

## 1 Timothy Chapter 3B

A few weeks ago Sharon and I took our grandchildren to the Phila Zoo. We visited a variety of the different houses and expended a great deal of energy in the tree house. When the time came to return to the car we were at the far end of the zoo. The kids were exhausted and beginning to whine and we had a long way to walk with one double stroller and 4 kids.

So I picked up Ruby, Grace and Maple rode in the stroller and Elliott walked by my side. I decided it was a good opportunity to teach him a little lesson on manhood.

We are Parsons Men, we are strong and we love our sister and our cousins so much that we let them ride while we walk. We are Parsons Men! We are strong and we can walk.

- I want him to know that Jesus gives us strength to lay down our lives for others.
- I want to build in him a sense of family identity that is built on who Jesus is.

When I was young there was a sense of family identity that was communicated by my parents and grandparents.

- In our family this was communicated informally as we spent time together on road trips and weekly meals.
- In the blissfulness of childhood I was oblivious to any level of dysfunction in the family and I was comforted by the care and training that I received.
- My parents and my grandparents showed love to us in a variety of ways.
- Friday night dinners with the whole extended family were the high point of the week and I grew up knowing that I belonged to something that was much bigger than me.

Of course this family identity came with a set of standards. I don't remember exactly how they were communicated but they were communicated:

- Respect for adults was important.
- Sitting quietly in church in the Episcopal Church I was brought up in.
- School work was done before one could enter into any form of recreation.
- Your presence at family dinners was mandatory.
- Certain moral codes were enforced for the good of the family:
  - Lying would result in ivory soap scraped across your teeth,
  - Speaking back to parents would result in swift chastisement.

This sense of belonging and the discipline that went with it actually helped me become a confident and responsible adult.

At the age of sixteen I became a member of a different household.

- At a youth meeting in the basement of a home in Souderton God graciously opened the eyes of my heart.
- Through repentance of sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ I was adopted into the family of God.
- God's timing was amazing because at the age of 17 my father left the family home.
- Looking back I can see the loving arms of the Lord carrying me through the difficult days when the family that I knew was no longer there.

- As I grew in my understanding of God's Word I was thrilled to learn the Fatherhood of God and the doctrine of adoption.

**PSALM 68:5 Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.  
6 God settles the solitary in a home; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.**

- These words brought life to my wounded soul and gave me a new identity in Christ.

I share this with you this morning in preparation for our return to chapter 3 of First Timothy where we will find:

1. The church described as "the household of God"
  - a. A place of love, acceptance and belonging
2. It is the "Church of the Living God"
  - a. A household that is ALIVE with the presence of God
3. The church is the pillar and foundation of the truth.
  - a. A household established in eternal and unchanging truth
4. The revelation of Jesus Christ is our family identity

1. The church is the household of God

**1 Timothy 3:14 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 truth.**

- As I said, growing up in the Parsons household the standards of behavior were clearly communicated. Those standards reflected the priorities of the head of the household.
- Here in 1 Timothy the Apostle Paul is communicating the standards of behavior for the household of God. (we understand that God is speaking through Paul)
- The wording is such that the entire letter should be viewed as the communication of those standards.

The idea that believers are included in the household of God is affirmed by Jesus' referral to God as Father: Lu 11:2 "**When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name.'**"

- Paul verifies the Fatherhood of God in his writings.

**1Co 8:6 for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist,**

- It is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ that believers from all backgrounds become members of God's household.

**Ephesians 2: 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,**

- The foundational truths of the household were revealed by God to the Apostles and Prophets who wrote them down for us in the Word of God.
- Believers in Christ are the living stones, built upon the apostolic foundation.
- WE are God's household, loved with an everlasting love, adopted by the sovereign choice of our Holy Father.

The church is to be a place of love acceptance and belonging!

NEXT: the church is to be a body that is alive with the presence of God:

## 2. The church of the Living God.

We learned from our studies in the Gospel of John and in our study of Genesis that God is the essence, the origin and sustainer of ALL LIFE.

**Genesis 2:7 it was the living God who breathed life into the first man thus making him a living being.**

- God imparted life to man, breathing into his nostrils the breath of life.

Throughout the Old Testament the God of Israel was known as the true and Living God. This identity separated him from the dead IDOLS of the Pagan Nations.

(their gods were man made idols of wood and stone)

The God of Israel was ALIVE, dwelling in the MIDST of his people, leading, speaking, protecting and defending them.

**Psalm 84:2, My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.**

- In the Gospel of John we learned that the Lord Jesus both possessed and imparted life.

**John 1:4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.**

**John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.**

**John 6:33 “For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”**

- While we understand that our physical life is a gift from God the life that the Lord Jesus gives to those who repent and believe is much more than biological life.
- The life that he gives is eternal life; it is spiritual life freely given to those who were spiritually dead.

SO: The household of God is a place of love, acceptance and belonging!

The church is to be a body that is alive with the presence of God:

NEXT: The church is to be a household established in the truth.

The church is the pillar and foundation of the truth.

Some of you have signed up to visit the nation's capitol on the bus trip April 5<sup>th</sup>. One of the sights to see in D.C. is the Lincoln Memorial. The memorial is a classic Greek structure featuring 36 massive columns, one column for each of the 36 states in the union at the time of Lincoln's presidency. Each of these pillars is more than 7 feet wide and stands 44 feet tall.

When you look at this structure I would like you to think about 1 Timothy.

Paul describes the church of the Living God as the “**Pillar and foundation of the truth.**”

In a world that is filled with lies and deceptions the household of God, the church of the Living God serves as the citadel, the bulwark of divinely revealed truth.

So that I am clear, the truth that is to be both supported and safeguarded by the church is the full revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ, the orthodox faith that was delivered by God through his Apostles and Prophets.

- It is the responsibility of the church in every generation to function in society as pillars to solidly, immovably, unshakably uphold the truth of God's unchanging Word.
- Although Paul speaks of the preservation and proclamation of God's word in a collective sense, the work of the whole church, each and every one of us bears a personal responsibility for the task.

Back to the Household metaphor: As a young child I had responsibilities in the Parsons household: Of course those responsibilities were conditioned on my level of maturity.

- At one time I simply had to clean up my own toys
- Later I had to empty the trash, mow the yard...

In the same way each one of us in the household of God has responsibilities with regard to the Word of God:

Reading: 1 Peter 2:2, As babes in the church we are to desire the sincere milk of the word.

Meditation: Ps 119:15 **I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.**

Study: 2 Timothy 2: 15 **Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.**

- Obedience: Heb 5:9 **And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,**
  - This obedience is an obedience of faith in response to God's revealed grace and not dependent upon human performance.
- Defending the Word: 1Pe 3:15 **but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;**

That brings us to the last point:

#### 4. The revelation of Jesus Christ is our family identity

There are identifying marks that certain family members share:

- I have my mother's nose, I also have her tear ducts, (we cry at the drop of a hat) I passed those tear ducts on to my daughter.

The identifying mark of the household of God is a sincere and heartfelt faith in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- When Paul exhorts Timothy regarding the mission of the church to proclaim and protect the truth he immediately gets carried away in an exuberant and eloquent exposition of that truth.

1 Timothy 3: 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.**

The phrases build one on another describing the majesty of our glorious Savior.

“He was manifested in the flesh” (the incarnation) The eternal preexistent Son of God appeared on the earth as a real man. John said “**the word became flesh and dwelt among us.**”

“Vindicated by the Spirit” - Vindicated – is to be declared righteous,

- I believe that this is speaking of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.
- Because he was sinless, death could not hold him. The Holy Spirit as a confirmation of his sinless righteousness raised him to life on the third day.
- Hence: vindicated by the Spirit.... Through his bodily resurrection.

Romans 1: 3 **Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:**

- There you have both the incarnation and vindication.

“Seen by angels” – While we know that Jesus was attended to by angels throughout his earthly pilgrimage I believe that Paul is describing Christ’s glorious ascension, his return to that exalted place where, in his glory he receives the adoration of the angelic beings.

“Proclaimed among the nations and believed on in the world”

- This phrase describes the power of the Gospel marvelously spreading throughout the earth to every nation, tongue and tribe.

The divinely revealed truth about Jesus Christ is the identifying mark of the household of God the church of the Living God.

How do you respond to the Word of God this morning?

1. The church described as “the household of God”
    - a. ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD, BORN AGAIN, ADOPTED INTO THE FAMILY?
  2. It is the “Church of the Living God”
    - a. DO YOU HAVE A LIVING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LIVING GOD? IS HE DIRECTING, LEADING GOVERNING YOU DAY BY DAY?
  3. The church is the pillar and foundation of the truth.
    - a. IS THERE A SINCERE THIRST FOR THE MILK OF GOD’S WORD?
    - b. Are you growing in your understanding of and your love for the Lord Jesus?
  4. The revelation of Jesus Christ is our family identity
- If I was to ask your friends, your co-workers to describe the identifying characteristics of your family: what would they say?
  - Would they point out:
    - Your Italian temper? Your German stubbornness? Your Spanish passion?
    - Would they point to your faith?
  - Are you identified by your Spiritual heritage?
    - Timothy was, Paul spoke of the faith that was in his grandmother, his mother and now abides in Timothy.

- Are you most identified by the love that you have for your brothers?
- Are you known (*like my wife*) as a woman in which the joy of the Lord abides?
- On the job do people look to you to be the peacemaker?

We are God's household, the Pillar and foundation of the truth.

WE HOLD FORTH CHRIST in word and deed, in truth and character.