

I Timothy 3, Sermon #27

I Timothy 3

We are coming up to a turning point in I Timothy.

They bring to end the first three chapters, which contain mostly positive instruction, because the last three chapters contain mostly warnings.

Verse 15 gives the heart of the church's mission – what we are all about as a church
If we miss this, we are failing.

So, take your Bibles to—

I Timothy 3:14

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word

I Timothy 3:14-16

Let us pray

You may be seated

As you remember, this whole chapter dealt with instruction to the church leaders – the elders and the deacons.

Verse 14 introduces to us the reason for these instructions

Vs. 14 – 15A

Paul was in Macedonia, and Timothy was in Ephesus.

He was hoping to be able to join Timothy shortly.

Paul would like to come see Timothy very soon but if he is unable to do that, he writes these things so that Timothy would know what? **Vs. 15b**

He is introducing the purpose of the entire epistle, the reason for this letter.

Verse 15 is the conduct, order, behavior in the house of God.

In other words, this is instruction for church conduct.

Why was I Timothy written?

- To tell Timothy how believers ought to behave
- How he is to lead the church

★ Believers are to **conduct themselves in the house of God** according to the instructions of this book—not the latest fads or polls

A lot of people believe this book until they don't like something it says – one God, one Mediator, female leadership

Verse 15 is the key verse of this book

- *“I’ve written this to you so you will know how to act in the house of God.”*

But after the Apostle said that, there are a couple of interesting things he said about the church itself. These we should know. We must know.

I. First, Christians need to be reminded of what a local church is. God gave three pictures of the church.

First, God's church is a family.

- We are not a building – we are a family.
- What does a family do? – Cry, we cry with them; Rejoice, we rejoice with them. Where there is a need – we provide it.

In this church, who was the last person you cried with?

Who was the last person you rejoiced with? 40th birthday?

Who was the last person who had a need that you provided?

Are you active with your family?

The House of God – verse 15b

This word house refers to the household of God – the family of God.

Paul's metaphor here is not that of a building—so focused on construction, beautiful church building, but the church is dead—but of a family.

Ephesians 2:19, *“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”*

When a sinner believes in Jesus Christ as Savior, he immediately is born again into God's family

TURN over to John 1:11-13

I Peter says, Being born again by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever; (I Peter 1:22-25).

God advised Timothy to treat the members of the local church as he would treat the members of his own family

What do you mean? Let me show you. I Timothy 5:1-2

Brother, sister, do you have relationships like this in the local church?

You can if you want to.

Matthew 12:48

Remember Jesus – mom and brothers outside desire to see Him

Mother and brothers – ye are my mother and brother and sister if you do the will of My
Father in Heaven

★Because the local church is a family, it must be fed; but the only diet that will nourish
the people of God is the Word of God.★

Malnourished – lack spiritual energy – anemic

The Bible is our bread—

Matthew 4:4, Jesus said, *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word
that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”*

It is our milk—

I Peter 2:2, *“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may
grow thereby.”*

It is our meat—

Hebrews 5:14, *“For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of
righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of
full age . . .”*

And we need it so we can discern between good and evil.

It is our honey—

Psalms 119:103, *“How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than
honey to my mouth!”*

A church leader must take time to nourish himself so that he might nourish others
(I Tim. 4:6).

A church does not grow by addition—which seems to be the focus of today.
It grows by nutrition—that's the Word of God.

Ephesians 4:11-16—equipping, teaching, training, serving together—fitly framed—
everybody supplying their part

Secondly, the church is a separated group – an assembly, a congregation—vs. 15b

The word *church* is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia* (ek-klay-SEE-a).

It is used about 100 times in the New Testament to refer to local churches, assemblies
of believers.

Church means “those called out” or “called out ones.”

This organization comprises people who are “**called out**” from the world – children of
disobedience to children of obedience.

Children of the devil – ye are of your father the devil

Children of God – born into His family

Remember, only believers make up the local church.

Everyone else needs to become a believer.

They need to be saved in order to be a part of the congregation.

A church is an assembly of believers, saints

Notice verse 15 – we are an assembly of the living God

We cannot help but to think he is contrasting this with all of the heathen temples in
Ephesus; heathen worship where they build great edifices for dead, lifeless idols.

Idols—

- They cannot see,
- They cannot hear,
- They cannot touch,
- They cannot respond,

They are dead idols – but the church we serve in, is the church of a God who lives.

Some local assemblies die! Not nourished on the Word, not obedient to God.

What are the signs of a dead or dying church?

- There is no burden for souls
- There is no hunger for the Word of God – concern for souls – across the board – youth, children
- There is no hunger for Christian fellowship – “I don’t really want to be a part of the church; I just want to attend and go home.”
- There is no liberty of the Holy Ghost – a church where the Holy Spirit has no liberty is like a wheel or an axle with no grease
- The joy of the Lord is gone – more quiet – morgue
- There is no spirit of prayer
- There is no willingness to serve with sacrifice

By the way, this is not my church – not even the charter members’ church – this is God’s church!

This is the church of the Living God – God who lives

It is basic to understand that the church belongs to God.

In no sense is it a human institution. It is God’s church, His family.

The church by its very nature belongs to the living God.

The church of God was truly His because He had “purchased it with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

“God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory” Ephesians 1:14

- Titus 2:14 and I Peter 2:9 says that we are a people of His own. Our God is alive, real, aware of everything
- Joshua 3:10 – Joshua called Him living God
- I Samuel 17:26 – *“And David spake to the men who stood by him saying, . . . For who is the uncircumsized Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?”*

- Psalm 42:2 – “*My soul thirsteth for the living God.*”
- Jeremiah 10:10 – “But the Lord is the true God. He is the living God and an everlasting king.”

The church often behaves and conducts itself as though God is dead.

If you recall in Revelation 1, Jesus is walking in the midst of the candlesticks.

What are the candlesticks? The churches

Do you think that He is not doing that today?

We find out that the Lord Jesus walks in the midst of His people.

Of those 7 churches, He commends, condemns, and commands.

He told one church to repent or I will put out your light.

The Lord Jesus is in our midst because we have gathered together in His name.

Here in our midst – He is either commending, condemning, or commanding.

No wonder there are such strict qualifications for serving in the assembly of a God who lives and assembles with His people.

You see, it isn't a matter, folks, that one of these days we are going to meet Him and then He will tell us all the things we've done right and wrong.

It is not that we are answerable in the future – we are answerable now.

So, Timothy, I'm writing to you so you would know how to conduct the affairs of this assembly because it is the assembly of a living God

We are the possession of a God who lives.

First, God's church is a family

Second, a church is an assembly of believers

Thirdly, notice the fundamental purpose of the Church.

The Church is the Pillar of the Truth. (I Tim. 3:15)

What are we? The pillar and the ground of the Truth

This is an architectural image – the pillar is a column.

At Ephesus there were a lot of temples.

The great temple of Diana had 127 pillars – some of these Ephesian pillars are standing today – 2,000 years later

Their function was to hold up the immense structure of the roof.

The Church is the pillar – it supports the truth – the Church holds up the truth in the world.

★If there is one thing the local church must support—that it must hold up—it is the truth of this Book!

The church is the pillar, the bedrock.

We must hold “forth the Word of life” so the world can see it (Phil. 2:16).

The local church puts Jesus Christ on display in the lives of faithful members.

When local churches turn away from the truth (I Tim. 4:1ff) and compromise in their ministry, then the enemy destroys people.

Sometimes church leaders must take a militant stand against sin and the world.

This does not make them popular, but it does please the Lord.

Secondly, he says the church is the *ground* of the truth

The word *ground* means foundation, the base, support.

Pillar and *ground* are synonymous terms for being the foundation and support of the Truth

Ephesians 1 – the church is the body of Christ – Christ is the Head

I Timothy 3 – the church is the pillar and support of the truth

You put those together – what is the church?

- It is the visible, expression of the invisible Christ – it is the Body – it is what people see
- It is the visible expression of the Living Word and it is the support – the pillar of the written Word

So, the church bears a relationship to both the living and written Word – it is no wonder then that the Scriptures are so emphatic about the character of church leaders/officers.

The Church is – God’s chosen institution for holding up the Truth in the world.

So, the Mission of the Church is to pillar and support what? The Truth (3:15c)

The truth is the divine revelation, the Gospel

It is the content of the Christian faith.

We don’t invent the Truth.

We are here to support it and safeguard it and shout it from the roof top

The Truth is the sacred, saving treasure given to sinners for their forgiveness, and to believers for their sanctification and edification, that they might live for the glory of God.

The church has stewardship of Scripture, 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 and death.

If we ever bristle under the requirements/standards for God's church, we need to remember—it is His Church and He does have the right to tell us what our conduct must be in His house.

Because it is God's assembly, He has the right to tell us how it ought to be governed.

The church has been purchased with the blood of God's Son (Acts. 20:28); therefore, we must be careful how we conduct ourselves.

We are the family of God

We are called out assembly

We serve the Living God – His church is to be pillar and ground of the Truth

We need to know how to conduct ourselves in a way/manner worthy of who we are.

And, this book of I Timothy tells us how to conduct ourselves as a church.

Now, next week – in the Late Service of our Anniversary Celebration, I will deliver Part 2 of today's message.

Let us stand for closing invitation

Have you been born again?

Are you a part of the local church?

There is only one entrance – ye must be saved

Jesus purchased the Church with His own blood

That blood was payment for our sins.

Do we realize our sinfulness and our need to be saved from our sins?

The Bible says, there is none righteous

We have all gone astray—no good in us to make us acceptable to God

Only Jesus Christ can make us presentable

Have you asked Jesus to save you – forgive your sins – to come into your life and
change you from the inside out?

Ask Him now.

Believer, are we a faithful member of the local church, holding up the Word in our living
and practices?

Is there anything in the way we conduct ourselves that would dishonor the Living God?