

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Brethren, Let Us Uphold The Truth!

1 Timothy 3:14-15

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SermonAudio Blurb: A central task of the church is to protect and lift up the Word of God. This happens on multiple levels, but for most Christians this is done in a very straight-forward manner. But it is also one that will affect generations for good or bad depending on how well each believer grasps and applies this task.

Dismiss

I. Introduction.

- A. Any person who has developed a skill understands the real value of the basics. It does not matter who you are or what you do, the better that you have the basics down the better you will perform.
- B. The former coach of the Packers, Vince Lombardi, was famous for his constant message of sticking to the basics of football. The early Green Bay Packers were great not because of fancy moves, but because the team practiced and worked on the basics of football. It is said that after one frustrating performance of the team that Lombardi held up a football and said, "Gentlemen, this is a football." And from there the basics were taught again.
- C. The basics are so critical. And they certainly are critical for the church and the individual believer. And basics are something that the Apostles majored on when writing to the church.
 1. Peter was a faithful reminder of the basics.

2 Peter 1:10-15 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. ¹² Therefore, **I shall always be ready to remind you of these things,** even though you *already* know *them*, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. ¹³ And **I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,** ¹⁴ knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. ¹⁵ **And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you may be able to call these things to mind.**

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2. Paul was a faithful reminder of the basics.

1 Corinthians 4:16-17 I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me. ¹⁷ For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and **he will remind you of my ways** which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.

Romans 15:14-15 And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another. ¹⁵ But I have written very boldly to you on some points, **so as to remind you again**, because of the grace that was given me from God,

3. John was a faithful reminder of the basics.

Revelation 2:5 **Remember therefore from where you have fallen**, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent.

D. 1 Timothy 3:14-15. Here we find in this small passage three points. I want to show briefly them to you so that you can see the meaning of the passage

1. The first point is how Paul is reminding them of the basics of church conduct.
 - a. This is the theme verse of the book of 1 Timothy.
 - b. He wrote this letter to his dear brother in Christ, Timothy. Timothy had been sent to fix the church at Ephesus. A tough task, so this letter was Paul's letter to tell him of the basics that had to be upheld in that church. Here are some examples:
 - (1) The first chapter deals with how to handle the issue of false doctrines and foolish teachings in the church.
 - (2) The second chapter deals with two main issues:
 - (a) The subject of corporate prayer meetings. It is interesting that he specifically says that the men need to be publically praying.
 - (b) In addition he deals with the issue of women in the church.

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- (3) The third chapter deals with appointing proper elders and deacons.
2. The second point of our passage is that how we act in the church is not up to us.
 - a. Notice how he puts this so clearly.
 - (1) “. . . the household of God, which is the church of the living God.”
 - (2) It is God’s house. He lives there. He is the head, He is the Master. Therefore we are to follow His rules. The picture is one of headship, where our Lord is the head.
 - b. Paul specifically tells Timothy that Paul sent the letter for this purpose.
 - (1) Meaning, Timothy was the guy who had to fix all the mess there. So Timothy needed to know what was to be fixed, so that he could teach it to the church.
 - (2) And the expectation was that Timothy would do just that—teach the church how each of them was to act.
 - c. To repeat, the reason that we don’t have freedom to “do” church any old way is made very clear in this passage.
 - (1) It is the household of God.
 - (a) Each adult here has a home. And in that home there are rules of conduct.
 - i) Don’t jump on the furniture.
 - ii) Take your shoes off before entering.
 - iii) No yelling.
 - iv) Chew with your mouth closed.
 - (2) Note also that this is the house of the Living God.
 - (a) A favorite term for God in the Old Testament.

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- (b) David is willing and eager to fight Goliath because he was mocking the armies of the living God. In other words, Goliath was mocking God.
- (c) Jeremiah says in Jeremiah 10, “

Jeremiah 10:6-10 There is none like Thee, O LORD; Thou art great, and great is Thy name in might. ⁷ Who would not fear Thee, O King of the nations? Indeed it is Thy due! For among all the wise men of the nations, And in all their kingdoms, There is none like Thee. ⁸ But they are altogether stupid and foolish *In their* discipline of delusion-- their idol is wood! ⁹ Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish, And gold from Uphaz, The work of a craftsman and of the hands of a goldsmith; Violet and purple are their clothing; They are all the work of skilled men. ¹⁰ But the LORD is the true God; He is **the living God** and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, And the nations cannot endure His indignation.

- i) It is this God, the true God. The maker of the Heavens and the Earth who calls us to conduct ourselves properly in His house.
 - ii) We are called to act properly and conform ourselves to His ways. He is the Lord of the house.
3. The third point of this passage is that the church is the pillar and support of the truth.
- a. Now it is this part that I want to focus on for the rest of our time.
 - b. A mature church understands that it has a purpose in the plan of God. And a key purpose that this passage shows us is that the church is to hold up and support truth.
 - c. Now let me briefly point out that this passage is also often used by the RCC to show that the Roman Church is where truth is explained and found.
 - (1) This is where they will then speak of the Magisterium and how it is the official doctrine of the church and this is where the truth is found and taught.
 - (2) But this is simply going way beyond what the passage says.

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- (3) Paul simply says that the church is the pillar and support of the truth, not the giver of the truth, the source of the truth or anything like that.
- (4) Truth is found in Christ. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the head of the church.
- (5) Therefore, it is Christ who **defines** the truth. It is the Church's responsibility to **uphold** it as truth.

As one man puts it so well, "The truth is the divine revelation, including the truth of the gospel, the content of the Christian faith. It is the solemn responsibility of every church to solidly, immovably, unshakably uphold the truth of God's Word. The church does not invent the truth, and alters it only at the cost of judgment. It is to support and safeguard it. It is the sacred, saving treasure given to sinners for their forgiveness, and to believers for their sanctification and edification, that they might live for the glory of God. The church has the stewardship of Scripture, the duty to guard it as the most precious possession on earth. Churches that tamper with, misrepresent, depreciate, relegate to secondary place, or abandon biblical truth destroy their only reason for existing and experience impotence and judgment" (MacArthur, *1 Timothy*).

- E. There is a serious problem that is attached to this idea of the church being responsible to uphold the truth.
 1. Last week I talked of the mark of a mature church is to love the church. Yet this simple reality is not really embraced by many who would claim to love Jesus. Even though the bible would simply have no recognition of that type of thinking, it exists.
 2. And the reason is because many believe they can make up God as they go. There is no body of doctrine or truth that is simply "Christian" that must be embraced.
 3. You will see this in many churches that have a church growth approach. How they define and describe God is often contrary to the revelation of God to us.
- F. Therefore, a mature church is one that is very concerned with the truth of God. It takes truth very seriously and handles it very carefully. It is not casual with it and it seeks to lift it high for all to hear.
- G. Let me give you five ways that Missio can show itself to be a pillar and support of the truth.

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II. Five ways MDF can uphold the truth.

A. First, believe it.

1. Psalm 106:24-26 Then they despised the pleasant land; **They did not believe in His word,** 25 But grumbled in their tents; They did not listen to the voice of the LORD. 26 Therefore He swore to them, That He would cast them down in the wilderness,
2. **Acts 15:7** Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles **should hear the word of the gospel and believe.**
3. **2 Corinthians 4:13** But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore also we speak;
4. **Ephesians 1:13** In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,
 - a. (Exhort all to think on this. It is insufficient to merely hear the gospel. You must believe it!)
 - b. (Then, having believed the gospel, to extend that to the fulness of the Word of God).

B. Second, meditate on it.

1. This is the real idea of **Psalm 119:11** Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.
2. This is the idea of not merely reading the Word of God on a consistent basis, but rather it is learning to give a small portion of the word your focus for the day.
3. Perhaps you have a passage you read in the morning and it was Matthew 6. There is a lot of wonderful teaching by our Lord in that passage.
 - a. But for the sake of meditation you choose to take just one verse, let's say it is verse one, (**Matthew 6:1** "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.)

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- b. You may memorize it quickly, or write it down on a card. Then you set your mind to think on it throughout the day.
 - c. You may focus on the warning, “beware” at first, and how our Lord is so gracious to let you have that warning so that you do not ignorantly lose out on reward.
 - d. You then may think about how a person could wrongly practice righteousness before others. And out of that you begin to pray that God might open your eyes to areas that you do this.
 - e. And then you may contemplate the idea of reward in heaven. There is a lot to think about on that subject alone.
 - f. All of this is just taking place in moments of silence and rest throughout the day. Maybe your stocking shelves, or booting your computer. It may be as you nurse your child or take a shower.
 - (1) Here is how David speaks of taking opportunities to mediate:
 - (2) **Psalm 119:148** ¹⁴⁸ My eyes anticipate the night watches,
That I may **meditate** on Thy word.
 - g. And as this goes on, you find yourself writing down questions that you will later want to study more fully.
 - h. And when it is all done, that passage is much more than just words that you read. It is alive and filled with meaning. You have taken it as your own and it becomes another beacon that leads you on in your life.
4. Joshua 1:8.
- a. This passage mentions not only the command to meditate on the Word, but it also gives the purpose.
 - b. And this leads us to the third way that we uphold the Word.
- C. Third, we must study the word.
- 1. 2 Timothy 2:15.
 - 2. So much harm and struggle can be resolved in the church through the knowledge of the truth.

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3. And this only comes through faithful study of it.
4. A mature church is a church that does two things in this area:
 - a. It demands that its teachers study hard and well.
 - b. It promotes the individual study of the bible among its members.

By way of illustration, I remember going to a church in Houston, TX that starved its people. I brought my bible, but there was really no need for it. The pastor would announce his text, and never really refer back to it for the next half hour.

From that experience, about a year and a half later, my wife and I moved to L. A. We attended a large church, pastored by John MacArthur. There were three things that stood out for me that very first Sunday. First, the number of families and the seemingly delight in children that existed. Second, the modesty of the dress of the ladies. But the greatest thing that stood out was that everyone had a bible and it was opened at the beginning of the sermon and they followed along as John would preach.

That church has weathered many crises over the years, and the reason is that the Word of God is heard, believed, studied, and obeyed.

5. There is a good passage in **Ezra 7:10** For Ezra had set his heart to **study** the law of the LORD, and to practice *it*, and to teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel.

D. Fourth, we obey the word.

1. Let me remind you what the last part of Joshua 1.8 said, for it was the purpose statement for meditating on the bible.

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, **so that** you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

2. In our passage we just mentioned, Ezra was a man who not only studied the Word, but also practiced what it said.
3. James 1:22-27.
 - a. Take them through it.

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- b. Point out in vss 26-27 that these are the sins of the tongue and of the hand. Reality is that they are things not borne out of love of neighbor, which simply shows there is not real love of God.
 4. John 8:30-31 is a reminder as well.
 5. Listen to how our Lord says it in Luke 11:27-28 with 8:21.
 6. Go to Titus 2 for just a moment and I want to show you how through obedience we uphold the Word. (Go through whole chapter)
 7. Did you notice what Paul told Titus at the very end of this chapter?
 - a. “Speak.”
 - b. “Exhort.” This is a passionate appeal. To strongly urge people to hear and obey.
 - c. “Reprove with all authority.”
 - d. All of this leads to the final point.
- E. Fifth, it is faithfully proclaimed.
1. Ezra was a man who was not concerned with merely a private study of the bible. He studied with two goals:
 - a. The first was to practice what he learned.
 - b. The second was to teach Israel what he learned.
 2. 1 Timothy 5:17.
 3. Additional passages that speak of this.
 - a. 1 Timothy 5:17.
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:2.
 - c. 2 Timothy 4:1-2.

III. Conclusion.

- A. This is a key task of the church.
- B. Each local church has this responsibility by the Lord and it is not to be taken lightly.
- C. How well we grasp and own this will affect generations.

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1. Think of what would be different if perhaps your parents and grand parents loved and upheld the truth.
 2. Think what may be different in your own homes if you were upholding the truth in every aspect of your life.
 3. Part of the idea behind being missional is that we are actively living out our faith before a watching world, specifically people who are our family, friends and co-workers.
 4. It is a life that is informed and directed by the Word of God.
- D. Let us therefore continue to uphold and exalt God's Word!