

“The House of God”
1 Timothy 3:14-15
(Preached at Trinity, March 14, 2021)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In these two verses Paul explains his reason for writing this letter. He expresses in verse 14 his hope and desire to soon be able to come to them personally to instruct them in the things of God and how the church should function.
But there was a great possibility he would be hindered in his plans for a personal visit. In such a case he is writing this letter of instruction to Timothy as well as to the church. It was important for the church to understand how it should function. This remains true today. The church must hold tenaciously to the fundamentals of the faith and the mission and message of the church.
 2. In verse 15 he makes three defining statements concerning the church.
He calls it: (1) The house of God, (2) The church of the living God, (3) The pillar and support of the truth.
 3. Misunderstandings concerning the nature of the church have led to much harm throughout history. This morning I want us to examine the first of these three statements concerning the church – IT IS THE HOUSE OF GOD. We'll cover the other two in future sermons.
 4. The church is the House of God - Definition - οἶκος – 114 times in the NT
 - A. The persons forming a family – a household, a family
The NASB translates it with this in mind - “household”
 - B. The place of one's abode or habitation – a house or home (most common use of word) - The KJV translates it in this manner - “house”
- I. The household or family of God – Paul uses the same word in **Verses 4, 5, 12** to describe how pastors and deacons manage their families.
- A. The Church exists as a family
Ephesians 2:19 NAU - "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,"
 1. Christians have been adopted into God's household. This is made possible through adoption.
John 1:12 NAU - "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,"
 2. We are a part of the vast spiritual family of God. It transcends all earthly families. We are identified by our union with the eternal Son of God, by the indwelling presence of His Spirit. We share together in this experience of grace. We share together in our new nature and by our love towards our spiritual brethren.
1 John 3:14 NAU - "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death."

3. This doesn't mean we abandon our earthly family. To the contrary, we have a great duty to care for our earthly family. God has given us a familial love that is powerful.
But too often in our modern generation all emphasis is placed upon our earthly family to the neglect of our spiritual family. We idolize our children while neglecting our service to Christ. The church.
Kent Hughes – “In a valiant effort to stem the tide (*of the decline of the family*), many Christians and non-Christians alike have made the family everything. Every moment of every day, every involvement, every commitment, every engagement is measured and judged by the question, “How will this benefit my family?” While this is generally commendable, it can degenerate into a familial narcissism. The four walls of the home become a temple and only *for* those within . . . are any sacrifices made. Thus we commit domestic idolatry. This is an immense tragedy. Every earthly loyalty, if it is made central, becomes idolatry.”¹
 3. This is one of the blessings of our union with Christ. We share in a union with one another, a common bond, a loving family.
 - a. Jesus often referred to His disciples as His brethren
Matthew 28:10 NAU - "Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me."
Hebrews 2:11 NAU - "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father*, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,"
 - b. We are so closely united to Jesus that to harm us is to harm Him, and to do good to us is to do good to Him
Matthew 25:40 NAU - "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even* the least of *them*, you did it to Me."
 4. All earthly relations must take fall behind our relationship with Christ
Matthew 10:37 NAU - "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."
- B. There are great blessings in being a part of God's household
1. God is our Father – He is not the Father of all men. He is the Father of those He chose to redeem and adopt as His children.
This is only possible through the blood of Christ
This is what is meant by being a “child of God”
 2. We share in the inheritance of Christ.
Romans 8:16-17 NAU - "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*."

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Mark, Volume One*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1989), Page 100.

3. We are partakers of the Divine Nature and bear the image of our heavenly Father.
2 Peter 1:4 NAU - "For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."
 (1) We are saints by calling – God’s holy ones.
1 Corinthians 1:2 NAU - "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their *Lord* and ours:"
 (2) As lost men we could not please God – it was not a possibility
Romans 8:8 NAU - "and those who are in the flesh cannot please God."
 4. We have the right to approach God as our Father
Ephesians 2:18-19 NAU - "for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,"
Ephesians 3:12 NAU - "in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him."
 (The busiest of fathers sets aside everything for his child)
- C. As a part of this access before the throne of God is the privilege of prayer.
1. We approach God as a child approaches his father.
 - a. Our Lord taught us to pray:
 “*Our Father* which art in heaven . . .”
 - b. The Lord’s Prayer is a family prayer.
 2. This is a gift that most take for granted.
 - a. Most people think they automatically have the right to pray and would become quite angry if you suggest otherwise.
 They approach God as a genie to grant us the desires of our hearts. They pray when they have a need or when they want to direct God but deny God’s right to reign over them.
 - b. Because of sin, no human being has the right of access to God’s throne. No one has the right to pray. Jesus Christ is the only door. He is the only way.
 3. As the children of God we have access to God through Jesus Christ. How sinful it is for us to neglect our ability to approach God’s throne. As the sons of God, God’s precious children, we have access before the throne of God at all times. We find infinite peace and comfort as we lay our cares before Him.
Philippians 4:6-7 NAU - "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

- D. There are responsibilities that come with being in God's household
1. Each of us have a place of service in God's household.
 2. Each of us must strive to live holy lives - Remember the name you bear
Matthew 5:16 NAU - "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."
 3. This is Paul's meaning – how are we to conduct ourselves as members of God's household? Our actions reflect upon the family. More important, they reflect upon our Father.

II. The dwelling place of God – KJV – “house of God”

- A. It describes a building – God's spiritual house.
1. The church is the dwelling place of God
Ephesians 2:21-22 NAU - "in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."
 2. This idea of the Church as a great building is taught throughout the NT
Matthew 16:18 NAU - "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."
 3. The church is a house built by God
 - a. It is laid upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets
 - b. Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone
We are built upon Christ. Any other corner stone will create a building destined to ruin
Ephesians 2:20-22 NAU - "having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."
 4. Christians are God's house or sanctuary.
We are the various stones which make up the building.
 - a. It is a work in progress – God is continually adding to it
 - b. God has ordained the entire building – He knows each stone
- C. There is cohesion – each part holds the rest together
Ephesians 4:15-16 NAU - "but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."
1. This is true with both the universal church and the local church
 2. The universal church is comprised of various members bound tightly together by Christ. Not a single stone shall lose its place.
 3. The local church must also be bound tightly in unity. If individual stones are lost or become loose in their fit the church will begin to crumble.

- D. God inhabits each member of the Church
1. Each of us have become the Temple of God
1 Corinthians 3:16 NAU - "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?"
1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NAU - "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."
 2. This reminds us that we are holy - devoted and consecrated unto God.
 3. This too instructs us how we are to function in the church of God.

Conclusion:

1. Although Paul is using the metaphor of a house or household, in this passage we are supposed to focus upon the church of God as an institution, an organization. How are the people of God to conduct themselves as the church of God?
2. Paul has been giving instruction for the church. Conduct within the church is the primary theme of this letter.
 - A. In Chapter 1 Paul described the importance of protecting the church against false doctrine and false teachers.
 - B. Chapter 2 describes corporate prayer, holy behavior and the different roles of men and women within the church.
1 Timothy 2:11-12 NAU - "A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. ¹² But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet."
 - C. Now in Chapter 3 we find the qualifications for the spiritual leadership in the church.
3. While Paul's focus is upon corporate unity and corporate conduct, we must not dismiss the importance of our personal conduct within the church. The family is composed of individuals. Is your place in this local family strengthening or weakening the church of God?
4. Few Christians today make their decisions with the question in mind, "How will this affect my Christian family? How does my life impact the church?"
 What about you?
 This is Paul's chief concern in this passage. Paul wants us to know how we ought to function as the family of God within His church.
1 Timothy 3:15 NAU - "*I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."