

## **My Thoughts for Sunday, 19 July 2015**

### **My Goal, Still Higher Ground.**

*“But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” 1 Timothy 6:11-12*

Again we are receiving that direction by God to get out of our complacency, our existence of contentment. Two weeks ago we heard Paul giving God’s instruction to the Philippians to *“forget what is behind, strain for what is ahead... to reach for the prize.”* Today Paul is talking to Timothy and indirectly to us as followers and believers in Christ Jesus, *“flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called...”* He plainly tells us to look forward, not backward, to *“pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.”* You know as I do that these are not the traits encouraged in this world of greed, lust, drugs and self indulgence. Paul takes it a step farther in his admonition to Timothy in the verses just before our text. He was warning Timothy about the love of money and the many snares that entangle those who fall prey to the devil’s schemes. *“Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many grief’s.”* What stronger warning could he give than to *“flee from all this?”*

A true Christian should have no desire to remain in the clutches of the devil. We have been set free by the blood of Christ. Why would anyone wish to become enslaved as we once were? I must take us back to that old hymn I mentioned last week “Higher Ground.” The second verse says it very clearly:

*My heart has no desire to stay  
Where doubts arise and fears dismay;  
Though some may dwell where those abound,  
My prayer, my aim, is higher ground.*

Are you interested in becoming or remaining a slave to the things of this world? Do you hold that desire to stay where doubts and fear are all around us? Doesn't the promise of God and the prize He is offering sound much more valuable than what this world can entice you with? Last week I was speaking primarily to fathers, some lost, some struggling to find their way home again. But this message is for all of us. We have been given an opportunity to get out of our old selves, trapped in sin as slaves. We have all become new persons in Christ. See the promise spread out before us in 2 Corinthians 5:17 *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"* This is what happened at your baptism when you were reborn of the Holy Spirit. You died to sin and were made new in Christ.

What is holding you back? Do you truly believe that this world can give you more than your Savior? Do you not see the great gift that is being held out to you? You only have to grab hold of it. The promises of God are all through the Bible. Look back at what Isaiah prophesied so long ago, even before the birth of our Savior. *"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."* There is no reason to hold on to the familiar, that feeling of contentment. Let it go, let God support you, strengthen you and hold you up when you stumble. He has promised and that is one promise you can be sure of. God does not take back His Word, unfulfilled. Again in Isaiah 55:11 Isaiah gives another of God's firm promises. *"So will my word be which goes forth from my mouth; it will not return to me empty, without accomplishing what I desire..."*

Join me. Join your brothers and sisters in Christ, as we all strive to allow God to set our feet firmly on "higher ground." I can't imagine any other place I would rather be than where He has instructed me to be. Nowhere is there a better, safer, surer place to be than in His care, following His direction.