

MT. OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH, 3500 Edwards Mill Road, Raleigh, NC 27612

NEWS & EVENTS – October 2023

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But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. (1 Timothy 6:11)

The difference between a good run and a bad stand is knowing whether we are coming or going. Some things you run toward and some things you run away from. Wisdom will tell us when we have run far enough. Some things you run toward and some things you run away from. Timothy is told to flee from these things. Flee from constant and controversial and useless contention. Some things are worth fighting for and some are not. The first step in successful contention is to know why we are fighting. Timothy is told to flee...not to walk quickly away in a different direction...or stand fast in the midst of the messiness...but *flee!* What are the things he was warned to flee from? He was to flee from meaningless and mindless controversies that distract from the gospel message. Imagine spending precious time in speculations about how many angels could dance on the head of a pin, or how much seed money we can invest till the Lord is obligated to bring about an exponential return of our investment. We may laugh at such things, but dissertations have been written and endless discussions have occurred over these things and many more like them. As faithful ministers of the gospel, we are to run away from these entanglements and distractions that rob us of reflecting and teaching the glorious truths of the gospel. We are to run away from these things because in many cases we are in conversations with fools and in danger of being trapped in silence or wrecked by irrelevance. Fools seek arguments. Wise people seek wisdom.

Wise people flee toward Jesus. Righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness are found in Christ. When we run to Him, I get a mental picture of a child running toward a parent, laughing all the way. The character of the person of God is framed here in this verse. When someone is looking for Jesus, he will look for a person like this. A serious, yet sensitive, person. The last two qualities in the verse are instructive. *Perseverance* can also be translated *steadfastness*. This is an old word and not one you hear much about these days. In our culture of rapid change, people tell us that the only way to survive is to be easily adaptable and ready to change and do not become rooted in an unchanging mindset. It is here that we need to realize whether we are coming or going. Perseverance is a word that tells us to stand where God stands...stand fast to be steadfast. Consider the words of this old song...

I shall not be...I shall not be moved; I shall not be... I shall not be moved; Just like a tree that's planted by the water... I shall not be moved. For a person to have perseverance, a strength to stand in place no matter what, one would think that stubbornness and an unyielding spirit might be beneficial. But then bring gentleness into the mix and you have a combination of character only the Lord Jesus can bring about. Each one of these words is tempered by the next. A person who thinks they are righteous may only be self-righteous. Godliness gives direction. A godly man will be a faithful man, faithful to God's principles rather than man's preferences. Practical faith is faith acting in godly love. A loving man may have a tendency to always say *yes* to those who may need to hear *no*, especially when practicing discipline with a loved one. Sometimes love stands fast...and sometimes you stand fast in a gentle and firm way. The godly man aspires to display a Christlike demeanor and a godly countenance among others. The Word of God is truly a mirror that reflects who we really are. It's also a lens through which we can view a world in constant contention. That's a strategy to keep us from running to Jesus.

One day, we will have run far enough...when we have run all the way home...to Christ.

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam

(If you are unable to attend Mt. Olivet's 11 AM Sunday worship service in person, can go to website www.mobc.org and click on "Worship Services" for live streaming or prior messages.)