

THE Rock COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Timothy 3:14-16

“The Motive Behind the Message”

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Transcript

24:42

So I wanna invite you guys to make your way to 1 Timothy chapter three. If you brought your Bible with you, if you didn't, there should be one hiding underneath of your chair that you can follow along as well.

24:52

But while you guys are turning to 1 Timothy chapter three, I just wanna kinda give everybody, kind of get everybody up to speed. If you haven't been with us over the past couple of months, we've been studying this book.

25:04

This is a letter that the apostle Paul wrote to a young pastor named Timothy. Paul had been in a city, Ephesus, and spent a significant amount of time there, kinda got this church started in Ephesus, and then he had to continue on his missionary journey as he was traveling to different cities, and he sends Timothy there to this town to come there and to be their pastor to provide leadership and to guide this church.

25:31

And so the letter of 1 Timothy, and we're gonna continue in 2 Timothy in a few months, but these letters are Paul writing back, kinda helping this young pastor to figure out how to lead appropriately, how to address some of the things that have come up in this church, in the city of Ephesus.

25:48

And so when we come to our passage that we're gonna be looking at this week, as we look at 1 Timothy chapter three, we're gonna look at verses 14 through 16. And these passages, these verses kinda serve as a little bit of a summary statement for the book so far.

26:04

See, so far through the book, we've been talking about a few different things. He's talked about how godly men should behave in the worship gatherings, how godly women should behave in the worship, in the church, and also talked about how godly elders and godly deacons should lead and serve the church in the ways that they're called and invited to.

26:22

So Paul now at this point is gonna kinda get to the end of that section as he's talked about godly leadership for elders and deacons, and now he's gonna explain the purpose for why he's writing this letter that he's writing.

26:35

See, he says that he's writing this to teach Timothy and to teach the Ephesian church how they should stand as a church. All of the prior instructions concerning men and women in worship, all those different things, elders, deacons are given to us to show us how God's household, God's family, God's church should be ordered correctly.

26:57

And this short section that we're gonna look at, just these three verses, kinda break down in a couple of simple points. This is our basic outline for this morning. So the first thing that we're gonna see in the first two verses is Paul's motive for writing all of these things, that his motive is strengthening the household of God.

27:14

And then we see in verse 16, the mystery that it is built upon. We're gonna see the motive and the mystery in these three verses. So I wanna invite you to read along with me. We're gonna read 1 Timothy chapter three verses 14 through 16 together.

27:28

You can follow along in your copy or on the screens. It says in 1 Timothy 3:14, that I, Paul, hope to come to you soon. But I am writing these things to you so that if I delay, you might know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

27:48

Great indeed we confess is the mystery of godliness, for he was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, and taken up in glory.

28:01

These are the words of the Lord. Would you guys pray with me? God, we thank you for the opportunity to gather together with your church this morning. God, that as you have ordained, you have built this thing and given us to one another in the church.

28:14

God, we need one another. And God, as we gather together this morning, as we humble ourselves before your word, as we remind one another of the greatness of who you are and the privilege it is to come to you and to worship you with our presence and with our songs and now spending time together in your word.

28:30

We just pray that as you give us your message this morning, God, we pray that you would give us ears to hear what you have to say, God, that you would give us hearts that are tender and prepared to receive what you have for us this morning.

28:43

And God, I pray most of all that you would hide me, that you would get me out of the way, hide me behind your cross. And God, that your word would be proclaimed that this wouldn't be anything of me or anything of our desires, but God, that this would be from you and you alone.

28:56

So we give this time to you, we pray that it brings you glory. And it's in Jesus' name, we pray, amen. All right, well, as we jump in, the first thing that I said we were gonna see in verses 14 and 15 is Paul's motive for why he's writing these things.

29:09

So he kind of comes right out and says it. He says that his motive for writing to Timothy and to this church in Ephesus is that he wants to make sure that the Ephesians know how they should behave in the household of God.

29:23

That term that he uses, the household of God. I wanna make sure that we kind of understand what he's talking about there. When he talks about the household, the house, that image actually shows up several different times throughout the New Testament.

29:35

We see it in 1 Timothy and a couple of different places. We also see it throughout the New Testament. It shows up in Galatians and other places. But this term that the household of God here is metaphorical language talking about the family of God.

29:51

So for Christians, having been born again, having placed our faith in Jesus alone for our salvation, the Bible tells us that we are adopted as God's sons and God's daughters into the family of God. The members of the church that have become sons and daughters of God, if we're sons and daughters of the same father, that means that also by extension that makes us brothers and sisters, right?

30:15

Each and every one of us has an important and a special role, a special place of fellowship and service in God's house. And so when Paul says, I'm writing these things to the household of God, these things that he's talking about is simply everything that he's been talking about so far in this letter.

30:35

He's kind of giving us this summary statement. He's talking about from 1 Timothy 1 as he was talking about the importance of believing rightly, the importance of good doctrine in the face of false teachers that had come into the church in Ephesus and were kind of pressing in on the church.

30:52

He's talking about his encouragement to believe the right things. He's also talking about from 1 Timothy chapter two, the importance as he talked about proper roles for men and for women in the church.

31:05

And so he's talking about those things as well. And finally, he's talking about these things referring to proper spiritual leadership by elders and by deacons in the household, in the church, in the family of God.

31:19

God's household has a certain order to it. There are elders that are given responsibilities as we saw a couple of weeks ago. There are deacons that are given the responsibility to serve and to play their role.

31:32

And there are also members of the church that people play the responsibility, play the role that they've been given that all of us have a responsibility in the family of God to do our part. And so since this is God's house, God gets to define the offices and God gets to set the job descriptions for each and every one of us.

31:52

But Paul's statement here that he's making, that we are family in God's house, I think it also can have some profound implications for us that I wanna make sure we don't just blaze past as we're talking about the basics of what these verses are talking about.

32:07

For starters, the first thing that comes to mind, an important implication for us, if we are family in God's house, it means that we are in a relationship with one another. And that relationship is an eternal relationship.

32:21

Jesus said that no one can lose their salvation, that those that God has placed into his hand, that no one can pluck them out, that no one can take them away from God. And so if we have come to faith in Jesus, and if we have received salvation, there's nothing that can change that.

32:37

That means that if you look to your right and you look to your left, and those other brothers and sisters that are part of God's family, they can't lose their salvation, you can't lose your salvation, you know what that means?

32:50

That means we're stuck together. That means we're gonna be stuck together for a long, long time, because I know if you've ever been to a wedding, you've heard for richer and for poorer and sickness and in health till death do us part.

33:01

Well, that may work for marriage, but that doesn't work for the church because even after death, you're still stuck together because we're all gonna go be in heaven together. So the reality is that we have to figure out how to get along with one another.

33:14

We have to figure out how to live in relationship with one another. So if you look at somebody across the room and you go, you know, I just can't figure out how to get along with that person, it's gonna take you a while, but you're gonna have plenty of time to figure it out as we spend time living with one another for all of eternity.

33:31

So if you're not getting along with your brothers and your sisters, the eternal aspect of this may not actually be that appealing to you, but you better figure it out, right? We don't get to just move on from one another and just say, you know, I'm done with this person, I don't feel like dealing with them.

33:47

And there's so many people in churches today, there's people in our church that will look at a conflict, will say, you know, I just don't wanna deal with this person anymore, so it'd

be easier for me to just go find another church so that I don't have to deal with this conflict.

34:00

I don't like this thing, whatever it is. Well, you can do that and maybe that gives you some temporary relief from whatever that conflict is. But first off, the next church is gonna have problems too because there's people there as well.

34:12

But also, you know what? One day you're gonna be with that person again. So even if you don't like them today, you better figure it out because heaven's gonna be really awkward one day. When you get there and you go, man, I tried to get away from this person and now we're stuck here together.

34:26

Maybe we should just figure out how to love one another and live in unity with one another and live life inside of the family the way that God has told us to all throughout scripture. There will be conflict and disagreement, but we're stuck with one another.

34:42

And so I'd encourage you, church, as I see it, seems to me like church is a good proving ground. It's a good practice time for us to figure out how to live in unity and live with one another's needs above our own because we're going to have to figure out how to live in unity with one another.

34:59

And so we talk about all of this importance of living with one another, of living in unity, but I think that begs the question, how do we do that? How do we live in harmony with one another? How do we figure this out?

35:11

Do you just need a pastor to come up here and bang on the pulpit and say, stop fighting with one another. Maybe that would fix it, right? If I yell at you to stop yelling at each other, then all the problems will go away.

35:22

Well, that's probably not it. So, yeah, maybe we should just, every week when we, you know, we sing together every week. Maybe we just, one out of the four or five songs that we do every week needs to be, We Are the World, or maybe, you know, Imagine by John Lennon, one of those like, everybody can get along and we can all be friends, and maybe that would help us to live in unity with one another if we just put our arms around one another and sway back and forth like a Charlie Brown cartoon every week when we get together in church.

35:52

I really don't think that living in unity with one another is actually about finding these little tips, these little tricks, these little, you know, maybe if you just communicate a little bit differently than all the problems will go away.

36:07

We're not, we don't need to go to marriage counseling together and figure out how to communicate with one another. I think there's a bigger answer to this problem that A.W. Tozer actually kind of lays out for us.

36:18

AW Tozer, if you're not familiar with that name, he was an American pastor and an author in the early 20th century. He was alive about 100 years ago serving in a church. AW Tozer gave some brilliant advice for the church that is seeking to live in harmony with one another.

36:35

He said, let me read, it's a little bit of a long quote for you and it's written by a guy that lived 100 years ago, so it gets a little funky in a couple of places, but let's see if we can wrestle through this.

36:44

He asked the question, has it ever occurred to you that 100 pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned not to each other, but to another standard to which each one must individually bow.

37:01

So 100 worshipers met together, each one looking away to Christ are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be where they'd become unity conscious and turn their eyes away from God and strive for closer fellowship.

37:16

You know, as we talk about this idea of the importance of living together in unity, of figuring out how to get along with one another, if we start focusing on the person to your left and the person to your right and figuring out how to make everybody get along, there's a problem with that because everybody has their own opinions and everybody has their own thoughts about whatever the matter is and it doesn't take us long to figure out that for us to get just 100 people to agree on anything is pretty much impossible, right?

37:46

I could ask you if you like blue or red better, I could ask you if you like Coke or Pepsi better, I could ask you a million, Dodgers or Angels, all these different things and there is no way that we could get 100 people to agree on something.

37:58

And so if we sit here and we go, you know, I need to just figure out how to make sure that you and you and you and you can agree on whatever it is, there's no way for us to

ever become unified. Yeah, just take any sampling from the last few years as it seems like everybody is fighting over everything.

38:15

We'll realize really quickly that we can't just become unity focused and somehow achieve unity. But what A.W. Tozer here is saying is that for us to live in unity as the church, well that's the work of God in his church and as we draw closer to him, that means that by nature we are being drawn closer to one another.

38:35

If we try to get, anybody ever heard of the term herding cats before? Well, yeah, cats running a million different directions. Well, herding church members kind of feels the same way sometimes. Everybody wants to run over here, run over there, do what, but if we're coming to one central unified location, well then all of them end up in the same place.

38:54

If we're all pursuing Jesus together, if we're all chasing after what he wants and holding to his standard and pursuing his truth, well by nature it's gonna take all the people that are scattered all over the place and bring us to a same unified central point being that Jesus is our head and that we're all lined up right smack dab behind him.

39:15

So the idea of us being drawn together, the work of God to bring us together in unity and the significance of that, it's important because if we are going to function as the household of God, if we're gonna function as the family of God in the way that we're supposed to, first off we have to be unified, but if we somehow successfully are unified and brought together as the family, what is the purpose of that family?

39:39

What does the household do? Well, Paul lays that out for us as well in verse 15. He says that, if I delay, I write these things so that you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and a buttress of the truth.

39:56

He says that the household of God is supposed to be a pillar and a buttress of the truth. So what Paul is saying here is that if the church is functioning like the house, like the family that it's supposed to, it will serve a clear function, namely that it will be a pillar and a buttress.

40:14

What in the world is Paul talking about with those things? Any architects in the room that can lay out exactly what the purposes of those things are? That'd be awesome if you raised your hand, we could answer this.

40:22

So I didn't think we had any architects in the room, so let me give you my super, super shallow understanding as I study this just a little bit this week. I think pillars are easier for us, so let's take pillars first, right?

40:35

Pillars, many of us are familiar with the idea of pillars, we see them common in home construction, especially you look at big buildings, you go to a government building or whatever, you're gonna see these pillars and they're familiar architectural features that I think we're kind of well acquainted with, right?

40:51

Pillars are these structural elements that will bear weight, that will help hold the structure up, they usually help hold the roof high and make sure that things don't collapse and come crumbling down. So for us to say that the church has to be a pillar, essentially

what we're saying, that if the church is a pillar of the truth, it means that we are going to hold high and to lift up the truth of what God has given to us.

41:15

This isn't something that we get to be the focal point, the pillars aren't the focal point as much as they are the supporting structure, sometimes pillars are seen, often they're not, often they're built into a wall or they're just something that's kind of hidden behind the rest of the structure, but they serve an important role because they hold up the roof, they hold up the structure and so for the church to be a pillar, it's important for us to hold high the truth of God's word.

41:43

Now we get to this other piece of the structure that Paul says that we should be a buttress of the truth. Now that was one that got me a little bit confused, so a buttress is an architectural feature that if you're like me, you've probably seen it in many older buildings and maybe you didn't even realize it.

42:00

So I've got a definition here, let's save the next slide, don't stick that one up just yet, so a buttress is defined by Miriam Webster's dictionary as a projecting structure of masonry or wood for supporting or giving stability to a wall or a building.

42:16

Essentially it's this structure that gives extra stability to a big wall or to some large structure. Now maybe that helps you, maybe you've kind of conjured a picture in your head but I read that and I went, yeah, I still got nothing, right?

42:32

I still don't have any idea what that's actually talking, you have some sort of a stabilizing-doing-something, but when I saw a picture, I immediately went, oh, those are all over the place in big buildings, right?

42:42

So anybody have a picture in their mind? Mickey, I see a smile on your face. You're probably the only one in the room, Mr. Construction Guy, that has an idea of what this is talking about. Anybody have that picture?

42:51

All right, let's throw the picture up there and see if you guys go... Basically, it's a little like cross leg that sticks out from a large wall or from a large structure that helps provide that stability.

43:03

You see it in old cathedrals, you see it even in just something as simple as a buttressed wall like an old fortress wall. We see these little legs that kind of stick out that help provide stability when forces come from one side of the wall or the other, it helps to make sure that the wall doesn't fall down.

43:20

Because as you start getting bigger and bigger and bigger with some of these buildings, I'm sure there's some sort of a rule of when the wall is this big or this heavy, you can't just set wall here and wall here, you need to make sure that the wind or the fact that the ground shakes out here in California, crazy thing to me, not living here originally.

43:39

But if the ground starts moving or the wind starts to blow, these big walls can go down if they don't have something that stabilizes them. A buttress is there to help bring stability to a structure and helps it stand against those forces when they start to blow up against the sides of it.

43:57

I don't know much about architecture, I don't have any real experience with architecture, but I will say that as I was thinking about this this week, I do have a little bit of a connection that I can make because as a child, I love to build card houses.

44:10

I would get bored inside, grab a stack of dad's business cards or a few decks of cards or whatever and start to build card houses. If you look at a house, the wall here and the wall here and you make a corner and you could try to make a card house that looks like a house.

44:25

But unfortunately, that's not going to be very successful if anybody's ever tried to build a card house like that. You need a few of those legs sticking out from the side of the structure in order to give it that extra stability.

44:38

You don't make a corner, you make a T and so you stack them all up against one another, against the side of one another. If you're going to build a successful card house, you need some of these buttresses to kind of provide stability, especially if you live in a house like I did growing up with two younger brothers that are going to make it their goal to come by and to just accidentally run by and create some wind.

44:59

I didn't blow it over, but they're like running back and forth past it trying to knock it down. Maybe nobody else lived in a house like that. I had little brothers that would do anything that they could to knock it down while maintaining their innocence.

45:13

You need some extra stability to provide that ability for it to stand strong. A buttress was an important element for me as I was building those card houses. And in the same way, the church is supposed to play a role as a pillar of the truth and a buttress of the truth.

45:32

The church of Jesus does not determine what is true or not true, but what it does is it serves as an existing support system for the truth. By serving as an immovable witness, by serving as a group of people who say, no, this is true and we stand on the truth that God has revealed to us.

45:50

Well, it means that we're going to serve as a support system for the truth in a world that really doesn't seem to care a whole lot about what God's word has to say about the truth. It's important for us to tenaciously hang on to God's revelation no matter what else happens, no matter what society may say, no matter what new truths may be brought up in different contexts and what other people decide is or isn't true.

46:18

As Christians, we believe that God is the source of absolute truth, that Jesus said, I am the way and the truth and the life, that things that are true are absolutely true, that Jesus, that God is the source of all truth.

46:32

And so when God has revealed things to us that are true, namely his word, that we hold tightly to that above all else. We believe in the sufficiency of Scripture. That's one of the pillars that our church stands on is that we believe absolutely that the Bible is absolutely true in anything that it speaks about.

46:52

And so when the church hangs on to the revelation of God, when we hold on to the truth in the way that we're supposed to, when we all play our roles in the household of God, as Paul has been talking about so far in this book, in this letter, 1 Timothy, when everyone plays their role confidently, we serve as a pillar and a buttress for the truth.

47:13

When the elders, as Paul has been talking about, preach the word of God faithfully. When we hold to the truth and lead the church in the way that God has commanded us to, confidently and clearly, we serve as supporters, as buttresses and pillars of the truth.

47:29

When the deacons serve the needs of the church with love and humility, they serve as functional supports for the church. Well, that means that we succeed in serving the church as a whole, as a pillar and a buttress of the truth.

47:44

We hold to the truth when we do our jobs in those areas, even as men and women play the roles that they're commanded to and invited to as the family functions in a godly manner. All of these things that Paul has been talking about so far, they serve to make sure that the household of God is ordered properly so that we can function the way that God has told us to.

48:07

God has called the church to lift high and to reinforce the truth, to pillar and buttress the truth in a world that seems so aggressively opposed to truth these days, that it would be really easy for most churches to crumble in the face of all the attacks that are coming from all sides.

48:24

You know, there are far too many churches, as I sit here and look around and watch what's going on around us in the culture, there are far too many churches that are more concerned about being accessible to the culture or even being agreeable and aligned with the culture, they're more concerned about being agreeable to the world than they are about holding fast to the truth of God.

48:46

You know, I'm not gonna use names, but I watched a video this week of what someone referred to as "the greatest Easter service ever." Maybe you saw this video circulating around online, but yeah, I watched just a little bit of that service and it horrified me. Because I watched it and as I watched it, it was glorifying worldliness as it was, you know, honestly, it looked more like a Rihanna concert than it did a church service as people are shaking around and doing all kinds of things, singing secular God, speaking negatively about the name of God.

49:22

All these things as they're shaking and dancing and using Lady Gaga songs in their church service to somehow try to create some kind of a point. We see churches that are so focused on trying to maintain their accessibility to the world that they abandon the truth that God has revealed to us.

49:41

Our job is not to snuggle up as closely as we can to the world and try to look so much like them that we're indistinguishable from them. Our job is to stand as a pillar, as a reinforcement for the truth that God has given to us.

49:56

And so when the church does what God has called the church to do, when we stand firm, when we hold up, when we lift high the truth that God has revealed in His word, we don't have to look like the world in order to invite people to come out of the world because God is going to build His church.

50:14

God is going to be the one that changes lives. Our responsibility is not to convince someone that they need Jesus. Our job is to simply tell them about the incredible offer that Jesus has made to them as he offers salvation and God will move hearts.

50:28

God will change lives. God will do His work. All we have to do is faithfully proclaim the message that God has given to us. So as we look at this, as Paul is talking about all these things, he's talking about the motive of why he has said all the things that he has said so far, that it's important that the church functions as the household of God, the way that God has created it and structured it to.

50:51

But then we also get to verse 16 and we see this mystery that he's talking about, the reason for why the church must contend for the truth. This verse, verse 16 summarizes the truth that the church should contend for.

51:05

And so let's look at verse 16 together. It says in 1 Timothy 3:16, great indeed we confess is the mystery of godliness, for he was, Jesus was, manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, and taken up in glory.

51:27

Now this term, as he talks about the mystery of godliness, this term mystery is a specific term that Paul uses multiple times in his writing. I think we should make sure that we're not confused here.

51:40

Paul's not talking about a mystery and referencing this as if it was some sort of a who done it movie where we have to figure out, you know, was it Professor Plum in the conservatory or was it Miss Scarlett?

51:52

We're not talking about some mystery movie, right? Anybody play clue as a kid? I did. We're not talking about a mystery like that though. But we're talking about, as Paul talks about, the mystery of godliness.

52:08

What he's referring to is the plan of redemption, the plan of salvation that was formerly hidden in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, Old Testament believers got to see in kind of like shadowy pictures.

52:22

They didn't have a clear picture of what salvation meant as it was going to come. They didn't have a clear picture of how God was going to work all these things together. But that's not a mystery anymore because we live on the opposite side of the cross.

52:37

We live after Jesus came and lived and died and laid before us the plan of redemption, the plan of salvation. So this isn't talking about some mystery that we can't understand or know today. Rather, Paul uses this as a synonymous term for the plan of salvation that was revealed to us in the man Jesus Christ.

53:00

And so the mystery of Jesus Christ is described in these six lines. It kind of actually sounds like a part of an early creed or an early confession of the church that would have been used around this time.

53:11

See, there's some rhythm, the lines are rhythmic as we look at them. If you look at them in the original language, the first word of each stanza actually rhymes as well. It seems like this was actually a part of an early Christian hymn or formed some sort of a poem or a creed or something like that that the early church would have used.

53:32

And so if we look at this hymn, this passage, as he was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, and taken up in glory.

53:44

This hymn, if that's what it is, is essentially a short history of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. It contains the gospel truth about his work of salvation in a simple outline form. If we go through each of them, each line kind of describes a different period or a different event in the life and ministry of Jesus.

54:06

And so let's take just a couple of minutes and look at each of these six things to make sure that we have covered the story of Jesus successfully. If this is something that's important to Paul, it should be something that's important to us, right?

54:18

Great indeed, we confess is the mystery of godliness. And then he goes into these things. And he says that the first thing is that Jesus, that he was manifested in the flesh, that he was manifested in the flesh, refers to the fact that Jesus became a man, that he put on flesh and lived among us.

54:37

So God, the Son, the second person in the Trinity, Jesus had been God, had lived as God from eternity past. As far back as you can rewind the tape, just press rewind and wait for a while. Jesus is there.

54:51

And you can wait a little bit longer and Jesus is still there. Jesus has always been as God, the Son, the second person of the Trinity. But God, the Son became like us. God, the Son became a man. He put on flesh.

55:06

He laid aside the glories of heaven. And it tells us that Jesus became a man, that he became identical to us in his physical body, that he was like us in every way. This is the mystery of the incarnation, that God, the Son became not just God, the Son anymore, but he was now the God -man.

55:25

By taking upon himself human flesh and becoming fully God and fully man. There's a big theological term if you want to jot it down. Theologians, people at the seminary will call this the "hypostatic union."

55:38

It means that God was fully, Jesus was fully God and that he was fully man, but that both of those things being 100% God and 100% man, that they were brought together to make one person the man Jesus Christ.

55:51

That's an important thing. While difficult to understand how you can take 100% and 100% and make one person, anybody that's a math major, you figure that one out and let me know, right? But Jesus being fully God, fully man, by taking humanity, by taking flesh upon himself, he became the one person with two natures.

56:14

And by doing so, he became the one person that was uniquely qualified in all of human history to go to a cross to pay a debt that he didn't deserve and that his death on the cross would be completely sufficient to satisfy the wrath of God as the perfect God of man.

56:31

He laid his life down so that we could be forgiven. And so Jesus being manifested in the flesh, being made a man is an important part of the whole story. It also tells us in here in verse 16 that he was vindicated by the Spirit.

56:45

He was vindicated by the Spirit refers to the resurrection of Jesus as the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, played an active role in raising Jesus from the dead. God the Son, while he went to the cross, while he died and was laid into a grave, we talked about this just a couple of weeks ago.

57:01

He didn't stay dead. He didn't stay in that grave. He was vindicated by the Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit confirmed and proved to be true what we had been saying about Jesus, what people had been saying about Jesus, what Jesus had been saying about Jesus all along, that he was the Son of God, that he was the Savior of the world, and that his payment for sin was accepted and received by God the Father.

57:25

He was vindicated by the Spirit as he was raised from the dead. It also tells us in this little short hymn that he was seen by angels. That refers to the fact that Jesus' resurrection, that Jesus' life and ministry wasn't only observed by humans, but it had a heavenly witness as well.

57:41

It shows that the mystery of the gospel is known in heaven as well as on earth. The angels got to have a front row seat to this whole story, everything that Jesus had done. They had known Jesus as the God in heaven for eternity past, but the angels also watched this story unfold as angels got to play a role in announcing the news of a pregnancy to a young girl named Mary and a young man named Joseph, that they were going to have a child.

58:09

The angels were the ones that foretold that birth. At Jesus' birth, it was angels who proclaimed the news of Jesus' birth to shepherds that were out in a field that night keeping watch over their flocks.

58:21

The angels were witnesses of the birth of Jesus. Fast forward a few years and the angels were also there at the cross, but the angels are specifically told that they were with the tomb as angels got to witness the resurrection, as they sat by the empty tomb waiting to tell the first witnesses as Mary Magdalene and those other women came to see the tomb as Peter and John come to see the empty tomb.

58:47

It was angels who were there to share with those witnesses. He's not here. He's alive. Even now, as Jesus has returned to the right hand of God as being worshiped in heaven as the God that he is, the angels are singing as Revelation 5 talks about.

59:04

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing. Jesus and his ministry was witnessed by the angels. It was also proclaimed among the nations.

59:19

That refers to the spreading of the gospel throughout the world. As Jesus was returning to heaven, you may remember it at the end of the book of Matthew or at the beginning of the book of Acts. As Jesus was returning to heaven, he tasks the apostles, he gives them this responsibility to go and to tell other people about what they have seen and what they have witnessed and what they have been a part of.

59:40

That they are given the responsibility to proclaim the news of salvation to the world, to Jerusalem and to Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth, to the nations. In fact, the fact that we're here today means that that work continues.

59:56

That work continues to this day as we are still tasked with the responsibility of taking the news of Jesus to the ends of the earth. Not only are we given the responsibility to take the news of Jesus to the ends of the earth, but also it says that he was believed on in the world.

01:00:10

That refers to the response of the nations to the preaching of the gospel. God has been working to build his church, and as the apostles began to preach the message of Jesus, other people started to believe in Jesus as well.

01:00:25

It didn't just stay with this group of a few people in Jerusalem. It started to spread. And so we see in Acts chapter two, as Peter shares a fairly simple gospel message. It says that over 3,000 people believed on that single day, as what I would argue one of the greatest sermons in history was preached.

01:00:44

Over 3,000 were added to the church there in Acts chapter two. It actually continues in that same chapter to say that the first church in Jerusalem it said that the Lord was adding to their number daily people who were being saved.

01:00:58

That the message of Jesus spread like wildfire throughout the early church world and it has continued to this day. I would dare say that there's not been a day since that point that someone has not placed their faith in Jesus for salvation.

01:01:12

The news of salvation has been spreading throughout the world, and people have been believing on Jesus in the world ever since. And finally it says that Jesus was taken up in glory. It's likely a reference to Jesus' ascension into heaven, and while that may seem like something fairly simple, that Jesus at the end of his earthly ministry, he floated back to heaven, that he returned to heaven, and it tells us that he's going to return in the same way that he came.

01:01:40

But as Jesus returned to heaven, after Jesus had given his life on the cross, after Jesus was resurrected from the dead and proved that death and sin had no power over him, this is a significant one because if you start to compare Christianity to any of the other world religions, there's something that's different about Christianity than pretty much any of the rest of them, any of them that I know of.

01:02:01

See, because every other world religion, they focus on a prophet or they focus on some person, but you know what all of those other religions have in common? Their prophet is dead. You know, Gandhi is dead, Muhammad is dead, all these other people, Joseph Smith. Go through the list, you know all of them are dead.

01:02:21

You know what, Jesus is not dead. Jesus died, and then three days later he got up and walked out of the grave, and he returned 40 days later to the right hand of God as he ascended back to heaven. We as Christians have a living God who is actively listening to us, actively interceding for us at the right hand of God as he is pleading our case, saying, God, no, no, no, I paid that sin.

01:02:45

I paid that sin. I paid that sin. He is actively advocating for us. It means that our religion, our faith is different because we have a living God. Jesus, Jesus is different. This simple, Paul lays it out really easily.

01:03:08

I didn't count the words, but you know, 20 words, what is it, something like that? I'm sure you guys would clap like that if I were to preach in 20 words and let you get out of here this morning. But this beautiful little early church hymn, that Jesus was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, and taken up in glory.

01:03:30

It does this incredible job of laying out for us the simple truth of who Jesus is and what Jesus had done. But what's the point of all this? What's the point of all this that Paul is talking about here?

01:03:43

Why does all of this stuff that's been addressed so far in the first half of this letter, why does it matter? Paul is saying that he has laid out how God's church should be structured, how it should be ordered, and now he's telling us in these few verses why it's important that it needs to be ordered the way that it is.

01:04:02

Because the message of Jesus, this message that we just walked through in a couple of minutes, the mystery of the gospel. That ministry of the household, the family of God, our job is to hold up that truth of who Jesus is and what Jesus did.

01:04:21

And that's an important job. It's an essential job. It's the thing that makes the Christian church different than any other religion that has ever walked the face of the earth, standing firm as a pillar of the truth, as a buttress of the truth, to lift up and to hold fast to the truth is a worthy cause.

01:04:38

Because we are holding up the greatest truth that has ever been revealed. Namely that the Son of God became a man, walked among us, lived among us, died a death that he didn't deserve, was resurrected and is offering eternal life to those whom he calls his own.

01:05:00

If we place our faith in Jesus alone for salvation, we can be given salvation, we can be given hope, we can be given life forever in the same way that Jesus still lives, we will live one day with him.

01:05:13

The magnificent Jesus that is reflected on in this simple confession in 1 Timothy chapter three makes all of the rest of it important because it makes all of the rest of this possible. It's only through Jesus that the household exists.

01:05:28

It's only through Jesus that the household has purpose. It's only through Jesus that the house of God has hope. It's because of Jesus that all of this exists and it's the reason that Jesus exists that we are a church.

01:05:42

It's the reason that Jesus is the center of it all. That's why we're here on a Sunday morning. I'm sure there's a lot of things that you could go and spend your time doing on a Sunday morning. They might even be good things, but the fact that we're here on a Sunday morning, it's because it's an explicit confession from all of us saying, I can't do this on my own, I need Jesus.

01:06:05

I need what Jesus is offering. And so as we come together as the family of God, with God as our father, as we are brothers and sisters, as we are given responsibility for one another and given an encouragement, a command to love and to live in harmony with

one another as the family of God, together our responsibility is to lift up and to stand firm for the truth in a world that really doesn't seem like it could care any less.

01:06:33

We live in a world where whatever works for you, that works for you and I'll just go do me and you do you and we can all just get along. That's not unity. Unity is what happens when all of us pursue the common truth of Jesus as the Savior.

01:06:47

When we all come to Jesus, when we're all tuned to the same tuning fork, then we can be unified. But if we just read another article about race reconciliation, if we just look at another conversation about how the red politicians and the blue politicians need to figure it out and figure out how to work together, we can argue about all those things.

01:07:09

We're gonna continue to argue about them until Jesus comes back if that's our goal. People can't figure this out because it's not something that we need to just figure out how to agree. Good luck with that, right?

01:07:22

If our goal is unity for unity's sake, it's gonna be an evasive thing that we chase and chase and never are able to wrap our hands around. But if we draw close to Jesus, if we stand firm as His church and we hold closely to His truth, and we're all united under the same banner of the truth of Jesus Christ, well, you know what?

01:07:43

That sets us free that we will be unified, that God will bring His church together, that God will build His church in the way that He has promised. And when we look at this responsibility to be brought together to be unified, it's impossible for us.

01:07:59

I think it's something that you may be able to achieve it temporarily. You may be able to achieve it in small doses, but sooner or later, everybody's gonna fight. Anybody that's been married for more than a few months can tell us that, right?

01:08:12

Disagreement comes. But when God is building His church, that's something that's impossible for man. But what's impossible for us is possible for God. God is able to build His church and unite the church together and do what He has promised He will do in the church.

01:08:29

So for us, all our job is, all our focus is in the point why Paul has been writing so far in what he's saying is that you just be the church like God has structured you to be and commanded you to be.

01:08:41

If you just do what God has told you to do, God will do the rest. And so I think that's the reason why we do all of this and it's the reason why we follow Him. We are the church. Our job is to live life his way, to structure the church, his way to hold his truth above our own, to stand firm in the truth, and trust that God's got the rest.

01:09:02

So that's our invitation for this morning. That's the invitation that if you would simply trust that when God says, hey, this is the way that it works, if we would just do it that way, and God's gonna do the rest.

01:09:14

So you do your part, God's gonna take care of his part. If you need prayer this morning, one of the most important things that we could do as we look at all these things that we go, well, that's not possible for me.

01:09:27

Well, it's possible for God. One of the most important things that we could do is pray about those things. And so our prayer team is gonna be down here after the service. They would love to pray with you.

01:09:37

And I was reminded this week in a conversation of something that I should have been talking about for a long time and it has slipped my mind. And so I wanna make you aware of another opportunity of how you can seek prayer.

01:09:48

Maybe you're a little too shy to come down here and talk to somebody and that's okay. We also have a prayer wall that when you walk out these doors, if you look to the right, there's a big wall featured at the end of the hallway with all these little slips of paper tucked all over the place in it.

01:10:03

And what that is is an opportunity for you to seek prayer, but maybe you're a little too shy to come talk to somebody on the prayer team and you know what, that's okay too. So if you need to ask for prayer for someone who's hurting or sick in your life, if you wanna ask for prayer for somebody that doesn't know Jesus and you wanna pray that they would come to know Jesus and the hope of the gospel that we've been talking about.

01:10:25

There's some little slips of paper that you can just write down whatever that prayer request is, roll it up and tuck it into one of those little spots. Our prayer team checks back there regularly. If you wanna lay it all out, you feel free to do that.

01:10:37

If you just wanna put a first name or just something simple, you know what? We serve a God that is much, much bigger than hidden information. And if you just put Tom on there, we might just pray for Tom.

01:10:50

We don't know what it is, but you know what? God knows what it is when we pray for him. And so I wanna encourage you, maybe you are a little too shy to come up here. Use, take advantage of our prayer wall that we've got back there as well.

01:11:01

We'd love to have you do that. So with all that said, I wanna invite you, would you pray with me now as we finish? God, we thank you for your word. God, we thank you that we can gather together that we can consider the beautiful mystery of Jesus that was revealed through Jesus' life and death and resurrection.

01:11:20

That salvation could be made available to sinners like me, to sinners like us, that God, by sending the one and only, by sending Jesus to come and to live among us, that Jesus would lay down his life willingly, but that he was vindicated by the Spirit as he was proven that he was who he said he was.

01:11:43

God, we pray that we would not be shy about that message, but God, as a pillar and a buttress for the truth that the church would stand high, that we would hold proudly the truth of who you are and what you have declared.

01:11:56

God, we don't want to be shy about what you've given to us. God, we wanna stand boldly and to stand proudly as a church holding up the truth in a world that has seems like very little interest in the truth most of the time.

01:12:10

God, we pray that we would be what you have called us to be and God, we pray more importantly that as we structure ourselves under what you have commanded for us, God, we pray that you would build your church.

01:12:22

God, that you would do the work that only you can do and God, that you would help us to do the work that you've invited us to do. So God, we humble ourselves before you. We pray that you would work in our lives and God, that you would work in our world.

01:12:33

God, that you would make the message of Jesus known to the nations, to the ends of the earth. And God, we thank you for Jesus. We thank you for the opportunity to play a role in proclaiming the news of salvation of Jesus to the world.

01:12:46

And God, we thank you for Jesus' sacrifice because it's through his sacrifice that we pray and we know that you hear us. It's in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.