



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Timothy 3: 14-16

“The Pillar of the Truth”

1 Timothy

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our text this evening is 1 Timothy 3:4-16. Let's begin with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank you for the time we have this evening to come to this place, read our scripture from 1 Timothy 3, and then, study this text at some length. We come to a great confession of faith, and we pray that we do so, you'd bless us with an understanding of the text in what Paul wrote to Timothy and the importance of it. So we look to you to guide us in our thinking. We praise you as the one who does that. We have been blessed in the new birth with new hearts. We have new minds. We have new faculties with which to understand your truth. Our will is enabled to act in a way that pleases you in obedience, have all of these things, but we are enabled to use them by the Spirit of God, and he is the one who directs us in our thinking, who opens our minds to understand the truth.

We are greatly blessed with his presence in our lives, more so than we realize. But we look to you to bless us in that way, to minister to us. We pray that the Spirit of God would minister unhindered in our lives to give us an understanding of these things and prepare us for life, prepare us for the remainder of the evening and the days to follow, that this would be effective in sanctifying us.

So we look to you to do that, Father. We cannot do it ourselves. We're dependent upon you even as new creatures and we pray that you would bless us. Bless the young people as they meet. We pray that wherever your word is taught this evening, in this place or elsewhere that your people would be built up in the faith. We look to you to bless us now and we thank you for the time that we have together. And we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] 1 Timothy 3, beginning with verse 14: "I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; 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. 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."

With verses 14 through 16 of chapter 3, we come to what has been called the dividing point in the epistle. It forms a bridge as it's been called between the first part of the epistle with its instruction on the church and its ministry, and the second part of the epistle with its practical or applicational instruction. In doing that, in joining these two sections together, it gives the theological basis for what has been said and what will be said by the apostle.

The importance of all that Paul has said and what he has to say about the church and the problems it faced is indicated, I think, in verse 14 and 15 by the urgency that Paul felt in giving this instruction. He had planned to come to Ephesus quickly, before long, he said. But still, he might be delayed. And what he wanted to communicate about the church was too important to wait, and if a delay should come, that would postpone it too long. And so, rather than wait until he came, in fear of a delay of some kind, he wrote this letter and sent it to Timothy.

The business of the church is very important. It was very much on the heart of the apostle and very much on the heart of God. Paul describes it as the household of God, the church of the living God. The word translated household is also the word that's translated house. They're one and the same word, so they can be translated in either way. It can be translated and has been translated as the house of God with a sense of the building of God, not in this context literally a house, but figuratively as God's temple. That's possible.

It has been translated that way and it may have that sense as well, but since Paul uses this same word three other times in chapter 3 when he's talking about the elders and the deacons and their household, it's probably to be given that meaning in this verse as well. And if that is the case, then it conveys to us the idea of the family relationship that should exist within a local church. It is a family. We are a family of God. We're joined together in a relationship that's really far more important than physical blood relations. This is a relationship that is eternal and we are brothers and sisters in Christ. He is our Father. And so, since this is God's household, we are his family, we ought to be related to one another in that way.

But having said that, the church is also God's house. It is where he dwells in this world.

He dwells among us. He dwells in us. We are his temple. That is the description that's given elsewhere in the New Testament. But his temple, his household, physically gathered from house to house throughout a city that was dominated religiously and economically by the worship of Diana or Artemis of the Ephesians. Her temple was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It was supported by 100 massive columns, some of which were ornately sculptured.

According to tradition, her image fell from heaven and what some scholars feels is probably the origin of that tradition is that a meteorite fell in the area of Ephesus, which may have had a shape that resembled the female form, but it was seen as the goddess or an image of the goddess. And so, it was worshipped. At any rate, the cult of Diana or Artemis was centered in Ephesus and an industry of silversmiths, who made small shrines or souvenirs for the pilgrims that would come to worship Diana there, industry grew up around this temple and this religion that brought a great deal of revenue into the city.

But it is there in that very prominent pagan city of the ancient world that God says is the house or the household of the living God. This house wasn't made of marble. Wasn't made of the tangible things of stone or precious metals of gold or silver that would guild a temple. It was made of people. He's not a stone. He's not like the goddess Artemis; a meteorite or a giant gilded statue seated in that temple on a throne. He is invisible. He is living. He is real. And he was there in Ephesus. He was with the Christians who met from house to house throughout the city.

I've been in some of the house that are there. Ephesus has been excavated and you can walk down its narrow streets and you can enter into some of the houses that have been uncovered and restored. They're not large, but in this places, places like those houses in the city, not in some grandiose temple, but in those homes in the city, the church met. The church sang hymns together. They read scriptures together. They were instructed from the scriptures and they practiced the ordinances. They carried out the true worship of the Lord God in a place that was filled with false worship and it was important that that church be kept alive, that it be kept pure in order that the light that it possessed, the truth that it possessed, be kept pure, that it be kept shining in that dark place, that dark city, and in similar dark places throughout the world.

So this is a very important bit of instruction that the apostle Paul has been given and the truth, the Gospel, the whole revelation of God would be kept clear and bright through the church, which through the truth that it possesses, rolls back the darkness of the world in which is exists and plants the seeds of life, spiritual seeds of life in Satan's domain. Now, that is the work of the

church and Paul views it as very important. And the instruction that he gives is urgent because this must be kept pure. This must be guarded. It is what he calls the pillar and support of the truth.

Now, that's how Paul describes the local church; the pillar and support of the truth. It may be small, the church. It may be found in humble houses in the shadow of a massive opulent temple, like that temple of Diana supported by 100 giant pillars, but Paul says it is the church, not that place, that is the pillar and support of the truth. And so, it must be guarded. It must be kept strong. And he felt the urgency of all of this. And so, he writes this letter, rather than wait to come to Timothy and speak to him personally.

So he gives a very significant description of the church that shows it's important. It is the pillar and support of the truth, and yet, as you think about it, that does seem a bit odd, an odd way to describe the church as supporting the truth. If you look back to the origin of the church, to Acts 2 and the day of Pentecost when the church was born, it began with a sermon. It began with the truth. So rather than be the support of the truth, it seems that the truth supports the church, and of course, that is true.

The church is only as strong as its commitment to the truth is strong, as its commitment to the scriptures. And so, there is a sense in which that's true. It is supported by the truth. The church has its origin in the truth, but in another sense, the church does support the church. It holds it up by proclaiming it to the world. It supports it by defending it against attacks and the truth of God's word is continually under attack, and it was coming under attack in Ephesus. Paul knew that. He knew the characters who were involved in the attack and he knew the nature of the attack. It was coming from within the church due to false teachers. That was the occasion for writing this epistle, to ward that off and to protect the church from the error that would be fatal to it. And so, all through the text, Paul exhorts Timothy to defend the truth. All through the Pastoral Epistles, he gives that kind of instruction.

We read in chapter 6 in verse 5 of men of depraved mind, who are deprived of the truth. That is, they're bereft of the truth. They don't have the truth, but they pose as men who have the truth. They pose as teachers, who Paul says, suppose the Godliness is a means of gain. So they use the word of God to gain money, to gain personal wealth. That was the reason that they professed to be teachers of the word of God. They peddled it. They peddled the word of God, but they didn't really preach it. They perverted it, and in so doing, they propagated heresy.

In 2 Timothy 2 in verse 18, Paul writes of men who have gone astray from the truth,

saying that the resurrection has already taken place and they upset the faith of some, and that's what Paul was very concerned about. The faith of people in this church is being upset. And there are other examples of text where Paul writes of truth being lost or perverted. It is against that. It's against false teachers that the church must defend the truth, must support it and teach it. But that will only happen when the church is strong, when it's strong in the truth, and that was being threatened in Ephesus. And so, Paul wrote to Timothy with urgency.

If the pillar is weak, then the house will fall. And the pillar will be weak if it's not functioning properly. When elders and deacons are not functioning properly, then the church will be weak and that's what Paul has spent a great deal of time in chapter 3 developing; the responsibilities, the qualifications of an elder and a deacon. They must be the right people and they must be earnest in their work, and if they are not doing that, the church will be weak, and the truth will suffer, and the faith of the saints will also suffer greatly.

Paul's statement about the truth and our responsibility to proclaim it and defend it is followed in verse 16 with his declaration of the greatness of that truth. "By common confession," he writes, "great is the mystery of godliness." This that he speaks of here is the truth that must be defended, that must be held up, that must be guarded and taught. The mystery of godliness.

This word mystery doesn't refer to something that's mysterious. We pointed that out maybe last week when we came onto this term. Paul frequently uses this word mystery in regard to the truth, and what it means is a secret that has been revealed. It is truth that was previously unknown. It wasn't revealed in the Old Testament, but has not been revealed to the apostle and to the church.

One example of a mystery is the equality of the Jews and the gentiles in Christ. It was not known before the New Testament, but it's what Paul writes about in Ephesians 3 as a mystery. "Gentiles are fellow heirs," he said. "Gentiles and Jews are fellows together in Christ." Well, here, the mystery of Godliness is the secret, it's the revelation, which is behind our Godliness or our devotion to God. It is that which stands behind our Godliness in terms of the revelation that's behind it, the truth that's behind it, and the motivation for it.

Now, Paul explains it in the rest of verse 16. It is the truth of the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is a person who is the mystery of Godliness, but it is a person understood in the mystery. That is, in the revelation, in the secret that's been revealed in doctrine, and that's what we have in these verses that follow, the statements that follow of a description of Christ. It's a

person that's being described, a person that's being revealed, but revealed in truth, in doctrine. So the key to Godliness is the truth. The key to Godliness is doctrine. It's knowing these truths, this truth about the person and work of Jesus Christ.

It's been pointed out that the statement, "Great is the mystery of godliness" is similar to the cry, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians" from Acts 19 in verse 28. And that is, you'll remember, what was shouted in the riot in Ephesus when Demetrius stirred up the silversmiths against Paul because of his ministry and the progress of the Gospel, which had affected their business. It had hurt their trade in silver shrines because people were converting and people were leaving the temple of Artemis or Diana, becoming Christians, part of the church, and it was affecting their business. And so, this riot occurred and they chanted this statement, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians." Kept chanting it for some time and we know it from that, but there's evidence that this was a regular declaration of praise to the goddess. They would say this in the city of Ephesus, which had a vested interest in the goddess because she was the source of a great deal of wealth for the city.

Well, the similarity in that statement, that chant that was given for Artemis and Paul's statement here, "Great is the mystery of godliness," may be a coincidence, but it's an interesting coincidence because it certainly underscores the point that it's not the goddess that's great, it's not the goddess that has a claim on truth and reality, but this statement that Paul is going to make, that he's going to explain. And so, it may be a coincidence that there's a similarity in the structure of the two statements, but it also may be true that Paul deliberately framed this statement in order to repudiate what was a very common expression in that city to which he was writing this letter. It's not Artemis. It's not the gods or the goddesses of the ancient world that are true. It's this God, the true God, the triune God, and his son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Regardless, the mystery is great truth and Paul explains it in six statements or stanzas. New Testament scholars think that this may be an early hymn of the church. And so, a lot of English version, mine, for example, the New American Standard Bible, structures it to reflect that. It indents it and arranges it to appear as a poem or a hymn. The Greek text that I have also arranges it in that way. And these six statements may in fact be an early hymn of the church.

If so, it tells us something about how they sang and what they sang. And the early Christians, if this is in fact a hymn, sang very theological hymns, not man-centered sentimental songs, like so many of our hymns are, but Christo-centric hymns, hymns that extolled the glory of God, the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what is characteristic of this hymn, if it is that,

this certainly statement of faith, is that it's all about what Christ did, not about what he said.

Now, what Christ said and what he taught is very important. Gave us revelation and we pay careful attention to what he said. Don't pay more attention to what he said than what the apostle Paul said because all of it is inspired of the Spirit of God. It's all the word of God, but what he said is very important. He was the greatest teacher who ever lived. But redemption was accomplished not by the revelation that Christ gave, not by the words that he spoke, but by what the Lord did, and that's reflected in this hymn, and that's reflected in the Gospel.

The Gospel is the proclamation of that event. It's the proclamation of what occurred at Calvary, what occurred on the cross, and it is the explanation of that event. It gives the meaning of that even, which is, again, doctrine, and that's what these verses are about. What Christ did, who he is, and what he accomplished. Paul begins with his incarnation. He was revealed in the flesh.

A very interesting statement and one that's full of meaning. He was revealed in the flesh. It's a very unusual way to describe a man's birth. Whoever described someone as being born in this way, with these kinds of words? He was revealed. But generally, the words of Christ's birth, the words that are used of his birth are the words that he himself used to describe his birth are unusual. He spoke of himself as coming into the world. He spoke of himself as being sent into the world. We don't talk like that when we talk about our birth.

He told Pilate, "I have come into the world." He told Nicodemus in John 3:16 that God sent him into the world. Paul referred to his birth in much the same way in Galatians 4 in verse 4. God sent forth his son, born of a woman born under the law. God sent him forth. Words like coming, being sent, being revealed all suggest preexistence. They suggest that he is more than a man.

As we see in a moment, he's certainly a man and that's part of the confession or part of the hymn, but what we see from the beginning, the words that are used and the implication of those words, and there's a lot of theology that's sort of hidden within these succinct statements. There's a lot of meaning that is to be brought out to understand what's being said, but the meaning that's brought out in this word revealed is that he's more than a man. He's God. He's preexistent. He wasn't born as you and I were born. He was sent. He came. He was revealed. And they indicate that he had a purpose in his coming. There was a mission in his appearance, in his revelation, in his coming or his being sent.

We have many examples of that where the Lord states that. Matthew 20 in verse 28:

"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many." And he will come again. When he comes again, he will establish his kingdom on the earth, but he's a coming one.

In fact, the messianic promises present him in that way. One of the earliest messianic promises was given by the prophet Balaam, who was a false prophet, but did prophesy truth because God made him to do so. And in Numbers 24 in verse 17, he prophesied, "A star shall come forth from Jacob." It travels forth. It comes. In Micah 5 in verse 2, we have a very familiar text that's read around Christmastime, and the prophet writes, "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel, his goings forth are from long ago, from days of eternity."

So a ruler's going to go forth from God and his goings forth are connected with eternity. Well, that's the way the messiah is described. He shall come forth. And so, here we have something similar to that; same kind of language. He was revealed in the flesh. He was born of a woman. That's how he was revealed and it was in that way that he took to himself our nature, a genuine human nature. He was, and he is, and he will forever be a true man. He is the God-man. The two natures are brought together in the one person of the Lord Jesus Christ. But he is fully God who took to himself a finite nature, but he had to that in order to accomplish what he came to down to carry out his mission, which is to die for men, to die in our place.

That's why Christ came into the world. Part of his mission was to teach. It was to speak revelation. But his primary reason for entering into this world was to die. That's what's celebrated in this hymn. That's what's celebrated in that first statement about being revealed in the flesh. Why in the flesh? Well, to reveal God, but to reveal him in the apex of that revelation, which is at the cross where redemption was accomplished.

So he was born to die. He took our flesh so that he could suffer in our place. Next, he was vindicated in the Spirit. Now, I read from the New American Standard Bible and in my version the S in Spirit is capitalized. So that indicates that the editors of this version take the word Spirit as a reference to the Holy Spirit. And what they're referring to in vindicating him is the Spirit's work in the resurrection of Christ, and in that resurrection, the Spirit vindicated the son. That is signified in the capital S of Spirit.

Generally though, it's the Father who is identified as the one who raised Christ from the dead, not the Spirit. So others have interpreted Spirit as a reference to the Lord's deity in contrast to his human nature, his flesh. He was shown to be the Son of God by the resurrection

from the dead, and that is certainly true. But the word Spirit doesn't have the article.

Now, that doesn't mean that it's not the Spirit. Sometimes the word, the Holy Spirit is referred to without the word the, but it doesn't have the word the, the article, with Spirit. It's simply Spirit and that could indicate something else. It could indicate that what he's referring to here is Christ's human spirit, which parallels the word flesh. He was born or revealed as a man. He was crucified as a man and his death, of course, was a shameful death. He was considered a blasphemer.

The fact that he was crucified indicated that he was, in the minds of those who crucified him, a criminal. He was crucified between criminals. He was numbered among criminals. And so, that was the indignity of his death. He was crucified as a sinner, presented to the world as a sinner in the shameful death of the cross. But he was vindicated as a man, vindicated in his human nature, in his human spirit, by the resurrection. And in the resurrection, he was seen to be approved of by God, accepted by God. His atoning work was accepted, but he was accepted. He was declared to be righteous; vindicated. In fact, that's the word that's used and vindicated was justified. Declared righteous by God through the resurrection.

So this line here, this stanza of the hymn, has been taken in a variety of ways, three different ways, but I think we can probably understand it best as in parallel with the flesh. He was revealed in the flesh. He was vindicated in his human nature through the resurrection of Christ. Third, he was seen by angels. And all through his life in ministry he was seen by angels. He was seen by angels at his birth. They announced his birth.

In fact, you remember in Luke 2 in verse 13, the shepherds are out in the fields and suddenly the heavens light up with the angelic host and they begin to sing praises to God. Well, they ministered to him all through his ministry. When he was tempted in the wilderness, after that ends, Mark tells us that the angels came and ministered to him. They announced his resurrection. This witnessed his ascension into heaven, and then, they announced or proclaimed that he would come again in the same way, all of which is a further witness to the person of Jesus Christ, who he was.

Men witnessed the resurrection and the ascension. They saw the empty tomb. They saw the glorified Christ. They saw him as sin. We have their testimony, but the testimony of the angels is also given. The host of heaven affirmed that he is who he is. They worship him. They lend their authoritative witness to the truth of it. So he was seen by angels. All of this is verified by angelic testimony, for he was proclaimed among the nations.

Now, that's what Christ commissioned the disciples to do. Before his ascension, he sent them to the nations to make disciples. That's the great commission. Matthew 28:20 told to do that. And this goes back really to the function of the church as the pillar and support of the truth. The church proclaims Christ and the church proclaims the whole counsel of God wherever it is established, whatever place, whatever dark region of the world it is. It is to proclaim the light of God's truth. And the hymn says, "He is proclaimed among the nations." And we are to proclaim him. The church is to be doing that and it is to be preaching the word of God. That is central to the ministry and the function of the church. The apostles understood that. Paul understood that very well at the end of his life.

Paul's final words to Timothy in chapter 4 in verse 2 of 2 Timothy is the simple statement, "Preach the word." It's as though Paul is saying if I have one last thing to say to you in my final words, this is what I want you to do, this is what you must understand. Preach the word. That is what the church is to be doing; preaching the word. Now it can do other things as well and there are other aspects of the ministry of a church, but central to the ministry of the church is preaching the word. If it's not doing that, it's not carrying out its mission.

Well, the apostles understood that and I think where there are great movements of the Spirit of God throughout history that is done. That is central to the work of the Spirit of God in this world, the word of God is being preached. You see it very well, very clearly, very prominently during the reformation. The hallmark of the reformation was sound preaching.

Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and the others were first of all preachers. They preached through whole books of the Bible. They preached often, sometimes every day of the week. There was more to their ministries, of course, than preaching, as I've already indicated. There's more to the life of the church and what the church does in that, but that was central to the reformation.

In the ordinances, which is the name that is given to the rules that were drawn up for the churches of Geneva, it was stated that the first part of the office of the minister is to proclaim the word of God. Of all that he does, the first thing that he is to do is to proclaim the word of God. He is to be a preacher of the truth. Reformers believe that God does not speak to us apart from the scriptures, apart from the message of the scriptures, and so, naturally they place preaching at the forefront of their work, and that is where it belongs in our work. That is Biblical and it our first responsibility.

So they sang of Christ, proclaimed among the nations. He was preached. He was

revealed to the gentiles, as well as to the Jews. Fifth, Christ was believed on in the world. Now, that's a miracle. The world accepted the truth of the person and work of Jesus Christ and it does today. It accepts it. Men throughout the world accept what is said about Christ, accept his deity, accept his incarnation, his sacrifice, and his resurrection. And that's a miracle that men would believe the Gospel because that is completely contrary to man's nature to do that. Men are dead in their trespasses and sins, Paul told these same people or at least wrote those words to this church in that region of Asia when he write in the book of Ephesians in chapter 2, verse 1 that we're dead.

All that they believe, when it says believed on in the world, all of those in the world who have believed, believed is contrary to their very nature. It's not natural for a natural man to believe these things and accept them as true. And yet, Paul says they were believe on in the world. Remember what he told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 2 in verse 14, which goes in line with what he wrote to the Ephesians in Ephesians 2, and there he states that the Gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing to the natural man. Doesn't accept these things. Doesn't accept the things of the Spirit of God. He can't understand them, Paul said. And so, when you read this statement, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, we're reading a miracle that such a thing would happen.

That's always been the design of salvation. It's never been for one group of people. It's never been for the Jew alone, for Israel alone. It's always been an international scope to the Gospel. It's always been worldwide. From the very beginning, we see that with the initial promise that was given to Abraham. In Genesis 12, we read that he would be a blessing to all the families of the earth. He would be a means through which the families of the earth would be blessed. And so, it's always been God's intention, his plan for him to be proclaimed among the nations and believed on in the world.

So as difficult as it is for that to happen because of the nature of man, nevertheless, that is God's plan and God's plan is always fulfilled. The hardness of man's heart is not stronger than the grace of God and he is presently saving people out of the nations, and he will continue to do so. In the end, every part of the world will have been saved. I'm not saving every person in the world will be saved, but every part of the world will have been saved, so that it will be true, as it is true today, that some out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation have been redeemed. And Christ will be seen in light of that as the savior of the world.

Well, that too is a witness to the truth of Christ's person and work. All of the nations

bear testimony to it. The church sang of this great work of God's grace. Sixth, he was taken up glory. That's a reference to the Lord's ascension into heaven and his session, his enthronement at the Father's right hand. That was the completion of God's vindication of his son; the resurrection and the ascension. He returned home triumphant because he had completed his work of salvation and he entered heaven triumphantly. And now his ministry as our great high priest takes place there, takes place at the right hand of the Father. It takes place in heaven. He's finished his high priestly work of atonement. He did that on the cross. He declared it finished, but his priestly work of intercession still goes on. It goes on today. It goes on at this very moment. He's interceding for us right now. He's interceding for you at this very moment.

The author of Hebrews describes this work for us in Hebrews 2:18 and 4:14-16. Christ has opened up heaven for us, so that we can draw near to the throne of grace through him, and in doing that, find grace to help in time of trouble. He prays for us. He is the entry for us to the throne of grace to pray for ourselves and we're to draw near, constantly. We're invited every moment of our lives to be coming to the throne of grace. And there at the Father's right hand, he's also ruling. He is directing the continuing preparation for the kingdom, so that when the time comes, he will return to this world and establish his rule and his reign upon the earth.

Well, this is the mystery in him. Certainly a statement of faith that speaks of Christ and speaks of his ministry in its broad scope. In just these few lines it speaks of his incarnation, which implies his preexistence, his eternity as the Son of God. It goes through his birth, his ministry, his vindication in the resurrection, his ascension, the great commission, sending out God's people throughout the earth, and souls coming to salvation. It is a broad scope of Christ's life and ministry, his person and his work culminating in his ascension into heaven. And the knowledge of this, as we reflect upon it, has a sanctifying work within us. It produces Godliness. It's the Gospel and we're to reflect upon it. We're to understand it.

We're to know who Christ is and what he's done. And these brief lines, as I said, are full of meaning. As you begin to reflect upon them and expand upon all that's meant, that's what we're to reflect upon. That's what we're to understand; who Christ is and what he's done and what he is yet to do. Because he has ascended into heaven victorious and he's not going to stay there. He's going to return and establish his kingdom. So we look forward to that.

Certainly it is a mystery of Godliness. It produces Godliness. It produces devoting to him as we think about what our savior has done and who he is. And so, this truth, which is to be guarded Paul says with urgency is to be treasured by us, proclaimed by us, defended by us, and

guarded by us. May God give us the grace to do that and to do it well. That's our mission in large part. And so, we can do it by God's grace.

[Prayer] Let's close with a word of prayer. Father, we do thank you for the truth that's set forth here. Paul wrote these things and sent them to Timothy with some urgency because he knew that the church is constantly under attack and these great truths are being undermined by the evil one. He would undermine them if he could and he will if we are not diligent in our task. And so, we pray that you'd make us diligent. Not only make us diligent about the truth that's here, but give us a love for it and a desire to know it better.

What is given in these brief six statements is full of meaning and we should be about the task of studying it and learning it. So give us a hunger for that, a great desire to do that. May we be men and women who see ourselves as pillars in support of the truth as a part of this church, and may we be about the business of proclaiming it and defending. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.