

3. Lessons from Timothy: the Pursuit of Godliness

But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. 1 Timothy 6.11

The Gospel of Luke has more teachings of Jesus about _____ than any of the other Gospels. Luke records Jesus constantly warning about the dangers of wealth.

The ancient world believed wealth was a sign of God's _____; they equated having wealth with virtue. In many quarters the same is true today; people who work hard can expect to be rewarded financially.

The idea that a rich man is a good man was challenged by _____ in our parable this morning; Jesus reverses the order and lifts up Lazarus, the poor man as the good man, and the wealthy man ends up in hell.

Timothy is up against people who have given in to the seduction of wealth. In their pursuit of wealth they were teaching that godliness leads to material wealth. This is the _____ belief that Jesus challenged in his parable when he lifted up poor Lazarus to the bosom of Abraham and lowered the rich man down into the depths of hell.

If we love money more than God, that will only be one _____ of evil in our lives. Inevitably, the love of money goes hand in hand with the love of power; the love of power goes hand in hand with the love status; and so on.

As we examine these encouraging words of Paul, and the Holy Spirit convicts our spirit in those places where we are not living up to God's call in Christ, the Cross reminds us that we have a God Who stands with us in our failure and sin. Now, we may know, not only forgiveness of our sin, but _____ from our sin.

To be _____ Jesus is to be righteous, godly, faithful, loving, steadfast, and gentle. On honest reflection, I am none of these! Even so, I am called by God to pursue them in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In short, we are being called to avoid the inherently seductive power of wealth. As Americans, who have been formed by a _____ of wealth, we have already been seduced, and we are being called to come to terms with how wealth has formed us in ways that are hostile to the Kingdom of God. Instead of pursuing wealth, we are to pursue godliness in all of its forms, and in that pursuit, we are to persevere. It is a long hard road, the same road Jesus traveled to Jerusalem on His way to the Cross! Let us not give up!

