

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 3:14-16 (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Some Primary Tasks Assigned For God's Household, The Church

READ: 1 Timothy 3:14-16

BACKGROUND:

- - So far in 1 Timothy chapter 3, the qualification requirements have been laid out for being an elder and for being a deacon in the church.
- - In chapter 1, instructions were given for confronting the teaching of false doctrine in the church.
- - And in chapter 2, instructions were given about proper conduct of men and of women in the church.
- - Now in verses 3:14-16 Paul explains why he has been writing about these topics.

vv.14-15 - READ

[Lesson Question: Describe what this passage is saying about the task and responsibility of the church and its comprising members.]

SECTION POINT: The church has been given the tasks and the responsibilities of appropriately being God's household in the conduct of its members and in the function to fulfill its mission.

v.14 - "I am writing you these instructions so that"

- - Paul, "an apostle of Christ Jesus", wanted Timothy, his ministry apprentice, to know the information Paul is writing about because it is important. (vv.1:1; 4:6; 6:11)
- - As a designated spiritual leader in the church at Ephesus, Timothy was charge with ensuring that the information Paul was writing in this letter gets implemented in the church in Ephesus, which is under Timothy's leadership and care. (v.1:3; cf. vv.6:20; 4:6)
- - Paul was uncertain if or when he would be able to meet in person with Timothy, so Paul sent this information in writing in order that Timothy would learn it and implement it immediately. (v.15)
- - Therefore, the information in the Book of 1 Timothy is important, urgent, and crucial to the proper functioning and well-being of every church, and thereby requires immediate attention and action by each church's leadership.
- - And Timothy was "instruct[ed]" to implement everything written by Paul in this letter, not picking-and-choosing what he will comply with and what he will ignore. (cf. v.4:6)
- - So the same imperative applies to leaders in churches and ministries today - selective compliance to the information in this letter is not acceptable; comprehensive compliance and implementation is mandated.

v.15 - "you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God"

- - "God's household" is the "church", the congregations or gatherings or groupings of believers. (Strong's #1577)
- - God intends that these congregations or gatherings or groupings of believers function as His "household or family". (Strong's #3624)
- - Believers are to "see", or realize, learn, and "know" how they are to conduct themselves in churches and ministries. (Strong's #1492)
- - Within God's household, its members have a spiritual relation to each other, which is achieved by means of the Holy Spirit "living" in or indwelling the life of each genuinely believing household member. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)
- - This inner "living" spiritual relation to each other gives its members a spiritual interconnectedness and a spiritual oneness in commonality, which is to result in unity, harmony, and likeness in thinking, in conduct, and in functioning together as a whole. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13,24-25)
- - Even though each genuine believer has been given a natural inclination towards these qualities by means of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the reality is that each member also still retains the inherent sin nature that battles for dominance within them. (Romans 6:11-14)
- - So, proper conduct within God's household requires training of each genuine household member in order that the ways of the old sin nature continuously get extinguished and then that the new Holy Spirit-empowered nature would dominate or reign. (Ephesians 4:21-24)

- - The Book of 1 Timothy contains detailed information about "how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household".
- - The process utilized back then to dispense this knowledge was Paul is using written information to train leader Timothy, who is to then train his congregants.
- - This same process is to be used today - the written information in the Book of 1 Timothy is to be used to train ministry leaders, who are then to train their congregants on "how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household".
- - So leaders need to thoroughly know the information in 1 Timothy, implement it, and teach it to their congregants.
- - And leaders, who fail in these regards, risk being assessed by God as fundamentally derelict in their obligation and duty as a leader of a church or ministry. (vv.4:6; 6:20)

v.15 - "the pillar and foundation of the truth"

- - Because it is God's household, the church has been designated and assigned by God to fulfill functions, and one primary function is to be "the pillar and foundation of the truth".
- - The church is to be the guardian of the truth about God and His Kingdom, steadfastly maintaining and perpetuating totally accurate information without shifting or moving in any regard or way. (cf. vv.1:3-6; 4:1; 6:20-21)
- - Logically then, the church should always steadfastly maintain a totally accurate stance on doctrines, principles, applications, and conduct that are properly derived from the Holy Bible, which is God's Word. (cf. v.1:8)
- - The church, in the form of an aggregate of all local churches that hold to genuine truth about God and His Kingdom, is corporately to maintain and be the "foundation or basis" upon which God's program for God's household rests. (Strong's #1477)

- - And within the true corporate church as a whole, each true local church individually is to function as a "pillar or post", rising up from the foundation of genuine truth to extend that truth into its surrounding community. (Strong's #4769)
 - - By implication then, persons, ministries, and churches that wander from the holding of genuine truth about God and His Kingdom are thereby wandering from God, wandering from a healthy relationship with God, wandering from His program, wandering from His will, and wandering from functioning as a pillar and foundation of the truth for other people to learn, know, and follow.
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v.16 - READ

[Lesson Question: What are these foundational truths of the faith and why are each of them important as a foundational truth of the faith that the church is to promote?]

SECTION POINT: A primary mission of the church is to un-waveringly promote the truths about Jesus and what He did while He was on the earth.

"Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body"

- - "And" certainly or "beyond all question", a main "confession" of God's household, the true church, is that "the mystery of godliness is great". (Strong's #2532 (omitted in *NIV*); #3672)
- - Paramount among the truths that the true church is to hold, confess, and perpetuate is the truth about Jesus, the Christ, who came to the earth in physical bodily form.
- - Previous to His coming and even during much of His visible appearance on the earth, the truth about Jesus was a "mystery", not revealed or significantly disclosed. (Strong's #3466)
- - Historically, the phenomenon of "God" Himself appearing on the earth in the form of a human certainly is a "great" event, especially because through His appearing eventually was bought a way for sinful humans to acquire the "godliness" required to secure a permanent righteous standing and relationship with our extremely holy creator God. (Strong's #2316; Romans 3:21-25a)
- - So the true church is to bear witness to, explain, and confess to the world the truth and reality about Jesus, the Christ, which was "made clear or rendered apparent" through His appearing in a "fleshly body". (cf. John 1:14; Strong's #5319, #4561)

"was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels"

- - During Jesus' time on the earth, the Spirit of God "vindicated" the God-man nature of Jesus, "showing", "providing support, verifying, defending, maintaining, recognizing, substantiating, and proving" that Jesus really was and is God appearing on the earth in a physical human body. (Strong's #1344; *AHD* - 'vindicate')
- - And as further verification and corroboration, angels witnessed His appearing, which carries the meaning of "to gaze with wide-open eyes, as at something remarkable". (Strong's #3700)
- - From a legal standpoint, these angels served as third-party observers to witness and testify to this truth about Jesus' appearing, which they did with a reaction of great joy and praises, as recorded in Luke 2:8-14.

"was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory"

- - One outcome of Jesus' appearing is that He "was preached among the nations", with humans now joining in (like the angels) to "proclaim, herald", and testify about the truth and reality of Jesus and His appearing.
- - Paul, for example, became a messenger "apostle", "a herald", "and a teacher of the true faith" about Jesus "to the Gentiles" in nations of the world. (v.7 in vv.2:3-7; v.1:1)
- - Another key person was Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, who is recorded in Acts 2, for example, as having preached about Jesus, resulting in many people becoming genuine believers.

- - The departure event of Jesus from His time on the earth is recorded in Acts 1:1-11 and was witnessed by His disciples. (Acts 1:2)
- - In verse 3 is stated that over a period of forty days after His resurrection from the dead, Jesus "showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive".
- - Upon His glorious floating up into the sky, "two men dressed in white" (who were probably angels) "stood beside them" and gave testimony that Jesus was indeed "taken from you into heaven". (Acts 1:10-11)
- - So this phrase in 1 Timothy 3:16 "was taken up in glory" signifies and encompasses this truth reality of the faith - that Jesus was raised from the dead and then later gloriously taken up into heaven, as witnessed and attested to by His disciples and by two angels.

BIG IDEA: God's household of genuine believers, the true church, is to appropriately be the custodian, guardian, and herald to the world of the foundational truths of the faith in Jesus.

APPLICATIONS:

- - Has all of the leadership in your church been thoroughly taught the entire contents, principles, and directives in the Book of 1 Timothy?
- - Does the leadership of your church properly and consistently implement all that is instructed in the Book of 1 Timothy?
- - Or does the leadership of your church pick-and-choose what parts of the contents of the Book of 1 Timothy they will comply with and what parts they will ignore or dismiss, even though the conferred instruction from God is to implement all of the contents of this book?
- - Or does the leadership of your church basically take a laissez-faire noninterference approach, letting the conduct and the leadership functioning in your church take whatever form comes natural?

- - Do you or your church hold doctrines, principles, applications, conduct, and foundational truths of the faith that are properly derived from the Holy Bible, which is God's Word?
- - Or do you or your church wander from what God says in His Word and make up your own variation on doctrines, your own religious principles, your own customized foundational truths of your faith, your own rules for conduct that your congregants are to abide by?
- - Or does your church shift in its doctrines, following current trends in society or religious circles, which in effect modifies foundational truths of the faith to thereby conform to foundational half-truths of the world?

- - Using a proper approach, conduct, and gentle persuasion, why not work to move your church to adopt, implement, and abide by what God has instructed in the Book of 1 Timothy for His household, the church, and its members?

[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - From experience and without disclosing names, what have you seen happens when churches wander from the foundational truths it is suppose to uphold? Try to identify each specific foundational truth it wandered from and what consequence directly resulted from each.
 - - From experience and without disclosing names, what have you seen happens when members in a church wander from proper conduct in their church? Try to identify each specific proper conduct they wandered from and what consequence directly resulted from each - for them individually and for their church as a whole.]
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