

## TAKING CARE OF THE HOUSE

Dave Blough – June 19, 2022

Recently, Cheryl and I were discussing our annual summer projects. As you may know and have seen on social media, we have had our fair share of work to be completed over the years. Things like bathrooms, roof, kitchen counters, painting, appliance replacement and the like. One of our favorite places is the porch and our goal is to paint it every other year. The painting process requires patching holes, other repairs, and a clean surface area to paint on. With the elements, snow and rain in particular, our floors have taken a beating, so we had to spend extra time on our overdue maintenance. And what I mean by overdue is five years. I took my sander and sanded away the rotting wood and it left a good sized hole. After cleaning that out, I used a bond filler, mixed it with a hardener, filled the hole and leveled it out. 15 minutes was all it took to harden and then I sanded it about an hour later. Hardener indeed! My sander was using 40 grit paper, dust was flying all over the place and I barely know what I am talking about. You make a mess and you have to clean it up, right? I did use my broom and was pushing hard and cleaning like crazy and I'm thinking.. man, I am good at this. Until, this.

**[Slide 2 – Define Clean Again]** THIS represents something. It a pile of dust, but it's not even my pile. This is what my wife swept AFTER I did my amazing cleaning job. Friends, each and every one of us have to take care of the house well.

I am going to share with you about this today and I would appreciate you opening up your Bibles to Paul's first letter to Timothy in the New Testament to chapter 3:14-16. You can use the Wintonbury app, your own digital version, or the Bibles in the chair in front of you on page 830. Let's **stand** and read our text today.

**[Slide 3 – 1 Tim 3:14-16]**

v14 *Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that,*

v15 *if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.*

v16 *Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great: He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.*

To give you a little background. Paul is writing to Timothy and I know this by looking at the first couple verses of the letter.

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. - 1 Tim 1:1-2*

My true son or child (teknon in the Greek). Dads, has anyone heard of Teknon and the Champion Warriors? I read that with one of my sons a while ago. It's my bonus resource for you to find. It is Father's day and I can't help but think about my dad **[Slide 4 – My Dad]**. I've had a bit of sadness this week breaking down in tears. This deep love I have for my dad and he for me helps me to best understand about the way Paul might have felt about Timothy. There were some things that Paul wanted to impart to his true son in the faith. Like wisdom, with it being Timothy's first church. It's not easy to pastor a church. Timothy had his fair share of things that needed to be figured out. My dad and I would talk about things and he had this gentle way of sharing wisdom. He was so gentle that sometimes he would talk to me later to apologize about what he said. He thought maybe he had overstepped. He was sensitive to that.

I picture Paul in fatherly ways toward Timothy. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy and Titus are called the pastorals or pastoral letters and they provided instruction to pass on to the pastors. Paul had been in Ephesus and left Timothy in

charge until Paul's return. **[Slide 5 – Biblical World Early Church]** Ephesus was one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire. It was 'all that' plus sex in a not so good way. Expressed in v14, Paul has this hope, this desire to be with Timothy again soon giving the sense that it would be quick or a short time. While Timothy waits, he receives instructions through this letter to devote himself to the reading of Scripture, preaching, and teaching (4:13). Timothy receives encouragement to stay on in order to properly deal with the issues in the church. Paul gives the type of instruction necessary for how the family of God would need to conduct itself, along with the solid foundational truths that would bear up against false teaching. Listen to Paul's heart in 1 Tim 1:5:

*The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

**[Slide 6 – First Point] My first point is: You take care of the house when you lovingly provide instruction.**

From v15, we ought to know how to conduct ourselves... how we are supposed to live. Earlier in chapter 2 v3-4, the Apostle says this, giving us insight:

*I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

Knowing that Jesus desires all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, we as a family bear that truth. We are ambassadors of the Kingdom of the living God clothed in His immense power. Because of this, we conduct our lives radically different than those who do not have and love Christ. Did you know that we have a Christian Conduct section in our statement of faith? It reads: We believe that Christians should live to bring praise and honor to God, to contribute to the well-being of others, to be faithful stewards of their resources, and to seek spiritual growth for themselves and others. This is part of our core. It is the center of the circles diagram.

The household of God is the church of the living God. It is the pillar and support of the truth. The church is not a building. Remember this: This is the church, and this is the steeple, open the doors and see all the people. People are the important part. God's household is actually a family learning how to love, take care of each other, forgive, and encourage each other. We need to do this well.

**[Slide 7 – The Household is a Family]** The household of God is a family. This family means that we have God Who is the Father, believers being the children and that is why we use terms like brothers and sisters. We operate with our Elders and Deacons to help the family carry out the Father's purposes. I don't know if you are aware, but sometimes families have issues and don't get along very well. For instance, let's say you are thinking there's something you don't like about me or the things I say and you remember something about eternity leading you to an unpleasant place. Eternity with him.. uh uh. Good News flash: it's going to be ok because there is no sin in heaven and you'll like me a whole lot better.

But, we CAN get close as a family here on earth. We have God taking residence in us. Your spirit is alive and you are activated! Let me explain about family closeness through the use of a geometric figure called the triangle. For the family of believers, the closeness is best depicted with the Triunity up at the top and believers on either side below. As we draw closer to the Triunity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), we become close to each other; genuine, authentic, and loving. Who knew we would be covering mathematics today?

**[Slide 8 –Second Point] My second point is: You take care of the house as a family.**

We come together as a church, in the Greek it is ek-klay-see-uh and it is the called-out assembly. Called out from what? In 1 Peter 2:9 we are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that [we] may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. It is good for us to assemble. Heb 10:24-25 asks us to consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking the assembling together as is the habit of some but encouraging each other all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Paul tells us that we are the church of the living God. Ex 3:6 God says ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.’ And 2 Cor 6:16, What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

**[Slide 9 –Third Point] My third point is: You take care of the house remembering you are part of the church of the living God.**

The church is also a pillar and buttress of the truth. A buttress or foundation is essential to the building because the building is only as good as its foundation. **[Slide 10 – Importance of Foundations]** Foundations provide support to the structure, transfers the loads from the structure to the soil... [You need] deep foundations... when the bearing capacity of the surface soil is not sufficient to carry the loads imposed by a structure.. – civiltoday.com

Footings are important because they are the foundations of foundations. Footings are thick slabs of horizontal reinforced concrete on which the foundation walls sit. Footings distribute the weight of the house onto a larger surface area and prevent the building from sinking into the ground... [Faulty] footings [cause] the entire house [to] crumble. -WarmCrete

You get the idea from the picture about why that support is important. Pillars stand upright on the foundation as columns and give the building its structure and beauty. As a pillar, the church upholds the truth that **comes from God**. The truth of God’s Word is the foundations of foundations and is solid. The church is a pillar. In describing the church, Paul might’ve had in mind, since it was so prevalent in Ephesus, **[Slide 11 – Temple of Diana]** the Temple of Artemis or Diana. The temple had 127 columns that were 60 feet high. That is twice the height of our Worship center. 127 of them! It was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Diana was a fertility deity and was called upon in the conception process. In reality, Diana was a dead idol.

A few days ago, pastors in the region gathered together in Wintonbury’s Great Room for prayer. At the end of our time, Rich Ainsworth shared from Ps 115:3-11 and it is a powerful way to differentiate the living God from others. Here’s how The Message reads **[Slide 12 – Idols vs The Living God]**:

*Our God is in heaven doing whatever he wants to do. Their gods are metal and wood, hand-made in a basement shop: Carved mouths that can’t talk, painted eyes that can’t see, Tin ears that can’t hear, molded noses that can’t smell, Hands that can’t grasp, feet that can’t walk or run, throats that never utter a sound. Those who make them have become just like them, have become just like the gods they trust. But you, Israel: put your **trust** in God!... You who fear God, **trust** in God!*

The church is the support columns. You support the weight of God’s truth. You elevate that truth for everyone to see. Church, you are a wonder of the world and more stunning than the Great Pyramid of Giza (only one standing), Hanging Gardens of Babylon, Temple of Diana, Statue of Zeus at Olympia, Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, Colossus of Rhodes, and the Lighthouse of Alexandria. All but one of these wonders were decimated by earthquakes. The church is alive!

**[Slide 13 – Point 4] My fourth point is: You take care of the house by elevating God’s truth for all to see.**

**[Slide 14 – The Church’s One Foundation]** The foundation, Jesus, cannot be destroyed.

The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord;

she is his new creation by water and the Word.

From heav'n he came and sought her to be his holy bride;

with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

Halleluiah, Our Salvation, Jesus Christ is our foundation

**[Slide 15 – Look Who Is Taking Care of the House]** Part of taking care of the house is allowing God to work in and through us in the use of spiritual gifts. They are given by the Holy Spirit so that we can do the work of the ministry not only in the church but wherever He chooses to send. There is nothing that can stop the movement and purposes of God through His bride called the church. I met with a group of pastors to talk about something called Thrive that will be happening in September. This assembly of God’s people will purposely partner together for blessing and equipping. The gathering of churches will put problems in front of the community and experience a nudge by God to disadvantage yourself to serve others. God being a God of justice and mercy will use the church to invade the world with God’s truth. You, the gifted church, need to know what is contained in the Body of Truth and communicate it. We can help you build a spiritual profile consisting of a Spiritual Gift, Personal Character, and Ministry Passion in order to serve God in a meaningful way. We would love for you to talk to God about this and serve. Some of our needs are in A/V, Coffee, Greeting, NextGen, Ushers, Worship Team, Life Group Leaders, Teachers to name a few. I will be adding a link for you to let us know where God is leading you.

**[Slide 16 – Point 5] My fifth point is: You take care of the house by putting the gifts God gave you to use.**

In verse 16 there is something different to see. First, a mystery. When I think of a mystery, one of the most prolific writers is Agatha Christie. A good mystery writer keeps you hanging on the edge as you are trying to guess who dunnit and then you get to the end of the book and the mystery is revealed, and you are like oh I should’ve known, but I missed the clues and couldn’t put it all together. Similarly, my twins and I read the Hardy Boys’ Mysteries which have a mystery pattern. Each book is 20 chapters and Frank and Joe kind of mess up in the beginning and if they only would catch the bad guys who barely escape from them... well, it would be a shorter book. The story goes on and after their heads have been concussed, the mystery all comes together through an unveiling process.

In this verse, Paul talks about a mystery from which all godliness springs. What is the mystery? Like a novel, are you exasperated having to wait until the end of the book? No worries! The sense of this word, mystery, is a divine secret that is now openly revealed. The Greek word used here is *mystērion*, which actually sounds like mystery. It is used in 1 Cor 15:51 of the mystery where we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed. Also, Col 1:27, revealing the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

More on the mystery in a minute, but first I want to share what this verse represents. It is believed to be a creedal hymn. What’s a creed?

**[Slide 17 – Creed Defined]** *Derived from the Latin credo (I believe), a creed is a summary statement of Christian faith and belief. The purpose of the earliest creeds was to present a short summary of Christian doctrine, which baptismal candidates affirmed at their baptism. Later, creeds become tools for instruction of new converts, for combating heresy and for use in corporate worship. -Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*

We have publicly read the Apostles' Creed at Wintonbury and it begins with 'I believe' so that makes sense with the definition. It then continues with the statements of what we believe. You can look that up this week and spend time reading all about it. But what Paul writes is not just a creed, it is also believed to be a hymn because of the way it is phrased or having meter in the Greek.

Now back to the mystery. What was hidden before is now made known. The deep truth is that the mystery is a person and namely Jesus Christ our Savior. He did something that has now enabled us to receive something which is the key to godly conduct in the church. I am talking about transformation power. Christ's life and ministry show us what godliness actually looks like.

Let's delve into the creedal hymn. Commentators have many different views that range from looking at six separate statements, or in triplets, or in couplets. You can see some of the differences here in the first four columns:

### **[Slide 18 – Creedal Hymn: Differing Views] One-for-One View**

1. **Revealed in the flesh** is consistent with the incarnation meaning Jesus, God, appears in human form.
2. **[Slide 19 – Vindicated or Justified] Vindicated** or to be justified having complied with requirements of the law of God. Most in this section believe it to be represented in the resurrection (God raised Jesus from the dead).
3. **Seen by angels** or in the Greek, *angelos*. This could be defined as angels or messengers and it is a bit all over the place in its interpretation. Angels certainly were with Him on earth: His birth, at the temptation, Gethsemane, the resurrection?
4. He was **proclaimed** and it could be by the disciples
5. He was **believed on** which could be accepting the Gospel, or by having new life or in response to the proclamation.
6. Finally, He was **taken up in glory** represented through His Ascension meaning Christ finished His earthly ministry and was exalted at the right hand of the Father.

### **Chiastic View**

1. This is where you have some ideas and then you **repeat the ideas in reverse order**. In this hymn you see Manifestation, Acceptance, and Comprehension, presented and then reversed. You also see the realms are opposite: Earth/Heaven; Spiritual Realm/Earthly Realm; Heavenly Beings/Human Beings.

### **[Slide 20 – Creedal Hymn: Couplets and Triplets] Couplets and Triplets**

This view simplifies the arrangement a bit. I think the pattern of Earthly/Heavenly makes sense to start. Then, it aligns well with the second column if you could see that. Where I have landed is not a demand for you. You should study and you may decide differently. Most importantly, whether a hymn and/or creed, it fits the foundation of what we believe as Christians.

**[Slide 21 – Personal Creed]** After studying this passage, I had the thought of creating my own creed to share with you:

I met the Savior face to face; He taught me much about His grace  
God a baby? Blows my mind; He gave me sight though I was blind  
Tender, soft, gentle, strong; God's family is where I belong  
He sacrificed, He died, He rose; I believe and fear no foes  
We are alive, the world will see; This Kingdom stands in solidarity  
Amen.

Brothers and sisters of the family of the Living God called out to be the light in a dark world, may the Lord bless you and keep you, may He make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you, lift us His countenance upon you and grant you peace.

**[Slide 22 – Take care of the house.] My final point is: Take care of the house.**

If you would like to receive prayer, please come forward.