



Sermon – 07-09-2017
1 Timothy 3:14 – 16
Revelations 2:4 - 5

I want you to slide over. We're continuing through the book of 1 Timothy. We're coming to verse 14, chapter 3. My kids are in this weekend; son and daughter-in-law and my daughter and the grandkids. So we had Stephen and Courtney's children, our grandchildren, Drew and Charis, with Wes for a few days without Stephen and Courtney. So Drew, my son's son, looked at his Aunt Lauren and he said, "Aunt Lauren what was the most favorite thing you did when you were growing up as a little girl?" She said, "Well, I don't know, you know I guess playing outside with my friends." He said, and I quote, he said, "You know my dad told me his favorite thing to do when he was growing up was to obey his mom and dad." At which point my daughter had your reaction and then there was this kind of befuddled look on his face and he goes, "I kind of thought he was kidding." It's actually the perfect segue into the text. He's going to talk to us about living holy today and how and why and what.

Now remember he's spent the last several verses telling us that those of us on staff and those deacons, anyone that leads basically inside the church, has the responsibility to maintain a certain character. It's not about success; it's about character. That our families should be intact; not perfect, but under the control as best we can under the Holy Spirit and scripture. That we should not be under control of anything except the Holy Spirit. And then he said to the deacon; holding fast the mystery of the faith. And then he said to the overseer that his responsibility is to teach that mystery. Now he's going to explain that. Now I want you to walk with me and we won't take long. I want us to walk through real quickly what he says here because it's one of the most amazing passages. Listen to what he says beginning in verse 14.

¹⁴I write these things to you hoping to come to you quickly, ¹⁵but if I am slow, if I am delayed, I want you to know how to live in the household of God.

Now I want you to listen to what he just said. He said, "Timothy if it was up to me I want to personally tell you what I'm writing to you. I don't want to do it over the phone. I don't want to text it. I don't want to do it by e-mail. I don't want to do it on social media. I want to come to and you and I sit down, face to face, I want to explain to you what I'm talking about, but I may not make it." There are obviously things that are happening and the kingdoms is moving out and I may not be able to get there. So in case I don't here's what I want you to know. I want you to know how to live in the house of God. Now that's the church. There's a certain way obviously

that we're supposed to live inside, not this building, but inside who we are in Christ. There is a certain direction we're to live. Now listen to what he says:

this church which is the church is the, church of the living God, a pillar and foundation of the truth.

Now listen to what he just said. He's put two things together. He said, "I want us to live a certain way that we're supposed to in God's house, as God's children. And it is because it is based on truth." In other words it is truth that will direct your life. Now that's a key fundamental point. When I grew up it was not truth that directed our life. It was God's really mean and he's watching everything you do and if you do something wrong he's going to deal with you and punish you and get you and he sees everything. And then they would give us, I mean I grew up pretty much in a very similar concept of the Pharisees. We had all sorts of rules that the Baptist church added that weren't in the Bible to make sure we didn't sin in certain ways. I mean we never told the people when we went to Training Union, Sunday night, and they'd say, "What did you do this afternoon?" They wanted us to say, "Read our Bibles, studied, and prayed." We didn't. We played football and poker. So we never told them that because, boy, that violated the Baptist rule set. The reason why we couldn't dance is because that was going to cause physical intimacy and there were all sorts of issues and when you can't square dance, you got really massive problems. So I grew up with that idea. God's watching me, he's got a big stick and when I mess up he's coming after me and here are the rules and I better not mess them up. So my motivation to live as I'm supposed to was his watching me and his ferocity at what I might or might not do.

Now he, though, in this book as he does in every book he writes makes a correlation between what we know to be true and what change occurs in our life. Now listen to this.

¹⁶And surely the mystery of Godliness is great:

Now it's always a tough thing for most people. He says the mystery of Godliness is incredible, it is great. Now when you say mystery you think well that's something we can't know. No, no, no, no, no. Mystery in the Bible is always something you can know, but you can't know it without God telling you about it. So if God doesn't tell you, you can't know. He says there's a mystery, and here's what he says, unique Greek word to Godliness, *eusebeia*, that is a unique Greek word in that it means this: it means not only do I have this deep reverence for this God, but the reverence is so deep that it actually shows up in how I live. I don't get to say I adore him and then he doesn't show up. That doesn't fit this word. It's not even a Christian word. They stole it from the gods and so the idea is, he says, "There is a mystery that God is revealed, that will enable me to worship him and to worship him so deeply that I am transformed by what I know about him." There's a mystery. I can't understand it unless God explains it. And now he tells you what it is. He gives you six real quick little statements. Here they are. Here's the first one. Listen:

The mystery of godliness is this and it is great: Jesus, who was manifested in the flesh,

First thing he says is if you want to really become Godly and worship him, here's the first thing you need to understand. That Jesus was manifested in the flesh. He took on flesh. You say, "OK. Big deal." He took on flesh; something as God he had never done. God the Father took God the Son through God the Spirit and put him in the womb of Mary. They did not have physical intimacy and I've had people say to me the virgin birth doesn't matter. Oh, yeah, it matters. Because if they, if she wasn't a virgin and they had relations, he's not God, he's a created being like you and me. So it's massive. He chose to come into the flesh. And what that did is restrict him. He's in heaven. He's God. According to John there isn't a single thing he didn't create and now all of a sudden he's bound up in flesh and blood. He's never been tired before; now he gets tired. He's never had to sleep; now he has to sleep. He's never been thirsty; and now he's thirsty. He's never been hungry; now he's hungry. He has restricted himself in the flesh. It's the first mystery of Godliness and he did that so that he could be tempted. And the reason he doesn't just come on the flesh at age 33 and God put him on the cross, is because he has to spend 33 years living a life as a man under the power of the Spirit believing what God says so that when he dies, he dies with two kinds of holiness. He dies with a holiness that he has as God and he dies with a holiness he earned as a man saying no to sin and yes to the Father. And he took that 33 years full well knowing that when he fulfilled righteousness he would die on a cross. You can't kill God but he took on flesh so we could.

So the first thing he says is that you understand that Jesus Christ was manifested in the flesh, not some small thing, but an enormous thing, and it was the choice of Jesus. He said, "No man takes me. I go where I choose to go." First thing you understand from the beginning of his birth out of the womb of Mary it was an absolute sacrifice on his part. Number two:

He was justified in the Spirit,

Well what does that mean? It means that when he died, the question obviously for us, "How do you know he really died for our sins? How do you get that?" Well he was justified by Pentecost. When Pentecost comes and these guys stand up and the Holy Spirit doesn't come on them like he did in the Old Testament he comes in them. The Greek word that's used for the Holy Spirit indwelling us is actually the Greek word that means to come in somewhere and never leave. So the Holy Spirit came in. How could he come in? The Bible says in the Old Testament God can't even look on sin and you look at what we are and yet the Holy Spirit indwells us, why, because his death was justified by the proof of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God. Every person that possesses the Holy Spirit is an intimate proof that what Jesus Christ did on that cross is absolutely correct. He was justified by the arrival because God can't dwell, remember in Isaiah in chapter 6, I've seen the Lord of Hosts, a man with unclean lips, I live among people with unclean lips, woe is me, and then he's touched and his sins removed. Our sin has been removed permanently in the blood of Jesus Christ and the manifestation in the flesh and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us permanently is the proof that his death was legitimate.

Thirdly, weird little phrase, two words in the Greek:

He appeared to angels,

1 Peter; Peter makes an interesting statement. He says, the angels long to understand salvation. When God set this plan in motion and God their Father looked at the Son and said we put him through the Holy Spirit into Mary's womb, when that happened the angels looked at him and said, "What in the world is going on?" And God had no response. He explained nothing to them. And for 33 years they watched him non-venerated, abused, mocked, laughed at, called the prince of demons. They're furious because they don't get this. And I'm telling you I will go to the grave with every passion of my heart that this is true. When they hung Jesus on the cross and those angels were standing, and remember one, one angel in the Old Testament killed the same number that lives in this Brazos Valley in one night, and there are millions of angels at his command, and they're watching the one they adore and venerate and love mocked, spit on, cursed, stripped naked, and made fun of. They were standing with swords drawn and ready to come and the only thing that saved you and me are the first words of Jesus on the cross when he said, "Father forgive them, they do not know what they do." If Jesus Christ had uttered a single other word they'd have come and you and I would not be sitting here because this planet would have been obliterated. But he held them back and when he ascended into heaven, when he went back on Friday and then before he came out of the grave on Sunday, he appeared to them because they watched him die and then they heard the last two things he said on the cross; it's finished, Father into your hands I commit my spirit. When he came home and they saw and finally grasped, "Oh my!" He drank the sin and the guilt of every person on the planet. Now we know. He appeared to angels.

He was preached in the Gentiles,

It's a big deal. Why is that a big deal? Because when they got Jesus, how many disciples hang out? He's got 12 disciples, right. How many are there? Ten are gone. Two spend the night. One, Peter, who denies him and runs out and weeps bitterly. And one, who betrayed him, and he kills himself. So you have a suicide, you have a weeping, and you have ten cowards. You've got twelve men, none of whom are there really when he dies, none of who are there at the resurrection, and yet somehow all of a sudden you've got the man who's so scared of a little girl, a little twelve-year-old girl. He's so frightened of her that on that night he cursed the name of Jesus and at Pentecost he looked out at the same people way more powerful than this little girl, Caiaphas, Anas, all the elite standing there, and he looked at them at Pentecost and he said, "I've got news for you. You killed him, but God brought him back." There is a ferocity and a courage in these apostles that proves out the legitimacy of the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus Christ. He was believed on in the world. Look at the summer crowd today. There are churches all over this city, there's not a city in this country that there's not somebody that doesn't believe in Jesus Christ. That gospel message has gone out and men and women have believed it because of the legitimacy of the truth. And then it says this:

He was received up in glory.

So he's living in glory, not in the embarrassment as a man, and the mocking and the laughter, he's now living in veneration and glory. And let me tell you something; that's now he's coming back. He's not coming back as some weak-kneed guy we can spit on and laugh at. He's coming back on a white horse riding. He's going to step on Mount Zion, it is going to split apart, and

he's going to reign. And those of us that accepted his drinking of our sin will reign with him. Now listen to what he said:

Timothy I wanted to tell you personally, but I can't, I want to tell you how to live as a child of God, now the church is the pillar of foundation and truth, the truth is a mystery only God can reveal. It is incredible and here it is: he sacrificed, he's justified, the angels know it, we've preached it, men have believed it, he lives in glory. Those are the truths that you focus on in your life that will create a Godliness in you that will make you love him and live out what he wants you to live. It's not some god up there that's got a big stick and he's going to whack you on the head when you do something he doesn't like. It is not a bunch of goofy Baptist rules. It is a simple thing, it's not even rules, it's a simple thing. I know what he did for me and because of that I love him and I want to do what he wants me to do. That's it.

I don't know how many times over the years, I am embarrassed that I've answered this wrong on numerous occasions, but I've always had somebody that says to me, "Look I'd like to come to Christ but I got to ask you a question. Am I going to have to give this up if I come to Jesus?" And my response had always been, "Look no you don't have to give that up. If God wants you to give it up that's OK. But you just come to Jesus." That is flat out wrong. When people say that to me now I look at them and say, "Look I love you but you're not ready. Because if the Holy Spirit's convicting you about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and what he did, that he was manifested in the flesh, justified, appeared to angels, he was preached on, believed, and he's in glory; if you really understand all that, you don't want anything in your life that put him on the cross and everything that allowed him to pay the penalty for your sin, you want in your life. And if that's not your heart, you're not under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and you're not ready to be saved. You know how you and I fall in love with him and why we do what he says? I love this verse. I want you to listen to what the scripture says. I have this against you, it's Revelation 2, stay where you are in 1 Timothy:

⁴I have this against you, that you've left your first love.

Which would be what we're talking about. Listen to the cure, two things, right, listen:

⁵Therefore, one, remember from where you've fallen; and two, repent and do the first works.

It doesn't tell you to get a bunch of rules in your life. He says, "Look, if you don't love me now and you've lost your love for me and that's what happens, we see so many people get saved, we hear the gospel so many times, we do all this stuff, we lose our ability to understand how valuable this is in our life. We lose our concern for it. We lose our value. He says, "You remember where you've fallen. I remember and you go back and you remember everything that's in 1 Timothy 3." And you do the first works, you go back and fall in love with him because of what he did for you. What does the Bible say? We love him because he first loved us. How do we know he loved us? Because of what we just read; the mystery of Godliness.

What are the two ordinances we do? What are they? It's not a trick question. Baptism and Lord's Supper. Our worship guy got it. There you go. It's why I like him. He actually reads his

Bible. Manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, appeared to angels. That's why we do the Lord's Supper; to remember his sacrifice and the cost. Preached in the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. That's why we baptize. We're going to have some people today that we're going to baptize because they're saying to you, they heard the truth, they believed it and they're headed for glory because they're related to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Both of those for that. That's why he said, "Tim I want to come see you personally. I don't want to text this to you. I want to sit down with you and talk to you about the mystery of Godliness."

There was in, I can't remember if it was '06 or '08, five men in a Humvee in Iraq, somebody chunked a grenade through the hatch, landed on the floor. There was a 19-year-old kid, 19, he's got time to get out of the hatch, but he doesn't. He jumps on the grenade, goes off, kills him, saves those other four men. Bush 43 gave him the Congressional Medal of Honor. Now let me ask you two things. If you walked up to the men that saved him, that he saved, and you trashed his name, what do you think the response for that would be? Second thing; when these four men go to his parent's house, how do you think they go in? Think they go in slam down on the couch, throw their feet up on the table and say, "Hey! Get me something to drink!" Or do you think they'd go in there reverently, ramrod straight, because they honor the parents of the man who died. If we can emotionally honor a 19-year-old who gave his life for four men physically, we can honor a Savior who died for all of us in every possible.

Let's pray.

Father thank you that you don't sit up there with a stick waiting to beat us. Thank you that you love us. You died for us. Nobody in this room you didn't die for. Nobody in this world you didn't die for. You drank all our sin. We know that because the Spirit indwells us in this room. We know the angels get it now. Still being preached. People are still believing and we know your glory's available. Father whatever you do today, drive those truths into every heart in this room so that we can be exactly the way you want us to be as a part of your house and as a part of your truth. Honor us as we honor you. I ask you that in the name of the One that did this, Jesus Christ.