

The Church of the Living God
1 Timothy 3:1-16
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INTRODUCTION

This morning we are celebrating our 5 year anniversary as a church as well as the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we began 5 years ago in my living room, the passage of Scripture that I taught on was from 2 Timothy chapter 4 where Paul tells Timothy to “preach the Word.” That has been our mandate as a church. As we reflect on our 5 years together, I want to invite you to turn with me in God’s Word to 1 Timothy chapter 3. Since our inception, I have taught repeatedly from this passage to our church as well as to those who were seeking leadership in it.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section addresses overseers or elders in verses 1-7. The second section addresses deacons and deaconesses in verses 8-13. And the third section addresses the conduct and confession of the church in verses 14-16. As we begin our look today at this chapter, I want to consider it in light of our 5 year anniversary and the celebration of the resurrection of Christ. This chapter addresses both.

So that you have the chapter before you, I want to begin reading at verse 1: “1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. 2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. 4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), 6 and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation

incurred by the devil. 7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, 9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. 11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. 14 I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; 15 but in case I am delayed, 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. 16 By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.”

First Timothy is the first of two inspired letters Paul wrote to his son in the faith. “After being released from his first Roman imprisonment (cf. Acts 28:30), Paul revisited several of the cities in which he had ministered, including Ephesus. Leaving Timothy behind there to deal with problems that had arisen in the Ephesian church, such as false doctrine (1:3–7; 4:1–3; 6:3–5), disorder in worship (2:1–15), the need for qualified leaders (3:1–14), and materialism (6:6–19), Paul went on to Macedonia, from where he wrote Timothy this letter to help him carry out his task in the church (cf. 3:14, 15)” (John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Handbook*). This letter was written between A.D. 62–64.

Now as you examine this first letter of Paul to Timothy, you learn that it gives various instructions. Chapter one gives instructions concerning false teachers. Chapters two and three gives

instructions concerning the church. Chapter four gives more instructions concerning false teachers. Chapter five gives instructions concerning pastoral responsibilities. Chapter six gives instructions concerning the man of God. So as we narrow in on chapter three, we are going to address the three sections that this chapter is divided into. The first section is verses 1-7 and it addresses overseers or elders.

I. Overseers (vv.1-7)

A. Their Calling (v.1)

1. It is limited (v.1a)

“It is a trustworthy statement: if any man”

- a) Church leadership is not for everyone
- b) An essential requirement for a church leader is that he be a man

(1) Tit.1:6 - “If a man...”

(2) 1 Tim.3:2, “a one-woman man” (cf. Tit.1:6)

2. It is compelling (v.1b)

“Those who seek the office of overseer must have a Spirit-given, compelling desire for it”
(MacArthur).

- a) He reaches out after it

“Aspires” Gr.orego, “to reach out after” – this described external action not internal motive”

b) It is a strong inward desire

“Desires” Gr.epithumeo, “a strong passion”

B. Their Qualifications (vv.2-7)

1. “Above reproach” (v.2; Tit.1:6-7)

Gr.anepileptos, literally means, “Not able to be held” (MacArthur) or “not able to be taken hold of, irrefragable, beyond reproach” (Rienecker)

“This is a general character qualification stating that he must give no just cause for blame” (D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 Timothy, p.64).

John Calvin said, “He does not mean someone who is free from every fault, for no such man could ever be found, but one marred by no disgrace that could diminish his authority – he should be a man of unblemished reputation.”

Ps.101:6 - “...He who walks in a perfect (blameless) way, He shall serve Me.”

2. “The husband of one wife” (v.2; Tit.1:6)

“Husband” Gr.aner, “man”

“Wife” Gr.gunaikos, “woman”

“The Greek construction places emphasis on the word, ‘one,’ thereby communicating the idea of a ‘one-woman man’” (John MacArthur, Church Leadership, p.45).

This is stressing “character, not marital

circumstances...the character of the elder should reflect fidelity to one woman” (MacArthur).

3. “Temperate” (v.2; Tit.1:8)

Gr.nephalios, literally means, “wineless,” or “unmixed with wine” (MacArthur)

“It speaks of sobriety – the opposite of intoxication” (Colin Brown, The New International Dictionary of NT Words, pp.514-515).

The verb form (nepho) was used in a literal and figurative sense in both Hellenistic and NT Greek. If Paul had the literal sense of nepho in mind, he was requiring elders to abstain from any form of intoxication.

The primary sense may mean “alert, watchful, vigilant or clear-headed. A leader must be one who thinks clearly” (MacArthur).

Leviticus 10:9 forbade priests from drinking wine when performing their priestly duties:

“Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations.”

4. “Prudent” or “sober-minded” (NKJV, v.2; Tit.1:8)

Gr.sophron, “of sound mind” (Kittel). It refers to “discipline or self-control.” It “describes a person who is sober-minded and coolheaded” (MacArthur).

This is a man who is “well-balanced,” who has a “properly regulated mind.” He is “discreet and prudent” (Hiebert, p.65).

5. “Respectable” or “of good behavior” (NKJV, v.2)

“Respectable” Gr.kosimios, “orderly” (Strong). It denotes “order as contrasted to disorder.” It “characterizes him as ordering well both his inner and out life” (Hiebert, p.65).

Homer Kent said, “The ministry is no place for the man whose life is a continual confusion of unaccomplished plans and unorganized activities” (The Pastoral Epistles, p.127).

“A spiritual leader must not have a chaotic, but an orderly lifestyle. If he cannot order his own life, how can he bring order to the church?” (MacArthur).

6. “Hospitable” (v.2; Tit.1:8)

Gr.philoxenos, composed of two words: xenos, “stranger,” and phileo, “to love or show affection.” It means “to love strangers.”

This goes “beyond opening your home to strangers – it includes opening your heart” (MacArthur).

7. “Able to teach” (v.2)

Gr.didaktikon, “skilled” or “skillful in teaching” (Rienecker)

“This is the only qualification that relates to the

function of an elder, and sets the elder apart from the deacon” (MacArthur).

8. “Not addicted to wine” (v.3; Tit.1:7)

Gr.paroinos, “The noun is made up of para, ‘beside,’ and oionon, ‘wine’ (Wuest). The compound means “one who sits long at his wine” (Rienecker) or “one who drinks” (MacArthur).

John Calvin said, “By this word the Greeks described not just drunkenness but any kind of intemperate drinking of wine.”

9. “Pugnacious” or “not violent” (NKJV, v.3; Tit.1:7)

Gr.plektes, “a giver of blows” or “a striker” (Wuest)

He “must not be quick-tempered and ready with his fists” (Hiebert).

10. The NKJV has “not greedy for money” (v.3; Tit.1:7)

Gr.aphilapguoros, “lover of money”

This is not in the better manuscripts (MacArthur, Wuest). That is why it does not appear in the NASB.

John Calvin said, “Those desirous of filthy lucre are all covetous persons.”

11. “Gentle” (v.3)

Gr.epieikes, translated “patient” or “gentle.” It means “to be considerate, genial, forbearing, gracious or gentle” (Alexander Strauss, Biblical Eldership, p.199).

Aristotle said, “It speaks of a person who easily pardons human failure.”

An overseer “is mild and considerate of others” (Hiebert) and must “have the ability to remember good and forget evil” (MacArthur).

12. “Peaceable” or “not quarrelsome” (NKJV, v.3)

Gr.amachon, translated “not a brawler” (KJV).
“Not to be withstood, invincible.”

“It is similar in meaning to ‘not violent.’ The difference is that the latter refers to not being physically violent, whereas the former refers to not being ‘quarrelsome’” (MacArthur).

This word “does not mean that he must not contend for the truth but it must not be done in a harsh, contentious spirit” (Hiebert).

13. “Free from the love of money” or “not covetous” (v.3)

Gr.aphilarguros, comes from two words phileo, “to be fond of,” and arguros, “silver” means “not fond of silver” (Wuest) or “not loving money.”

It speaks of someone who doesn’t love money.

14. “He must be one who manages his own household

well” (vv.4-5)

- a) This speaks of one who maintains a godly family.

“An elders home life is an essential consideration. Before he can lead in the church he must demonstrate his spiritual leadership within the context of his family” (MacArthur).

“One who manages” Gr.proistemi, “to preside over,” “have authority over, stand before, or manage” (MacArthur).

- b) The elder must have “his children under control with all dignity”

“Children” Gr.teknon, refers to “one’s immediate offspring but without specific reference to sex or age – child” (Louw-Nida)

“Control” Gr.hupotage, “obedience, to submit to the order or directives of someone” (Louw-Nida)

Lenski said, “Ill-trained, bad children reflect on any pastor, not merely because they are hurtful examples to the children of the members of the church, but still more because they show that the father is incompetent for his office.”

15. “Not a new convert” or “novice” (NKJV, v.6)

“New convert” Gr.neophutos, “Newly planted – a

new convert”

Alexander Strauch says, “No matter how spiritual, zealous, knowledgeable, or talented a new convert may be, he is not spiritually mature. Maturity requires time and experience for which there is no substitute.”

16. “He must have a good reputation with those outside the church” (v.7)

This refers to one who “has a good internal and external reputation or testimony.”

John Calvin said, “It seems difficult to think that a godly man should have unbelievers who are most eager to tell lies about us as witnesses to his integrity. The apostle’s meaning is that, as far as external behavior is concerned, even unbelievers should be forced to acknowledge that he is a good man.”

II. Deacons (vv.8-13)

“Likewise” in verse 8 and 11 indicates two more categories.

A. Deacons Who Are Men (vv.8-10, 12)

1. “Men of dignity” or “reverent” (NKJV, v.8)

Gr. *Semnos*, “serious, in mind as well as character.” This is reflected in his attitude and character.

2. “Not double-tongued” (v.8)

Gr.dilogos, means, “two-tongued”

Fritz Rienecker suggests the idea of a “talebearer, suggesting the idea of gossipers, or it could be consistent in what one says, i.e., not saying one thing while thinking another, or not saying one thing to one man and a different thing to the next.

3. “Or addicted to much wine” (v.8)

Gr.prosechontas, literally means, “Not holding near much wine.” This refers to a habitual practice.

4. “Fond of sordid gain” or “not greedy for money” (v.8)

Gr.aischrokerdes, “fond of sordid gain” (This is why those in Acts 6 were to be blameless men)

5. “Holding to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience” (v.9)

“Mystery” Gr.musterion, refers to something that was once hidden and is now revealed.

“The mystery of faith” is the NT revelation – that which was hidden from past generations before the coming of Christ.

A deacon must hold to all the NT revelation and understand the truth revealed in the New Covenant.

6. “Beyond reproach” or “blameless” (NKJV, v.10)

Gr.anegkletos, “without charge, without accusation, irreproachable”

7. “Husbands of only one wife” (v.12)

This is the same as verse 2 of the elder. He is a “one woman man.”

8. “Good managers of their children and their households” (v.12)

Just as an elder has to demonstrate leadership in his home, so does a deacon.

B. Deacons Who Are Women [deaconesses] (v.11)

1. “Dignified” or “reverent” (NKJV)

This is the same word used in verse 8 of men who are deacons. Deaconesses are to have a sense of dignity and stateliness. They are to understand the seriousness of spiritual issues and not make light of them.

2. “Not malicious gossips” or “slanderers” (NKJV)

Gr.diabolos, “devilish” (used in Tit.2)

3. “Temperate”

Paul uses the same word in this verse (nephalios, “without wine” or “unmixed with wine”) as he did in verse 2.

Deaconesses are to be sober and sensible in their judgments.

4. “Faithful in all things”

This parallels that of verse 8, “not greedy for money.” If a deacon was greedy, he or she could not be trusted.

Verse 13 states that those who have “served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

III. The Conduct and Confession of the Church (vv.14-16)

A. The Reference to their Conduct is the Purpose of the Epistle

1. He is writing to instruct about how believers are to behave in the church

“These things” has been interpreted in various ways:

Some suggest that it refers to “the material in chapter 3 about church leaders. Others would include Paul’s remarks about men and women in chapter 2, or his teaching about false doctrine in chapter 1. But since nothing in the context places limits on the phrase, and because it seems clear that he is stating his theme in a very general way, it is best to interpret it as broadly as possible, to include the entire epistle. Conduct in the church is the theme” (John MacArthur, 1 Timothy, p.134) of 1 Timothy.

Paul’s purpose was to “strengthen Timothy in leading the church” through this epistle though his preference was to “come to you shortly.”

Fritz Rienecker, in his *Linguistic Key to the Greek*

NT, says that the phrase “though I hope” “may be concessive” and the term “shortly” in verse 14 means “more quickly.” Then the phrase “but if I am delayed” in verse 15 is in the subjunctive mood in a third-class conditional clause expressing that which may be possible.”

In other words, Paul is saying, “I am writing these things, although I hoped to come to you sooner.”

The third-class conditional clause “but if I am delayed” indicates that “Paul would be unable to come as soon as he had originally wished, and maybe not at all” (MacArthur).

So “Paul recognized the possibility of being delayed, or even of his not getting to Ephesus at all. Actually, we do not know whether he ever was able to rejoin Timothy in Ephesus. And so if he tarried long, he wanted Timothy to know how believers ought to conduct themselves in the house of God” (MacDonald, W., & Farstad, A. (1997, c1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (1 Ti 3:15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson).

2. Paul has in mind the practical knowledge of how one ought to conduct himself with God’s people (v.15)

“Conduct” Gr.*anastrepho*, “speaks of a consistent pattern of life” (MacArthur). It means “to behave” (Rienecker).

- B. The Reference to their Conduct is Not for Timothy Only But Also Everyone Else

1. We are to behave ourselves “in the household of God”

“Household” is *oikos* which is translated “house” in the NJKV. It can refer to a building but the NASB rendering “household” is preferable.

“Paul’s metaphor here is not that of a building, but of a family. Believers are members of God’s household, and the responsibility to conduct themselves accordingly is heaven’s mandate to them” (MacArthur).

- a) Eph.2:19 emphasizes the same truth: “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s *household*.”
- b) The idea of the church as the household of God also appears in Galatians 6:10

“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the *household* of the faith.”

- c) It also appears in Hebrews 3:5-6

“Now Moses was faithful in all His *house* as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; 6 but Christ was faithful as a Son over His *house*—whose *house* we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.”

2. Conduct or Behavior is emphasized throughout the

NT

It is seen in the Greek word *peripateo*, which means “to live or conduct oneself.”

Friberg says it’s used figuratively of how one conducts one’s daily life.”

The term is translated by the English word “walk”

- a) Col.3:5-7 - “Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, 7 and in them you also once *walked*, when you were living in them.”
- b) 1 John 1:6-7 - “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet *walk* in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we *walk* in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”
- c) 2 John 1:6 - “And this is love, that we *walk* according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.”

C. The Reference to the Church as Being “the Church of the Living God” Identifies to Whom the Church Belongs

1. It is Basic to Understand that the Church Belongs

to God

- a) In no sense is it a human institution
- b) It is God's church, His family
- c) It is described here as "the household of God, the church of the living God"

2. He calls it "the household of God" and "the church of the living God"

- a) The church by its very nature belongs to the living God
- b) Paul writing to the elders at Ephesus said that He "purchased [it] with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).
- c) In his letter to Ephesus, Paul had called the church "God's own possession, to the praise of His glory" (Eph.1:14)

D. The Reference to the church as Being "the Pillar and Support of the Truth" Identifies Its Mission

"The imagery of these terms for the church would not have been lost on the Ephesians. The impressive temple of the goddess Diana (Artemis), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was located in the city.

William Barclay gives the following description of it: "One of its features was its pillars. It contained one hundred and twenty-seven pillars, every one of them the gift of a king. All were made of marble, and some were studded with jewels and overlaid with gold" (The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975], 89).

Each pillar acted as a tribute to the king who donated it. The honorary significance of the pillars, however, was secondary to their function of holding up the immense structure of the roof” (John MacArthur, 1 Timothy, p.136).

1. The Church is the foundation and pillar that holds up the truth

“Pillar” Gr.hedraioma, appears only here in the NT and refers to the foundation on which a structure rests, so in Paul metaphor the church is the foundation on which the truth is held up.

“The Truth” is the divine revelation, including the truth of the gospel, the content of the Christian faith.

2. It is the solemn responsibility of every Church to solidly, immovably, unshakably uphold the truth of God’s Word

- a) The church does not invent the truth
- b) The church is to support and safeguard it

- (1) The church has the stewardship of Scripture

- (2) The church has the duty to guard it as the most precious possession on earth

“Churches that tamper with, misrepresent, depreciate, relegate to secondary place, or abandon biblical truth destroy their only reason for existing and experience impotence and

judgment” (John MacArthur, 1 Timothy, p.137).

3. The church has the responsibility to support the Word but that cannot occur unless each individual believer is committed to that duty

How do believers uphold the truth?

- a) By believing it - Acts 24:14 Paul said to Felix: “But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.”
- b) By memorizing it - Ps. 119:11 - “Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.”
- c) By meditating on it - Jos. 1:8 - “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”
- d) By studying it - 2 Tim. 2:15 - “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
- e) By obeying it - Luke 11:28 - “Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

- f) By defending it - Phil.1:17 - “I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.”
- g) By living it - Tit.2:10 - Believers are to “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.
- h) By proclaiming it - Mat.28:19-20

E. The Reference to the Confession of the Church is What We Proclaim (v.16)

If the church is the “household of God,” and “the church of the living God,” “the pillar and support of the truth,” out of all that truth, what is the most essential for the church to uphold and proclaim? The answer is in verse 16:

1. Its contents center on the message of Jesus Christ

Some believe this verse was a church hymn because of “its uniformity, rhythm, and parallelism” (John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible).

- a) This is the core of what we teach and preach

There are two things we do every time we gather. We preach what the gospel is and how to live it.

That’s why we do not reduce the message about the resurrection of Christ to one service a year. It is in every message!

- b) The message of Christ was given to the

disciples to be proclaimed

Luke 24:46-47 - “And He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

c) Paul’s preaching centered on this message

(1) He said in 1 Cor.1:23 “we preach Christ crucified.”

(2) He said in 1 Cor.2:2 that he “determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

d) Peter centered on this message when he preached on the day of Pentecost

Acts 2:22-24 says, “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— 23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. 24 “But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.”

2. It is a common confession agreed to by all

“And by common confession”

The word “Confession” comes from the Greek word *homologeō*, which means, “to say the same thing.”

This is a truth upon which everyone agrees. It is the unanimous conviction of all believers that “great is the mystery of godliness.”

The phrase “great is the mystery of godliness” may be a “parallel to the common confession of the pagan worshipers in Ephesus, ‘Great is Artemis [Diana] of the Ephesians!’ (Acts 19:28)” (MacArthur).

“Mystery” Gr. *mysterion*, which occurs in v.9, was “a hidden, sacred truth that is revealed in the NT.” This refers “to the great truth of salvation and righteousness through Christ, which produces “godliness” in those who believe.

It is also possible to understand “the mystery of godliness” as a reference to Jesus, who was the very revelation of true and perfect “godlikeness,” since He was God.

Godliness refers first to the incarnation and then to those who are saved and become godly in Christ.

The KJV (Authorized) opens with “God.” The earliest and best manuscripts, however, read *hos* (He who), not *theos* (“God”) but this is describing Jesus regardless of how it reads.

Jesus was the purest mystery of godliness – the hidden God revealed perfectly.

Notice 6 truths that are revealed about Him:

a) Jesus Christ was revealed in the flesh

“He was revealed in the flesh”

(1) God became man in the person of Jesus of Nazareth

“Revealed” Gr.phaneroo, does not mean to bring into existence or to create but to make visible. This affirms His preexistence (cf. John 8:58; 17:5).

At the Incarnation, Jesus “although existed in the form of God...emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and [was] made in the likeness of men” (Phil.2:6-7, NASB)

“Our Lord Jesus Christ made the invisible God visible to human eyes” (MacArthur).

(2) Jesus was one-hundred percent human

“Flesh” does not refer here to sinful, fallen human nature, as it does in Romans 7. Rather it refers to humanness (Jn. 1:14; Rom. 1:3; Gal. 4:4).

Jesus was “made in the likeness of

men...and found in appearance as a man” (Phil.2:7-8).

This does not mean He was sinful but that He was fully human.

b) Jesus Christ was “vindicated in the Spirit”

(1) “vindicated” Gr.dikaioo, means, “to justify,” or “to declare righteous.”

(2) “Spirit” is capitalized here by the translators making it refer to the Holy Spirit but it could also refer to Jesus.

That would mean that Jesus Christ was “vindicated” – “declared to be righteous” – with respect to His spiritual nature. This is why the Father said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased” (Mat.3:17).

(a) 1 John 2:1 calls Him “Jesus Christ the righteous.”

(b) Hebrews 4:5 says “He was tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (NASB).

Jesus Christ was a sinless sacrifice on our behalf (2 Cor.5:21).

It is also possible that the translation of Spirit in the upper case is correct and is referring to Christ’s vindication by the

Holy Spirit.

- (c) Romans 1:4 says that Jesus Christ was “declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness.”

“It may well be that Paul here encompasses both realities. Jesus Christ was “vindicated” both by His sinless life and 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” (MacArthur).

- c) Jesus Christ was “seen by angels”

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, the angels observed Him, and attended to Him.

They were at His birth, announcing it to Joseph and the shepherds. They ministered to Him at His temptation, and strengthened Him in Gethsamane. They rolled the stone away at His resurrection (Mat.28:2). They appeared to the women, affirming His resurrection (Lk.24:4-7). Two angels also attended His ascension (Acts 1:10-11). They were involved in our Lord’s earthly life from beginning to end.

- d) Jesus Christ was “proclaimed among the

nations”

Before His ascension, He commanded the disciples to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Mat.28:19-20).

In Acts 1:8 He told them “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

There was to be no nation left without the gospel message. Jesus Christ is the Savior of the whole world, especially of those who believe.

e) Jesus Christ was “believed on in the world”

The plan of God was fulfilled as the apostles’ proclamation resulted in saving faith in many lives.

At the first public preaching of the gospel after Christ’s resurrection, 3,000 people were saved (Acts 2:41). In the days that followed, thousands more believed on Him.

The gospel was preached throughout Judea, then to the Samaritans, to the Ethiopian

eunuch, to Cornelius the Gentile, and ultimately across the Gentile world by Paul and his associates.

f) Jesus Christ was “received up in glory”

Acts 1:9-10 - “And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.”

Jesus’s ascension showed that the Father was pleased with Him and accepted His work.

CONCLUSION

1. In 6 short stanzas, this hymn summarizes the gospel.
2. God became man, died for our sins, triumphed over death, was honored by angels and feared by demons, and ascended into heaven.
3. This message was preached all over the world and many believed and were saved.
4. That is the heart of the message and it is our mission to proclaim to the world.
5. As we have celebrated our 5 year anniversary as a church and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, let’s continue to commit ourselves to these truths that are the foundation of the church!

6. Let's pray.