

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: November 12, 2017

Sermon Title: The Power and Glory of Christ in His Church

Sermon Series: First Timothy

Text: 1 Tim. 3:14-16

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

Date: November 12, 2017
Title: The Power and Glory of Christ in His Church
Text: First Timothy 3:14-16
Theme: God's power and glory is in His Church and we would do well to align with it.

Introduction:

George Barna notes how 73% of Americans claim to be Christian, but only 31% "practice" or go to Church regularly.¹

"We live in a world where the Church has taken a back seat to the individual. People think they can be a Christian apart from the local Church. This is a symptom of the self-centeredness that permeates our culture. Christianity is not about the individual so much as it's about the Church. Christ died for the Church. The Church corporately is the Bride of Christ. We are called to serve one another, love one another, and care for one another because as we do so, we love Jesus Christ who died for His bride the Church. We need this passage to show us our true identity in Jesus Christ. We need this text to show us the glory of our Lord and Savior."²

It has been said, "What you win them with, is what you win them to."

"When we reduce the gathering of God's people to an entertainment venue, we don't enhance it, we diminish it. Diminish. That's such a benign word for the damage we do to the gospel when use it as a tool to put on a better show. The only thing worse? Boring people with the gospel. We've been entrusted with the message that God came to live on our planet, lived a sinless life, and taught the greatest truths ever heard, died for our sins, rose from the dead, and is coming back for us. You have to work hard to make that story boring. Yet we do."³

"A survey in 2009 asked pastors to identify the most influential living preacher. Chuck Swindoll came in second only to Billy Graham. How does one use that kind of cachet? Apparently to call the church back from its captivity to entertainment. Dr. Charles R. Swindoll is the pastor of Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas, the chancellor and former president of Dallas Theological Seminary, a prominent radio preacher on *Insight for Living*, and a prolific author. His latest book, *The Church Awakening: An Urgent Call for Renewal*, outlines the dangers when churches seek the world's affirmation and copy the world's methods. Skye Jethani spoke with Swindoll about the use of entertainment values in worship. Early in your book you say that when the church becomes an entertainment center, biblical literacy is the first casualty. So why do you think the church has become so enamored with entertainment? We live in a time with a lot of technology and media. We can create things virtually that look real. We have high-tech gadgets that were not available to previous generations. And we learned that we could attract a lot of people to church if we used those things. I began to see that happening about 20 years ago. It troubled me then, and it's enormously troubling to me now because the result is an entertainment mentality that leads to biblical ignorance. And alongside that is a corporate mentality. We're tempted to think of the church as a business with a cross stuck on top (if it has a cross at all). 'We really shouldn't look like a church.' I've heard that so much I want to vomit. 'Why?' I ask. 'Do you want your bank to look like a bank? Do you want your doctor's office to

look like a doctor's office, or would you prefer your doctor to dress like a clown? Would you be comfortable if your attorney dressed like a surfer and showed movies in his office? Then why do you want your church's worship center to look like a talk show set?' Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, 'When the church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first.' **When a church is spending more on media than shepherding, something is wrong.** Some time ago a group of church leaders decided that they didn't want to be hated. They focused just on attracting more and more people. But if we're here to offer something the world can't provide, why would I want to copy the world? There is plenty of television. There are plenty of talk shows. There are plenty of comedians. But there is not plenty of worship of the true and living God."⁴

Charles Haddon Spurgeon noted in his day, "An evil is in the professed camp of the Lord, so gross in its impudence, that the most shortsighted can hardly fail to notice it during the past few years. It has developed at an abnormal rate, even for evil. It has worked like leaven until the whole lump ferments. The devil has seldom done a cleverer thing than hinting to the church that part of their mission is to provide entertainment for the people, with a view to winning them."⁵

If Jesus walked into our church, would He be overturning the tables? What I found interesting is that the word "conduct" in verse 15 is the same Greek word used by John in John 2:15 when Jesus OVERTURNED the tables.

As a larger church, I desire the ministry here to be gospel rich from top to bottom. I desire for this church to have a clear understanding of our vision and mission. I desire for our theological DNA to permeate the whole. I want us to be clean and organized, but I have no desire to attract you with anything other than a straightforward handling of the biblical text that tells a single *Story* and at the center of this *Story* is Jesus.

I believe this desire is biblically driven and sustained.

"In many respects, the contemporary church in America looks more like a large corporation than like anything described in the New Testament. Even church leaders sometimes bear a closer resemblance to CEOs and corporate executives than to humble, tender shepherds. Sadly, the good news – that a sinner can find forgiveness for sins before a holy God by placing his trust in and committing his whole life to Jesus Christ—is often eclipsed by 'success'-oriented programs and an interest in the bottom line.

As a result, many churches have become nothing more than entertainment centers, employing tactics that effectively draw people into the church, but are incapable of truly ministering to them once they come. God never intended the church to be like that. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus says, 'I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.' Notice the Lord's one condition to that great promise: 'I *will* build My church' (emphasis added). Christ's guarantee is valid only when He builds the church His way. When you follow His blueprint, you can be sure that He is doing the work through you and that nothing, not even the gates of hell, can stop Him. *So, what's the blueprint?* A logical place to start is at the beginning with the first church—the church at Jerusalem. It began on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit

filled 120 believers who had gathered for a prayer meeting. The Lord added 3,000 souls later that same day (Acts 2:41). Those fledgling believers didn't know anything about building a church. They had no precedent; they didn't have a book on the church; they didn't even have the New Testament. Yet it was built Jesus' way, and as such it's the model for the church today.

Back to the Blueprint: Bible Study, Fellowship, and Prayer

Acts 2:42 gives the blueprint they followed: 'They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.' Those are the vital elements that make up the actual function and life of the church— and all of that in just one verse!"⁶

Our text echoes this idea.

THE BIG PICTURE:

I would probably argue that the false doctrine failed in the following two areas.

Outline:

Paul also uses interlocking chiasms to highlight the mystery of the Christian faith. In 1 Tim. 3:16, for example, an interlocking pattern explains "the mystery of our religion."

[Jesus] was revealed in *flesh*,
vindicated in *spirit*,
seen by *angels*,
proclaimed among *Gentiles*,
believed in throughout the *world*,
taken up in *glory*.

Two sets of overlapping chiasms bring two separate worlds together – this world and the world above. One set – flesh (A), spirit (B), angels (B'), Gentiles (A') – is joined by a second set – angels (A) Gentiles (B), world (B'), glory (A'). The interlocking pattern suggests that Jesus brings together in balanced harmony two worlds that were separated or at odds with each other.⁷

I will reduce the idea two-fold.

I. The Church's [Common] Conduct (v. 15)

"To busy oneself; to turn one's self over." Only time it occurs in the Pastorals.

The intent of this text is to tell us how we are to behave as a church. It does not tell us how we are to behave as individuals, but as a family, as a community.

Paul addressed strange teaching as it has come from certain men (1:18-20) and certain women (2:8-15). He has also addressed the offices of Elders and Deacons (3:1-13). Strange teaching abandoned the gospel by either adding to or subtracting from the gospel. As a consequence of this, they have deviated in their behavior as a church. Paul's intent in pointing out Elders and Deacons is to protect the gospel and proclaim the gospel. It is really "that simple."

What is of real interest to me is how the local church is described in our text. We have marginalized the local church as if one can live the Christian life apart from it. This text would tell us otherwise. You can no more live the Christian life than Adam and Eve could have walked with God apart from the Garden or a Jew could have lived life outside the Temple.

This text tells us of the church's importance in the life of the believing.

A. The Household of God

Oikos – house / temple. It is not simply referring to the structure, but to the household, the administration, the occupants. It is for this reason we can identify ourselves as a family of families. We are living in a household and the owner of the household is God.

“In the house of God. – The image is from the Old Testament, where ‘the house of God’ denotes, in the first place, the Temple of Jerusalem, and, in the second, the covenant-people. It is here used for the congregation of believers among whom God dwells – the true and enduring Church of living souls. Of this great spiritual temple, the corner-stone of which is Christ, the Jerusalem house on Mount Zion, with its marvelous work and its gorgeous and elaborate symbolism, was the poor, perishable, hand-wrought model.”⁸

- “One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity” (1 Tim. 3:4).
- “ (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)” (1 Tim. 3:5).
- “Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well” (1 Tim. 3:12).
- “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). {ground: or, stay}
- “But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God” (1 Tim. 5:4). {piety: or, kindness}
- “The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain” (2 Tim. 1:6).
- “Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus” (2 Tim. 4:19).
- “Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake” (Titus 1:11).

B. The Church of the Living God

“Which is the church of the living God. – The house of God is here plainly defined to be the ‘Church’ (or, congregation) ‘of the living God,’ who was working in its midst actively and personally, in strong contrast to that well-known graven image of the Diana of Ephesus, throned in that fair temple which glittered in its white and lifeless beauty over the roofs of the city where Timothy’s charge lay.”⁹

C. The Pillar and Support of the Truth

“The pillar and ground of the truth.—The imagery is here changed, and the ‘house of God’ which the Apostle had just defined to be the Church, or congregation, belonging to the living God, and in the midst of which He was pleased to dwell, is now defined to be ‘the pillar and ground’ (or, basis) ‘of the truth.’ In the first picture, the Church is painted by St. Paul as a vast congregation, with the living God dwelling in its midst: in the second, the same Church is painted as a massive pillar, holding up and displaying before men and angels the truth—the saving truth of the gospel. In the first picture, the thought of a great company gathered together for God to dwell among is prominent: in the second, the thought of the great redemption-truth alone comes to the front, and the Church of God is no longer viewed as a company of separate individuals, but as one massive foundation-pillar, supporting and displaying the glories of redemption.”¹⁰

Pillar [stiff], only time in the pastorals.

Support [ground], only time in the pastorals.

The truth rests on and is supported by the local church. The local church is not the truth. The local church, however, is what the truth sits on. The local church upholds the truth. What is the truth we are to be a pillar of and support for?

II. The Church’s Common Confession (v. 16)

One word; without controversy. The local church holds to these immutable truths. The common confession comes from two words, “one word.” The early church and this church has “one word.” And that one word is JESUS.

“The mystery of godliness is Christ.”¹¹

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.—‘And is not simply copulative, but heightens the force of the predication, Yes, confessedly great is the mystery’ (Ellicott)—for the glorious truth which the Church of God pillar-like upholds, is none other than that stupendous mystery, in other ages not made known, but then revealed—the mystery of Christ, in all His loving manifestations and glorious triumph. Yes, confessedly great—so great that the massive grandeur of the pillar is only in proportion to the truth it supports.”¹²

He defines for us what the mystery of godliness is. It is the same as the mystery of faith in v. 9. This mystery was previously unknown, but is now being made known or is widely known and constitutes the common confession.

“*Grk* ‘great is the mystery of [our] religion,’ or ‘great is the mystery of godliness.’ The word ‘mystery’ denotes a secret previously hidden in God, but now revealed and made widely known (cf. Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 2:7; 4:1; Eph 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 6:19; Col 1:26-27; 4:3). ‘Religion’ (εὐσεβεία, *eusebeia*) is a word used frequently in the pastorals with a range of meanings: (1) a certain

attitude toward God – ‘devotion, reverence’; (2) the conduct that befits that attitude – ‘godliness, piety’; and (3) the whole system of belief and approach to God that forms the basis for such attitude and conduct – ‘religion, creed.’ See BDAG 412-13 s.v.; 2 Tim 3:5; 4 Macc 9:6-7, 29-30; 15:1-3; 17:7. So the following creedal statements are illustrations of the great truths that the church is charged with protecting (v. 15).”¹³

Godliness is the Greek word **eusebeia**. It carries the idea of “the gospel scheme.” It occurs in 15 verses. Over half of those occurrences are in the first letter to Timothy, then once in Second Timothy and Titus each (cf. Acts 3:12; 2 Peter 1:3, 6, 7, 3:11).

- “For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all **godliness** and honesty” (1 Tim. 2:2). {authority: or, eminent place}
- “And without controversy great is the mystery of **godliness**: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim. 3:16).
- “But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto **godliness**” (1 Tim. 4:7).
- “For bodily exercise profiteth little: but **godliness** is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8). {little: or, for a little time}
- “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to **godliness**” (1 Tim. 6:3).
- “Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is **godliness**: from such withdraw thyself” (1 Tim. 6:5). {Perverse...: or, Gallings one of another}
- “But **godliness** with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6).
- “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, **godliness**, faith, love, patience, meekness” (1 Tim. 6:11).
- “Having a form of **godliness**, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Tim. 3:5).
- “Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after **godliness**” (Titus 1:1).

“Perhaps the most comprehensive discussion of this matter is to be found in Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians, where the apostle declares that the ‘mystery,’ which in former generations was unknown to men, has now been revealed through Spirit-inspired apostles and prophets, so that those who read the New Testament record can perceive the heavenly plan which is fulfilled in the work of Christ (cf. 3:1-12). The word ‘godliness’ in the Greek Testament is the noun *eusebeia*. This term, along with its various cognate forms, suggests piety, devotion, religion, or a disposition of God-towardness. One version renders the phrase, ‘Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion’ (RSV). A fair paraphrase might be, ‘Undeniably, great is the strategy of the divine plan of salvation.’”¹⁴

We would like to think the mystery of godliness is about us, about our holiness and behavior, but it is about Him and His Word, the gospel.

Friends, it is about the gospel. One of my “worries” is our inability to keep you engaged. Somehow we become tired and thus bored with the gospel. We want something from the gathering that the gathering was never intended to provide.

I cannot see your heart, your spirituality. I wonder if you are engaged in the *Story*, if you are prizing Christ above all else. I know of the struggles and difficulties of life on the horizontal, but in the midst of it all are you still seeing your story as a part of His *Story*?

I think we have become so saturated with the spirit of this age that it is all about us and our comfort. We have been sold a bill of goods. We have been told this world is a friend to grace and that you can have it all. But you cannot. Jesus is our all and one day He will thoroughly straighten all that is crooked in you and your world. As the people of God, we must steward our physical assets, but our physical assets are not the gospel. JESUS IS THE GOSPEL.

Here is what we are to confess and prize.

A. Incarnation – “Revealed in the Flesh”

“First aorist passive indicative of *phaneroô*, to manifest. Here used to describe the incarnation (*en sarki*) of Christ (an answer also to the Docetic Gnostics). The verb is used by Paul elsewhere of the incarnation (Ro 16:26; Col 1:26) as well as of the second coming (Col 3:4).”¹⁵

B. Resurrection – “Vindicated by the Spirit”

“First aorist passive indicative of *dikaioô*, to declare righteous, to vindicate. Christ was vindicated in his own spirit (Heb 9:14) before men by overcoming death and rising from the dead (Ro 1:3).”¹⁶

C. Ascension – “Taken up in Glory”

“First aorist passive again (six verbs in the same voice and tense in succession, a rhythmic arrangement like a hymn). Cf. Ro 8:29. This time the verb is *anambanô*, the verb used of the ascension (Ac 1:11, 22, which see). In a wonderful way this stanza of a hymn presents the outline of the life of Christ.”

1. Seen by angels
2. Proclaimed among the nations
3. Believed on in the world

Friends, this is the gospel. This is what we as a church have been entrusted with, are to protect, and openly proclaim. Do we study other things? Yes, but all things come from Him, are sustained by Him, and lead to Him.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

In 1966, A. W. Tozer wrote in, *Man, the Dwelling Place of God*, a chapter entitled, The Old Cross and the New. In it, he contrasts the historic gospel as noted in Scripture with what has become an altered and alternative gospel. It is very much like the problems facing the first century church. We think we know better than God as to what humanity needs and how to “fix” their problem.

The new gospel believes this world is a friend to grace and that you “can have your cake and eat it as well.” I do not wish to paint a picture of doom and gloom, but the gospel is the only thing that can answer the one problem you and I cannot address in and of ourselves.

There is no substitution for the gospel. When we make you believe you can have it all or that somehow there is something beyond Him or someone beside Him, we are teaching a strange doctrine. It is always Jesus plus nothing equally everything and everything minus Jesus equally nothing. Jesus is enough in this life and in the life to come. Anything other than this is a false gospel.

¹ <https://www.barna.com/research/state-church-2016/>

² <https://gccwaverly.net/2015/10/11/sermon-the-mystery-of-godliness-1-timothy-314-16/>

³ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/karl-vaters/2016/april/church-does-not-exist-to-entertain-us-or-bore-us.html>

⁴ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2011/spring/chuck-swindoll-entertainment-scripture-worship.html>

⁵ <http://www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/amusement.htm>

⁶ <https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A128/church-as-it-was-meant-to-be>

⁷ <https://biblicalchiasmus.wordpress.com/category/n-t/1-timothy/>

⁸ Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers on 1 Timothy 3:15.

⁹ Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers on 1 Timothy 3:15.

¹⁰ Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers on 1 Timothy 3:15.

¹¹ Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on 1 Timothy 3:14-16.

¹² Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers on 1 Timothy 3:16.

¹³ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/1+Timothy+3:12>

¹⁴ <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/160-great-mystery-of-godliness-the>

¹⁵ A.T. Robertson on 1 Tim. 3:16.

¹⁶ A.T. Robertson on 1 Tim. 3:16.