

Title: Right Church Conduct
Scripture: 1 Timothy 3:14-16
Series: The Pastoral Epistles

1. Introduction –

- a. After having expounded on Timothy’s call and what duties lay before him, the Apostle then focused his thought on what the church of God should look like. Paul was concerned with the glory of Christ and of His church.
 - i. Paul understood that the church is the bride which belongs to Christ – **Ephesians 5:25-27** Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, (26) that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (27) so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.
 - ii. Paul knew the importance of the bride purity – **2 Corinthians 11:2** For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.
 - iii. Only the true church of God will be given to the Son – **Revelation 19:7-9** Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; (8) it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. (9) And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”
- b. This is the reason for which Paul now focuses Timothy on what is appropriate and Godly conducted within the Church. He does so by reminding Timothy of the truth that we must uphold and proclaim.

2. Verse 14 and 15 – I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, (15) if I delay, you may 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.

- a. **I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay** – The apostle wanted to come and work alongside the young pastor for the glory of God. However, it appeared to the apostle that he might be delayed. If that would be the case, Timothy would not be left without instruction. The apostle sent his very heart in the form of this letter. Now, the young pastor had received the written word of God. He had received God’s instruction for godly conduct. It would behoove us to pay close attention to what God says.
- b. **...you** – This letter is for Timothy. He must ensure the church is living according to the new birth and the transformational work of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. Pastors are stewards to whom God has committed the charge of governing His household.
 - ii. Pastors are accountable for the worship of the church. A pastor is held accountable for the conduct that is allowed within the community of believers.
 - iii. This is an awesome responsibility.
- c. **...may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God** –
 - i. Paul broadens the instruction to include all Christians—not just the young pastor.
 - 1. Notice dear brethren! Notice that God bestows His name to the Church. The church belongs to the **living God!** In no sense is the church a human institution. Therefore, humanness should not run the church. God is the one that deems what is the appropriate form of worship, community, behavior, and reverence.
 - a. **Acts 20:28** Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.
 - ii. Notice how God appropriates the church unto Himself
 - 1. **...household** – Because he has saved us and brought us into relationship with Himself. We have been received into the family of God. We are His children. Praise God for the Grace of Adoption. We are family.

- a. Therefore, our conduct must be biblical for it is His word that guides us on the safe path.
 - 2. **...which is the church of the living God** – Because God dwells in the midst of His people. In the gathering of His people we find the place where God is.
- d. **...a pillar and buttress of the truth** – The mission of church is to worship God appropriately and uphold His truth.
 - i. **Pillar** – That which upholds the structure. The Church upholds the truth of God.
 - ii. **Buttress** – The foundation on which a structure rests. The Truth of God rest in His church
 - 1. According to Paul the church is the foundation and pillar that holds up the truth of God to a dying world.
 - iii. **Truth** – Is anything more holy than the everlasting truth which encompasses both the glory of God and the salvation of men?
 - 1. What a weight rests on pastors and Christians who have been entrusted with the keeping of such a great treasure!
 - 2. Shame on all those churches who conduct is evident in that they have either replaced the truth, changed the truth, or abandoned the truth altogether.
 - 3. We cannot be such people. We must live and proclaim the truth; having the truth of God guide our conduct.
 - a. Silence in the Church is the banishment and crushing of the truth.
 - b. The church must proclaim God’s truth – failure to proclaim the truth is a failure to honor God and love our fellow man.
 - 4. Central to the life of the church is the Word of God both to the corporate body and to the individual Christian. According to Paul, right conduct in the church will be centered on the Word of God taught, believed, applied, and obeyed.
 - a. How can Christians uphold the truth? (MacArthur)
 - i. Believe it
 - ii. Memorize it
 - iii. Meditate on it
 - iv. Study it

- v. Obey it
- vi. Defend it
- vii. Live it
- viii. Proclaim it

3. Verse 16 – Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

a. Among all the truths found in the pages of Scripture, Paul focuses on one essential for the church to uphold and proclaim. That truth, Beloved, is the message of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the core of what we teach and preach. Jesus Christ’s gospel is what should compel the church forward in love for God, the brethren, and the sinner.

- i. **1 Corinthians 1:23** but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,
- ii. **1 Corinthians 2:2** For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.
- iii. **2 Corinthians 1:19** For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes.
- iv. **2 Corinthians 4:5** For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.
- v. **Galatians 6:14** But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

b. What is the message of Christ –

- i. **Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness –**
 - 1. Great is the mystery of godliness – of Jesus Christ
 - a. Jesus Christ, the hidden God revealed perfectly.
 - 2. We have a common confession. We have a unanimous conviction as to the person and ministry of Jesus Christ.
- ii. **He was manifested in the flesh –** not sinful flesh, but rather humanness.
 - 1. Here we find an express testimony of both natures. We see the hypostatic union.

2. We see the distinction between the two natures. He is the mystery of godliness and yet he is manifested.
3. We see the unity of the one person.
- iii. **...vindicated by the Spirit** –
 1. Jesus Christ was vindicated both by His sinless life of obedience to God which declared his righteousness, and by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, who affirmed His righteousness again by raising Him from the dead.
- iv. **...seen by angels** – Angels looked into the great plan of salvation by observing all that Christ did. They attended to him.
 1. Announced his upcoming birth
 2. Where present at his birth
 3. Ministered to Jesus in temptation
 4. Strengthened him at Gethsemane
 5. An angel rolled away the stone
 6. Angels appeared to the women
 7. Angels attended Christ ascension
- v. **...proclaimed among the nations** –
 1. In accordance to the command received.
- vi. **...believed on in the world** –
 1. The plan of God fulfilled in the apostles' proclamation resulted in saving faith in many lives. It continues today in our preaching and reaching the Lost with the message of salvation.
- vii. **...taken up in glory** – Jesus ascension demonstrated that the Father was pleased with Hi and accepted His work on behalf of sinful man.
- c. This portion of scripture summarizes the gospel. Go became man, died for our sins, triumphed over death, was honored by angels and feared by demons, and ascended into heaven. This message was preached all over the world and many believed and saved.
 - i. This is the same message that we must proclaim
 - ii. It is these truths that must guide our conduct both in the church and in the world that we minister too.

4. Benediction –

- a. **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, (4) that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

Public Reading of Scripture

1 Corinthians 15:1-11