Gekko.
 - *In the first movie Gordon Gekko says:
 - + "Greed is good."
 - We can be trapped by our desires.
- e. One of my pastoral colleagues told me a story about John Wesley.
 - 18th century Anglican cleric.
 - Founded the Methodist movement.
 - #Along with his brother Charles.
 - One year John Wesley received a salary of £30.
 - #He lived on £28.
 - Next year his salary more than doubled.
 - #Wesley continued to live on £28.
 - Even though he earned more than £20,000 for his publications.
 - #He never spent more than £30/year on himself.
 - #He gave the rest away.
 - Just because he made more.
 - #He didn't feel compelled to spend more.
 - *He had learned to be content.
- f. What about us?
 - Are we trapped by our desires?
 - #If we are.
 - *Problem isn't out there somewhere.
 - *Problem is in here.
- 4. Do we wander away from our faith?
 - a. Look at the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the days of Amos.
 - They had:
 - #Winter homes.
 - #Summer homes.
 - *Amos 3:15
 - They had:
 - #Houses of ivory.
 - #Houses of ebony.
 - *Amos 3:15.
 - They slept on beds of ivory.
 - They ate the finest food.
 - They drank the best of wines (Amos 6:4, 6).

- They wandered away from their faith.
 - #They forgot:
 - *God.
 - *Poor.
 - #They forgot:
 - *Where their wealth came from.
 - *God gave it to them to share.
 - #They would be the first to go into exile.
 - *Amos 6:7.
- They hadn't fought the good fight of faith.
- b. Look at the rich man in our Gospel lesson (Luke 16:19-31).
 - Didn't he have the same problem?
 - #He couldn't see past his own front gate.
 - *Gate he no doubt had erected.
 - +To keep the Lazaruses of his world.
 - =On the other side.
 - I once took the train.
 - #From St. Louis to California.
 - *Not because it was:
 - +Faster.
 - +Cheaper.
 - *But to see the scenery in between.
 - +Which I had previously flown over.
 - #We got into Las Vegas about sunrise.
 - *On one side of the train.
 - +Homeless people.
 - =Crawling out from under their plywood lean-tos.
 - Where they had spent the night.
 - =Climbing out of their beds.
 - Made from abandoned couches.
 - *On the other side of the train.
 - +10'-12'-high chain link fence.
 - =Topped with razor wire.
 - +On the other side of the fence.
 - =Not a prison.
 - =But the casinos.
 - With all of their:
 - #Glitz.
 - #Glamour.
 - *I couldn't help but wonder:
 - +How much one side of the fence (casinos).
 - =Created the other side of the fence (homelessness).
 - =But then didn't want to have anything to do with it.

- c. Do we wander away from our faith?
 - Forgetting God.
 - #Who has blessed us with every good and perfect gift.
 - *James 1:17.
 - Forgetting our neighbor.
 - #Who may be on the other side of:
 - *Gate.
 - *Fence.

III. Fight The Good Fight Of Faith.

- A. Good Fight Is Within Us.
 - 1. If the fight is:
 - a. Outside of us.
 - b. Between us.
 - 2. Chances are it's not the good fight.
- B. Good Fight Doesn't Forget God.
 - 1. Who doesn't forget us, even when we get self-absorbed with:
 - a. Me.
 - b. Mine.
 - c. More.
 - 2. Who sent us Jesus.
 - a. Who fought the good fight for us.
 - b. Who was himself pierced with many pains.
 - Lashes on his back
 - Crown of thorns in his scalp.
 - Nails through his:
 - #Hands.
 - #Feet.
 - Giving of himself.
 - #Generously.
 - #Sacrificially.
 - c. So that we need not be pierced with many pains.
 - For our love of money.
 - For our wandering from the faith.
 - d. Who offers us food for the good fight.
 - Not food to throw at one another.
 - But spiritual food.
 - #Bread.
 - #Wine.
 - *Body.
 - *Blood.

- #Faith.
- #Forgiveness.
- *Generous hearts.
- *Generous hands.

3. Good fight of faith does not forget God.

C. Good Fight Of Faith Doesn't Forget The Poor.

1. Those who ask the question:
 - a. "Have you accepted Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior?"
 - b. Ask an impersonal question.
 - c. Maybe forget that there is little personal about the Christian faith.
 - In the waters of Holy Baptism.
 - In the bread and wine of the Holy Supper.
 - #We are called:
 - *Into a community of faith.
 - *To look outside of our community of faith.
 - +Outside the gates.
 - +On the other side of the fence.
 - =To remember the poor.
2. You can do that in two ways in the next week.
 - a. Oktoberfest on Saturday.
 - To have a good time.
 - #Brats.
 - #Beer.
 - #Potato pancakes.
 - #Polka dancing.
 - To contribute to a worthy cause.
 - #Angel Tree Ministries.
 - *To provide Christmas gifts to children.
 - +Whose parents are incarcerated.
 - b. CROP Walk next Sunday.
 - Come walk with us.
 - Give a donation to one of the walkers.
 - #To help in the fight against hunger.
 - *Here in Tulsa.
 - *Around the world.

Concl: We have been closing our worship services with the words:
 -"Go in peace."
 -"Remember the poor."

It's part of the good fight.
 -Fight of faith.