

Local Church Budget

Keep the Faith

Imagine that you're in Rome in the year 65 A.D. The Apostle Paul is imprisoned, awaiting his approaching execution.

For decades, Paul has ministered to both the rich and the poor—and he has experienced both situations himself. He's watched professing followers of Jesus use God's gifts to glorify themselves instead of the Giver. He's watched them exalt *human* genius, revere *worldly* success, desire *earthly* luxuries and teach their children to do the same. Yet he's also witnessed heart conversions, mind-blowing generosity and incredible sacrifice.

He's felt guilt for not always following the example of Jesus, who, being rich became poor for our sake, that we, through His poverty, might become rich—eternally.

A decade earlier, Paul had an epiphany. He saw right through everything offered by the world, and he realised that his greatest possible satisfaction, his highest privilege, his very reason for existing, was to lift up Jesus Christ.

With death approaching, Paul writes to young Timothy. It's a dying man's last letter, crowded with wisdom, fatherly advice, and earnest pleading. He concludes, "Timothy, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (*2 Timothy 4:7*).

That's also Paul's prayer for us. In all our life decisions, he encourages us to 'keep the faith.'

Appeal: It's now time to return God's tithe and give the Promise offerings, which we are encouraged to pre-plan and set aside as a percentage of our income this week. Let's ask God to help us to hold on tightly to Him. Let's reflect God's faithfulness in our returning of tithe and giving of offerings. Let's keep the faith.

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