

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for
June 16, 2024



"An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?" – Jeremiah 5:30-31

“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Matthew 7:15-27

Leader: Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing,

People: But inwardly are ravenous wolves.

Leader: You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit,

People: But the bad tree bears bad fruit.

Leader: A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

People: So then, you will know them by their fruits.

Leader: Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven,

People: But he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.

Leader: Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them,

People: I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.

Leader: Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house;

People: And yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.

Leader: Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—

People: And great was its fall.

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – John 1:12-14

***Hymn #499** (red hymnal) – “Rock of Ages”

[It will be played in a different key from the hymnal version, though the same tune.]

Scripture Reading – Ezekiel 13:1-23; 2Timothy 3:1-7

Ancient Creedal Reading – Apostles Creed (pg#845 in the red hymnal)

Offerings Presented

[Please put your tithe/offering in the plates before or after the service – Thank you!]

[Gifts labeled “Deacon’s Fund go to aid those in need in the congregation.]

***Doxology #731** (red hymnal)

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Hymn #629** (red hymnal) – “*What a Friend We Have in Jesus*”

Prayers of the Church & Lord’s Prayer (sins)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Reformation Creedal Reading – Belgic Confession (1561 AD), Article 29b

Leader: The marks by which the true Church is known are these:

People: If the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein;

Leader: If it maintains the pure administration of the sacraments

People: As instituted by Christ;

Leader: If church discipline is exercised

People: In chastening of sin;

Leader: In short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God,

People: All things contrary thereto rejected,

Leader: And Jesus Christ acknowledged

People: As the only Head of the Church.

Leader: Hereby the true Church may certainly be known,

People: From which no man has a right to separate himself.

Ministry of the Word – Preaching

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Titus 3:8-11

***Gloria Patri #735** (red hymnal)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Sermon – “*Unity Through Division*”

A Sermon Series on Titus

***Hymn #38** (red hymnal) – “*Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*”

***Benediction** – Numbers 6:24-26

Announcements

- The church would like to **thank everyone who worked on Sunday School** this year, especially Vika Winters, Mason Goodell, Verna Aldrich, Jon Haulenbeek, and Rebekah Aldrich for subbing, and all those who help to support the inaugural semester of TRC's Sunday School.
- The church like to thank Rebekah Aldrich for filling in for Cindy, who is on vacation.
- Today, June 16th, is the **last day for Sunday School** until Fall.
(Sunday School will return on September 8th.)
So, for **June 23rd & 30th church will start at 10:30 AM** followed by Coffee Hour.
For **July & August** church will start at **9:30 AM** followed by Coffee Hour.
- **Tuesday Morning Study has stopped for the summer**, though **Wednesday Evening Study continues**.
- Pastor Doug will be on vacation from July 8th through 22nd.
Elder Jon Haulenbeek will be preaching those Sundays.
- Pastor Doug plans to preach a mini-series on **sermon requests** this summer. If you have any biblical, theological, historical, moral, and/or cultural questions relating to the Christian faith please email him (douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net) or put your written request in the collection plate. Please, only one request per person. This Fall we will return to our norm of expository preaching, working our way through a section of the Old Testament Law.
- The Elders and Deacons are trying to think of a **local charitable outreach** TRC could do, either for someone in the church, or someone / something in the community - If you have any thoughts, suggestions, or requests, please see Pastor Doug.
- If you would like to **help the Franceschetti family** (Dave, Janelle & baby Caleb) there are a few options:
 - Prayer, which is always greatly appreciated.
 - The Franceschetti's have a gofundme account at: <https://gofundme.com/1c7aaeb4>
(Or you can search for: "gofundme Franceschetti Family")
 - If you would like to donate a meal, see Julie Latina.
(julieannalatina@gmail.com; h=860-824-8410; c=860-480-1687)
- There are **Bibles** and "**Basics of the Faith**" pamphlets about various theological topics free if you are interested.

Upcoming Special Events

- On Saturday, **July 20th** (with a rain date of July 27th), there will be a **pool party and picnic** for the church at the Decker-Gabelmann house, starting at noon. The address is: 101 Wallens Street, Winsted (it is a long driverway with the house a bit off the road.) You can park anywhere along the side of the driveway as well as at the end of the driveway where the 2-car garage is.
- On Saturday, **September 7th**, there will be a **picnic** for the church at the Winters' house, starting at noon.
- On Saturday, September 21st, will be a joint Elders & Deacons' meeting at Pastor Doug's house.
- After church on Sunday, **November 10th**, will be the **Annual Meeting**.

Normal Weekly Schedule

Sunday

10:30 AM

LORD'S DAY WORSHIP – Lord's Supper on the 1st Sunday

c.11:40 AM

Coffee Hour

Wednesday

6:30 – 8:00 PM

Wednesday Bible Study (Pastor Doug's house) – Ephesians

Friday

6:30 PM

YADG – Young Adult Discussion Group (Pastor Doug's house)
1st & 3rd Fridays

Saturday

[*morning*]

Prayer Group – Meets at the Decker-Gabelmann house.
If you are interested, please contact Sheryl Gabelmann.

Online Resources

Internet Prayer Chain: If you have any prayer requests you would like the Internet Prayer Chain to pray for, please email them to Donna Ensminger at: trcnwprayer@gmail.com. (If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, also see Donna.)

Church's Facebook Page: facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/

Church's Webpage: TrinityReformedCT.org

Church Youtube Channel: youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT

Pastor Doug's Youtube Channels:

Simply Reformed: youtube.com/simplyreformed

Pilgrims of Plunder: youtube.com/@PilgrimsofPlunder

*Liking, Commenting, Sharing
facebook posts and Subscribing,
Liking, Commenting on youtube
helps boost TRC's online
outreach.*

Leadership

Teaching & Preaching Elder: Pastor Doug Aldrich
(860-379-1147; douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net)

Ruling Elders: Bob Ensminger
(860-485-8738; robert.ensminger@arthurgrossell.com)
Rich Gabelmann
(860-605-7852; rgabelmann0415@gmail.com)
Jonathan Haulenbeek
(860-283-0224; jhaulenbeek@icloud.com)

Deacons: David Mattson (*chair*), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell,
Mason Goodell, Dean Winters

Music Coordinator & Treasurer: Cindy Rines

Clerk: Sheryl Gabelmann

Sunday School: Verna Aldrich, Mason Goodell

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Sermon Notes

Titus 3:8-11

“Unity and Charity Through Division”

A Sermon Series on Titus

June 16, 2024

Introduction

- 1) The Apostle Paul writes to Pastor Titus that: *“This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.”* – Titus 3:8
- 2) As we talked about last week, the primary thing pastors & elders are to *“speak confidently”* about is the Gospel, which is beautifully described in Titus 3:3-7.
 - a) We Christians were dead in sin but because of the gracious kindness of God, He saved us by making us regenerated, giving us His Spirit, which causes us to trust in Christ, bringing about our justification and adoption before God solely through Christ.
 - b) The Gospel, the very power of God, is the central message of Christian preaching. Matt 24:14; Rom 1:16-17;
1Cor 1:18, 24; 1Pet 1:12
 - i) With the outcome/byproduct of producing many good works in believers. Eph 2:8
 - ii) Faithful Christians doing what God has commanded is certainly *“good and profitable for men.”*
- 3) When you hear *“good works”* do you first think about the individual or the church collective?
 - a) Do you ever think about *“purity of doctrine”* (Titus 2:7) and stopping heretics?
That is where the Apostle goes in the next verse.
 - b) Titus 3:9 – *“But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.”*
 - c) Why don't we think like this? How does this even work? Let's ponder it today.

Titus 3:9 – Call for Unified Division

- 1) We have heard this concern to check falsehoods before in Titus.
 - a) Titus 1:10-16 is a call for the elders to silence, and severely reprove rebellious men, teaching false doctrines and upsetting whole families.
 - b) For *“they profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.”* – Titus 1:16
 - c) Notice how doctrine is directly tied to good and correct, works.
 - i) What is the old computer programmer line?
“Garbage in, garbage out.”
 - ii) Works not in accord with God's Law are by definition not good. Rom 1:18-32
 - iii) Let alone, the fact that our good works have to be covered by Christ's sanctifying blood for them to be pleasing to God. Eph 2:8-10;
Titus 3:7-8
- 2) One of the major works of the church, and a fundamental theme found throughout the Bible¹ is to be on guard against heresy and trouble-makers in the church.
- 3) In our hyper-individualistic, emotional, relativistic age this is despised and dogmatically rejected.
 - a) Have you ever seen a church advertising itself as a *“friendly, welcoming to all, where no one will judge you”*? (Answer: All the time.)

¹ To cite a few examples: Lev 4:13; Ps 5:6; 52:3-5; 62:4; 119:104,128,163; Is 9:17; 29:13; 32:6; Jer 5:31; 6:13-14; 14:14; 23:25-32; 27:9; 29:8; Ezek 13:1-23; 22:28; Hab 2:18; Zech 10:2; Matt 7:15; 12:34; 22:29; 24:11,24; Mark 7:8-13; 13:22; Luke 6:26; John 20:9; Acts 13:6; 15:24; 20:29-30; 2Cor 11:13,26; Gal 1:6-7; 2:4; 5:10-12; Eph 4:13; Phil 1:15; 3:2-3; Col 2:8,23; 1Tim 1:3-13,20; 4:1-3,6; 5:19-20; 6:3,20-21; 2Tim 2:17-18; 3:13-4:5; 4:10; Titus 1:9-2:2; 2Pet 2:1; 1John 2:18; 4:1-6; 3John 9-10; Rev 2:2,6,20; 13:14; 16:13; 19:20; 20:10.

- b) Have you ever heard a church sell itself as “we have zeal for orthodoxy, standing firm against the heathen and all heresies, and will expose your sins calling you to repentance and submission onto Christ”?
- c) Which one loves God, the church and its neighbors more?
- i) Both are very dogmatic, by the way.
 - ii) One is being honest and godly and the other is a
synagogue of Satan - the blind following the blind. Rev 2:9; 3:9
Matt 15:14; 23:16,24
- 4) True, the Bible strongly calls Christians to unity, to be of one mind and that we should be charitable to each other, especially those weakest in the faith. Is 42:3; 1Cor 1:10;
Eph 4:32; Phil 2:3;
Col 3:12-12; 1Pet 3:8
- a) As we read in Titus 3:2 that Christians are “*to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.*”
 - b) Yet we also have Titus 3:9 (“*But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.*”)
 - i) How do these two things go together?
 - ii) To silence and reprove those causing doctrinal and moral problems, while avoiding controversies, strife and disputes.
 - c) Biblically, they fundamentally go together.
 - d) The fact that we think they contradict each other shows us how much worldly thinking has corrupted us.
- 5) We need to read the Bible carefully.
- 6) Remember my suggested Three Rules for Reading the Bible:
- a) **Rule #1 – Context, Context, Context!**
Read any passage in the context of the surrounding verses, seeking to find the original intent of the author, while knowing its historical and grammatical settings.
 - b) **Rule #2 – Follow the Pronouns**
Unpack and define the I, You, He/She/It, We, You’ll, and Them.
 - c) **Rule #3 – Note Any “Yeah, But . . .” Reaction**
If your first response to a verse of Scripture is “*yeah, but . . .*”, trying to first find a qualification about it, you probably have an idol you need to deal with.
- 7) Notice the grammatical context of Titus 3:9.
- a) It doesn’t say “*but avoid controversies and strife and disputes, for they are unprofitable and worthless.*”
 - b) This is what most (modern) people hear.
 - c) Paul qualifies those terms with very important adjectives.
 - i) “*Avoid **foolish** controversies*”
 - ii) “*Disputes **about the Law***”
 - d) There are bad controversies and disputes, and then there are necessary and good controversies and disputes.
 - i) I knew a church that split over changing the color of the carpet.

- ii) However, to split a church over defending such doctrines as the sovereignty of God in salvation, wanting to hear the whole council of God systematically preached and fully applied, and to have godly leadership as prescribed in the Bible, is a good and godly thing.
 - e) To quote that famous teaching by Solomon: *There is “A time to kill and a time to heal; A time to tear down and a time to build up. A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones; A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing. A time to tear apart and a time to sew together; A time to be silent and a time to speak. A time to love and a time to hate; A time for war and a time for peace.” – Ecclesiastes 3:3,5,7-8*
- 8) Let’s unpack the pronouns.
- a) Who is Titus 3:9 (“*but avoid foolish controversies . . .*”) talking to?
 - b) The answer is in Titus 3:8, again Context! Context! Context!
 - i) Titus 3:8b – “*concerning these things I want you to speak confidently*”
 - ii) Who is the “I”? Answer: The Apostle Paul.
 - iii) Who is the “you”? Answer: Pastor Titus.
 - c) The focus is on the leadership judging the membership, not the other way around!
 - d) Moderns hear that the church, and her leaders, should be nice and not judgmental, (according to worldly standards) and not be “dogmatic.”
 - e) The fact the world has completely changed the meaning of the word “dogmatic” highlights the problem.
 - i) It used to mean “*A settled opinion; a principle, maxim or tenet; a doctrinal notion, particularly in matters of faith and philosophy; as the dogmas of the church; the dogmas of Plato.*” – Webster’s,1828.
 - ii) Now it means “*expression of opinions very strongly and authoritatively without adequate grounds*”
 - f) Thus, because of the Myth of Neutrality, the secularists can impose their religious dogma on everyone while not having to defend it because they are not dogmatic but tolerant and scientific.
- 9) When taught in context, that the elders are to “*reject a factious (i.e. heretical) man*” (the beginning of the very next verse) the response is usually “*yeah, but . . .* (insert some self-focused objection)”.
- a) Now, is there a place to rebuke a factious elder?
 - i) Sure, and the Bible teaches ways to deal with that. 1Cor 5:13; 1Tim 5:19-20
 - ii) That is why we have a plurality of elders and congregational government to have checks & balances with power.
 - b) That we mishear this verse (trying to avoid any division) is because we reject what it is actually teaching.
 - c) Which has severely crippled the modern visible church and created a Western Culture that is full of foolish controversies about redefining family (i.e. genealogies), with strife and disputes about the Law (i.e. lawfare).
 - d) Wanting no disputes we have only increased division.
- 10) So, there are good disputes and bad disputes.
- 11) Let’s work through Titus 3:9 and look at some examples of bad disputes.

Titus 3:9 – The Detail Examples of Unified Division

- 1) The church is to “*avoid foolish controversies.*” 1Tim 1:4; 2Tim 2:23
- a) I love the Greek word here for “fool” and “foolish.” (*mōros*)
- i) It is where we get our English word “*moron*” from.
- ii) Being a moron (*mōros*) is worst then being just stupid. (*raca*) Matt 5:22
- iii) Stupidity is an intellectual problem.
- iv) Being moronic is an intellectual, heart, and character problem.
- v) A moron combines stupidity with immorality which makes him worthless.
- b) Isaiah 32:6 – “*For a fool speaks nonsense, and his heart inclines toward wickedness: To practice ungodliness and to speak error against the LORD, to keep the hungry person unsatisfied.*”
- c) We should be careful about calling someone a fool. Remember the Lord’s warning about the subject. Matt 5:22
- d) However, a church that says they will “*never judge anyone*”, is lying, moronic, and hates God and their neighbors.
- i) Will judge others by worldly standards: How many liberal churches tolerate biblical preaching?
- ii) Like a parent who lets their child do anything they desire, because they want to be the child’s friend, doesn’t love God’s commandments or the child, because they are creating a monster.
- iii) As the Lord Jesus says to the church, “*Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.*” – Revelation 3:19
- iv) What is the normal way the Lord reproves and disciplines us?
- Answer: Through His church. 1Tim 5:20; 2Tim 4:2; Titus 1:19-13; 2:15
 - That is why there is a plurality of elders. There are high standards for elders, because it takes skill to learn to discipline, as we have been reading throughout Titus. Titus 1:5-16
Titus 2:15; 3:9-11;
James 3:1
- e) What is the difference between important controversies and foolish ones?
- i) Again, that is why the church has elders and one of the fundamental requirements of the job is to know, teach and robustly defend correct doctrine. Acts 20:28-30;
1Tim 3:2; 2Tim 2:24;
Titus 1:9-11; 2:15
- ii) Things that deal with worship, the doctrines about God, the Gospel and morals are critical and should be dogmatically protected.
- iii) Paul continues about some controversies that should be avoided.
- 2) The church is to avoid controversies about “*genealogies.*” 1Tim 1:4; Titus 3:9
- a) Genealogies are important in the Bible. Gen 10:32; Num 1:20ff; 1Chr 1:1-9
- i) The very first verse of the New Testament starts with a genealogy.
- ii) Matthew 1:1 – “*The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*”
- b) Also, the idea of the blessings of a multi-generational extended family is a biblical truth we moderns have lost to our detriment. Ps 22:30
Ps 78:4-6

- c) This does not contradict Paul's warning about foolish controversies about genealogies in Titus 3:9.
- d) Just as he warned Pastor Timothy, when the Apostle wrote: *"instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."* – 1Timothy 1:3b-5
- e) Were some ancient Christians causing trouble by speculations on who they might be related to from the Old Testament? Maybe.
 - i) Just like a relative of one of the "founding members" of a local church thinks that its "his" church (building) and has to defend the legacy of "his family."
 - ii) Instead of being concerned about correct doctrine and worship because it is Christ's assembly.
- f) I have known Christians whose favorite subject of the Old Testament is genealogy.
 - i) Which as a hobby is fine, however, not as a theological focus.
 - ii) Some take it to demonic levels, called "Christian Identity."
 - That your people group are the "true" Christians.
 - Started with "British Israelism" in the 19th century that argued the British were the descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.
 - Or the Black Hebrew Israelites which is growing in popularity this century that believes black/brown people are the true Israel.
- g) When someone "majors in the minors", let alone has false opinions, and tries to spread or impose them on the church, this causes strife.

3) **Strife**

Rom 1:29; 13:13; 1Cor 1:11; 3:3; 2Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20; Phil 1:15; 1Tim 6:4; Titus 3:9

- a) Strike is expressing differences of opinions for the sake of antagonism.
- b) It is about causing dissension, quarreling, disputes, conflict, speaking discord, to argue for arguing sake.
- c) This is a serious sin. Rom 1:29; 13:13; 2Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20
 - i) Frequently paired with jealousy and envy. Rom 1:29; 13:13; 1Cor 3:3; 2Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20; Phil 1:15; 1Tim 6:4
 - ii) Can easily grow within the church. 1Cor 1:11; 3:3; 2Cor 12:20
 - iii) Jealous of the authority of the church causes strife. Gal 2:4; Jude 4ff
 - iv) Those that cause strife in the church usually have a false zeal for purity of doctrine, especially over trivial things, while having no charity for the saints, contentment within the church, or respect for authority. They wish to create their perfect church based on their whims.

4) **Disputes About the Law**

- a) One of the major things the early church had to work out was the relationship between being in the New Covenant and what to do with the Old Testament Law.
- b) It is the theme of several NT books. Acts, Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, etc.

- c) To list a few points of debate:
- | | |
|---|---------------|
| Is the New Covenant only for Jews? (No.) | Acts 10:44-48 |
| Does keeping the Law justify us? (No.) | Gal 2:16 |
| Is there a difference between the Civil, Ceremonial and Moral Law? (Yes.) | Matt 19:3-9 |
| Do we have to keep the Civil & Ceremonial Laws? (No.) | Col 2:16-17 |
| Do the Civil & Ceremonial Laws make you a better Christian? (No.) | Rom 14:1-2 |
| Is the Law still useful and very important? (Yes.) | 1Tim 1:8 |
| Can I be a true Christian and ignore the Law? (No.) | Rom 3:31 |
- d) This is a very important and deep subject that we have preached on before, and we will again this Fall. However, we don't have time to go into it today.
- e) At the very least, Paul is warning Titus not to get bogged down in misusing the Law, especially the Civil & Ceremonial Laws of the Old Testament.
- 5) All these controversies are foolish, unprofitable and worthless. Titus 3:9

Titus 3:10-11 – Conclusion

- 1) All churches, even the most liberal, practice church discipline and impose their dogma, whether they admit it or not.
- 2) A godly church has elders that focus on doctrine, desiring the church to be pleasing to God, and making sure that the sheep/saints are spiritually, intellectually and physically protected.
 - a) Thus, godly elders must “*reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.*” – Titus 3:10-11
 - b) While at the same time being “*not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.*” – Titus 1:7b-9
 - c) If you assume God has not spoken with clarity, and the individual is the final authority, then you will have no idea how those things go together, because you are a fool.
 - d) If you know God has spoken with clarity through His Word (Christ His Son as testified in the written word of Scripture) then those things fundamentally go together.
- 3) As Paul tells Pastor Timothy: “*If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.*” – 1Timothy 6:3-6