

## Church and the Truth: The Mission and the Message

### (1 Timothy 3:14-16)

#### Introduction

The Church has many missions or responsibilities. Some of the responsibilities or tasks of the Church are:

- Prepare God's people for worship and service
- Teach them the Word and encourage them to love the Word
- Prepare a covenant community to fulfill God's plan and purpose
- Involve in proclaiming the gospel and witness for Christ

Along with these missions of the Church, there is another very important tasks which we seldom emphasis, that is, the Church's commitment towards the truth of God.

Paul says in 1 Timothy 3:15-16, "I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory."

The theme of 1 Timothy has been guarding the truth against the false teachers (1:3-4, 19-20; 6:12).

- In that context Paul says Timothy has to know how he should conduct himself in the house of God. This is not the physical or local church, but the company of believers.
- The house of God is the church of the living God.
- He then immediately adds description to the church, saying, it is the pillar and ground of the truth (v 15b)—this is the mission of the church!
- Followed by that Paul also adds the message of the church (v 16).

#### The Mission of the Church—Church, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth (v 15)

For the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is her utmost responsibility to uphold the truth of God.

- To clarify, this verse does not say that the Church is the truth.
- To understand correctly, the truth is the foundation of the Church.
- In other words, the Church is built on the foundation of the truth.
- Then, the Church, being the pillar and ground of the truth, upholds the truth of God.

This interpretation is strongly supported by Paul's use of two Greek words, *stulos* and *hedraioma*, translated as "pillar" and "foundation." *Stulos* means "pillar, column, or support" *Hedraioma* means "prop or support"

Both words come from Greek root words that imply something that stiffens, stabilizes, steadies, or holds.

- Church is not the truth, but it supports or upholds the truth.
- Paul seems to be saying that the *ekklesia*—the body of believers, "the church"—is the structure that holds up and holds forth the gospel to the world. For that reason, the conduct of the body and its selection of leaders are critically important.

- Scriptural truth is what the Church upholds, it does not dictate what is the truth, God Himself dictates the TRUTH. Jesus being the Truth, He establishes the truth, the Church becomes the pillar as it preaches the Gospel of Christ.
- The Church is therefore commissioned to preach it. One must also note that if a "church" does not uphold the truths and traditions of the Bible and chooses to go by its own tradition like the Pharisees (Matthew 23, Mark 7:8-13) then it should be considered a parody church.

### **The Message of the Church—God was Manifested in the Flesh (v 16)**

What is the truth that the Church has to uphold or safeguard?

- It is concerning the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ—this is the message of the Church.

Verse 16 is one of the greatest and profound statements in the whole Scripture, declaring that Jesus Christ is God manifested in the flesh and He is the salvation for humanity.

- This is a common confession, a truth that everyone should agree
- This message is the great truth of salvation and righteousness through Jesus Christ, which produces godliness in those who believe.
- Manifested or revealed in the flesh means Christ's incarnation—He being the eternal Son of God, took upon Him the form of a man that God's requirement for man's salvation be fulfilled through Him. Because man, in his sinful condition, will never be able to fulfill God's requirement. This was the necessity of incarnation.
- This message to be preached to the Gentiles (Matt 28:19), and only this message brings salvation.

### **Conclusion**

- Believe this truth
- Build our lives on this truth
- Broadcast this truth
- Base this truth, that is, guard it

This is the reason Covenant has been established 16 years ago, and may the Lord help us to fulfill this noble and glorious vision!