

# Second Hand Preacher

*26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time*

September 25, 2016

## **1 Timothy 6:11-16**

I was never a great athlete, but I have fond memories of competing in high school sports. I loved the pep talks and attention our coaches used to give us. I am, in part, the man I am today because of what those coaches did for me. We are strong as a community when we work together. Adults helping children and children helping children make us all stronger. As I analyze my upbringing, I benefited from so many adults sharing their talents with me. These adults coached me in many life lessons that didn't involve a playing field or the wrestling mat. Hopefully all of us can serve as good examples for our youth.

St. Paul used some athletic images to show support of Timothy's church. He asks them to support righteousness, devotion, faith, and love. They are to compete in will for the faith. Living the faith in the time of St. Paul was a real struggle. Being open about it could mean persecution and even death. They often had to do things in secret just to survive. Some of the Christians felt so strongly about their faith that they were willing to die as a witness to just how much Jesus meant to them. They knew Jesus in their hearts. They were motivated by the witness of Paul and Timothy. With guidance, early Christians learned the way to live their faith. They let the faith inspire the lives they lived.

Are we inspired by Jesus? We are called to live the faith that Paul and Timothy lived so long ago. Religious persecution still exists today. People are still losing their lives for the faith. Christians in the Middle East face persecution and loss of life. A priest in France was stabbed during the Mass because of people who were intolerant to Catholicism. I'm not looking to die soon, but to die during the Mass would be a privilege. I hope God would give me the strength to witness if my life circumstances ever faced that type of persecution. We face persecution in small ways when people prevent us from praying in public. Not being able to express our faith is a real crime. Let's continue to pray for religious liberty. Let us pray that all Christians be witnesses in a world in need of a Savior.