

He is risen.

Amen.

Amen.

If you would, at this time, turn to 1 Timothy chapter 3.

Our morning's reading is from 1 Timothy chapter 3, verses 14 through 16.

Starting in verse 14.

I hope to come...

to you soon, but I'm writing these things to you so that if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness.

He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

Amen.

Thanks, Scott.

Thank you, Quartet.

I feel like all we need now is a beatboxer and we'll have our own pentatonics here.

So if there's hidden talent out there somewhere, just talk to Pastor Drew.

That'd be great.

We looked last night.

We're continuing our series through 1 Timothy, and I just want to warn you, you know, because I don't want any surprises on Mother's Day.

Like, we're continuing our series through 1 Timothy all the way until summer, so...

Praise the Lord that there's actually a passage about women and mothers and widows and some other stuff, so it'll be very appropriate.

But in true Reformed fashion, I'm just plowing through 1 Timothy here on Easter Sunday.

And again, providentially, we have a wonderful Easter text for us this morning.

So we're going to look at that.

But we looked last night or two nights ago on Good Friday and talked a little bit about what Jesus has done for us, who he was for us, how Paul...

ascribed some duties and titles to Jesus that he accomplished for us on the cross.

And we saw in particular that Christianity, one of the things we're reminded about on Good Friday is that Christianity is the most egalitarian, democratic, equal worldview available.

We're all in the same boat apart from Christ before God.

We all stand before God, not only as people who have committed sins, but sinners to the core of who we are.

And then we saw about the rescue plan that God gave us and all that Jesus has done for us on the cross.

And today we're gonna look a little bit at how the resurrection affects us and how if we're all in the same boat prior to coming to know the Lord, that when we're in Christ, apart from Christ, we're all in the same boat, but when we're in Christ,

that there's actually some things that unite us and some ways that we look alike and behave alike and some commonalities that we have in Christ.

And that's what we'll be looking at today.

Let's pray and ask for the Lord's help as we unpack these couple of verses.

Heavenly Father, thank you again for the gift of your son.

Lord, we're grateful that not only did he come and take our place and pay the price and pay the penalty we can never live, but Lord, you vindicated that sacrifice.

You affirmed it by raising him from the dead.

And Lord, we just ask that as we ponder and consider what effect that bodily resurrection has on us today, Lord, that you would open our eyes to see, that you would soften our hearts, Lord, that you give us ears to hear.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

So we've sung a lot, a couple songs, at least today, that are pretty unique to Easter or to Resurrection Sunday around this time of year.

You know, we love to break out songs that remind us that, you know, God called her name and we ran out of that grave, right, where we talk about

experiencing God's resurrection power.

Again, we've sung about it this morning already.

We sang the Charles Wesley hymn.

We're in the fourth verse, I believe, that we sung today.

"Thine eye diffused a quickening ray.

"I woke the dungeon flamed with light."

Quickening, if you're not up on your old English, means to give or restore life.

So Wesley's talking about a resurrection here, right?

That when he woke up in the dungeon, he woke the dungeon flames with light, right?

He's talking about a resurrection waking up there.

And then he says after that, that my chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

But what does that look like?

We sing a lot of this stuff, running out of the grave, running out of this dungeon with the chains off.

What does that look like?

If Jesus is a real person that historically rose from the dead at a point in history, and through his death and resurrection, God is resurrecting dead hearts, he's freeing enslaved souls, what does that freedom, what does that resurrection life look like?

And that's the whole reason that Paul wrote 1 Timothy.

He tells us in these couple of verses, this is actually like the central passage in 1 Timothy where Paul just very clearly lays out his purpose for writing the book.

He says, I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God.

What kind of effect does the resurrection have on our lives individually?

And more importantly for Paul here in 1 Timothy, what kind of effect does that have on us as a church?

What ought we to look like as a church if we are living with a living God?

And we'll see, big idea for today, that what it means for us as a church to be the church of the living God is to uphold truth and godliness with our lips and with our lives.

To be the church of the living God, to live as a church of the living God is to uphold truth and godliness with our lips and our lives.

All right, another way to put this, or the three points that we'll break this down into, is that the church declares what God is like, the church is designed by who God is, and the church demonstrates God's love.

So it declares what God's like, it's designed by who God is, and demonstrates God's love.

All right, first, the church declares what God is like.

We're actually going to work backwards through these verses, because I think it's easier to lay out.

Paul's packing a whole book of meeting into a

and I think it's easier to unpack it with just these couple of verses by going backwards.

So let's look at verse 16, actually.

And verse 16 is a hymn.

It's a little device to help remind us of what the gospel is and to show us what the gospel is.

He says, "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness.

"He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, "seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, "believed on in the world, taken up in glory."

So the we here in this verse, if we go back to the beginning of the verse, great indeed we confess is the mystery of godliness.

The we here, as we've been seeing as we've been moving through this book, is the church.

Paul's writing to believers, specifically the church at Ephesus.

So a group of believers that were gathering together, just like we're doing today, to worship the Lord and to live together in community.

So the we, the church, confess is to publicly declare something.

We often talk about confessing bad things, but you can publicly declare bad things or good things, right?

And in this case, it's to publicly tell people how great God is.

Great is the mystery, or great, we confess, is the mystery of godliness.

And Paul calls it the mystery of godliness because God didn't tell us everything there is to know about himself all at once.

So prior to Jesus coming, there were some very mysterious things that were said and done in the Old Testament that didn't quite make sense until Jesus came and revealed the Father to us in his death and resurrection.

So there are a lot of things about God that were a mystery, that were not seen until Jesus came and showed them to us.

And Jesus showed them to us, Paul's saying in this little hymn here, by taking on flesh.

God manifested himself in the flesh.

He came in the form of humanity, became human, and revealed God to us by becoming like us in our humanity.

And the main reason, so you're following, I'm just plowing through here, you're staying with me, the main reason he became human was so that he could become killable, to take on a mortal body, so that he could die, and die in our place,

to take the penalty for our sin.

That's what we talked about in depth on Friday night.

He was manifested in the flesh, came in the flesh to show us who God is, and the main thing he wanted us to know about God was that he is willing to pay a great cost, even his own life, to serve his people, to serve and to work for his people.

And we know this wasn't some, when he came to die, right, took on a body to die, that this wasn't some grotesque suicide mission or some act of insanity because God vindicated him in the spirit.

Or he declared, vindicated meaning like he declared Jesus's mission, what he came to do as good.

He put a stamp of approval on Jesus's life and death.

And he did this several times throughout Jesus's life and death.

When Jesus was baptized,

In Matthew 3, the Holy Spirit, or the third person of the Trinity, came in the form of a dove and fluttered down onto him.

And then God said out loud for all to hear, God the Father from heaven said audibly for everybody to hear in attendance there, this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.

He put his stamp of approval on the ministry that Jesus was about to do.

And then later in Jesus' ministry,

He went up on a mountain, and he took Peter, James, and John with him, and he revealed his glory to them.

It's called the transfiguration, where still in a veiled sense, veiled in flesh, but he revealed, uncloaked his glory to them, and God came and audibly affirmed his son again to Peter, James, and John there.

But the greatest vindication of Jesus' life and death on the cross

was that God accepted his sacrifice for his people, on behalf of his people, and he raised him from the dead.

He indicated that Jesus' death, his sacrifice, was pleasing to him by raising his son from the dead on the third day.

Actually raising him, physically raising him on a day in history from the dead, to which Paul says that there are spiritual and physical witnesses.

He says, "...seen by angels..."

proclaimed among the nations.

So this little phrase seen by angels, I knew right away when I read this passage, this was going to be the weirdest phrase.

It kind of stuck out to me as odd.

I'm like, why are we bringing up angels right now?

You know, Jesus came and died.

We're talking about some events in Jesus's life and death.

You know, why are we talking about angels?

But then I thought about it and there were actually quite a few references to angels all throughout Jesus's life.

So before he was born, the angels came to the shepherds.

Well, they came to Joseph and Mary first, but then they came to the shepherds and they declared glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill to men and told them about the baby that was to be born.

And then when Jesus was about to begin his earthly ministry, he went out into the desert

to be tempted and angels attended to him there while he fasted and was tempted in the wilderness.

And then an angel came to him in the garden of Gethsemane right before he was about to die, which was the beginning of the Passion Week, right when he was being presented with the opportunity to maybe run away and escape the task that he was about to be given.

An angel came and strengthened him there in the garden.

Angels witnessed his resurrection.

They sat there on the stone that was rolled away at the empty tomb.

And then when he ascended to heaven, angels came down to comfort his disciples.

And we're told, too, in Revelation 5, that angels right now are in the throne room where Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father saying, "...worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing because of all that he had done on behalf of his people."

So he was seen by angels and he was proclaimed to be who he was by angels throughout and with other physical witnesses throughout his life.

And again, he wasn't just seen and affirmed by angels.

But he was also seen and affirmed by real people, right?

Real people and proclaimed among the nations.

Drew read the passage where Paul's listing the witnesses, right, to the resurrection.

And he's saying they're alive now, right?

500 witnesses, most of whom are alive now.

If you don't believe me, go talk to these guys.

They saw him raised from the dead too.

Real people saw the risen Lord.

Real people told others about it.

Real people died refusing to recant their claims to have seen him  
and talked with him.

Listen, I don't have time to take a deep dive into this.

I'm not.

I'm just going to skip across the surface.

And if you want to talk more about it, I'd be happy to.

But you just don't have large groups of people willingly suffering and dying for a lie or for a  
hoax.

Somebody cracks and somebody blows the whistle if it's a hoax or a lie.

Whether it's Watergate or Deflategate, when the heat gets turned up and heads are going to  
roll, some of you like the Deflategate reference, saw that smirk, Trev.

Somebody turns up the heat.

Somebody cuts a deal, turns everybody else in so that they can get off.

They don't want to suffer and die for something that they know is a lie.

But nobody turned.

None of the witnesses cracked.

And most of them were still alive when the Gospels were written and the New Testament was  
written so that they could be verified and the facts could be checked as these letters were  
circulating and these churches were growing in the face of opposition and persecution.

And it's still growing.

That's the point of the last two lines here in this hymn.

That the church is still growing.

It's believed on in the world.

And Jesus is taken up in the glory.

He's in glory at the right hand of his father, where he's not sitting idle, but where he's interceding on behalf of his people.

Today, we don't have the eyewitnesses to consult.

When Paul wrote these letters and these letters were circulating, some of the eyewitnesses were still alive.

They could be consulted.

We don't have that today.

We have the record.

But what we do have are people who have been and are being changed from the inside out by God through the good news of what Jesus has done.

They're here, right?

These people that have been changed and are being changed are here.

Go ahead and talk to them.

People who have seen the unique beauty of Jesus in his work on the cross and in his resurrection.

People who have found an unusual comfort in his words.

People who have found an unrivaled hope in his death and resurrection that can only be explained as divine beauty and power.

Charles Spurgeon puts it this way.

He says, and when he was a preacher in England, I should not say things without it being in my notes, just in case I get fact-checked.

Charles Spurgeon, Prince of Preachers in England, said this, and when we come to think of it rightly, we see at once that it is a theme for wonder.

Worthy of the consideration of heaven and earth that the infinite God should stoop so low as to comfort finite infallible creatures such as we are Were there no more worlds to be created?

Was there no other deeds of power and glory to be performed?

So that he must come to this poor earth to comfort the sick the sad and the sorrowing The Lord is great in his in the majesty of his power but he's equally great in the condescending character of his love and compassion and through Christ

And even though Christ has been taken up to glory, even though he's there awaiting the Father's prompting to return, he's left us his word, he's left us the Holy Spirit, and he's left us the church as witnesses that he's alive and active and changing people from the inside out in a way that can only be explained by his divine glory.

This is why the church can confess the mystery of godliness, right?

This is why the church can declare what God is like because the church is designed by who God is, right?

Designed or shaped by who God is.

God is, look at verse 15.

In verse 15, we're backing up here.

If I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

God is a living God who is still revealing his resurrection glory to people.

The New Testament's clear.

You don't come to see, truly see, the glory of God we've been talking about on your own, right?

You need the quickening ray that Charles Wesley was writing about.

And the living God is still quickening.

He's still setting hearts free.

Our Lord himself said that he will build his church, that he will build his church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

And he's doing it.

You just have to look to see it.

But sometimes we don't want to see it, right?

God's changing people.

He's building his church.

It's there to see, but we don't want to see it because if God is real and God's alive and active, then he must have opinions and thoughts, right?

Specifically, opinions and thoughts about what I'm doing with my life.

So if there's a living and active God who's changing people and rescuing people, then that living and active God must care about his church and he must care about how you and I live.

Paul says that the church of the living God is the pillar and the buttress of truth.

That's not your truth.

That's not my truth.

That's the truth, God's truth.

If God is real and he's living and active, then I've got to adjust to him, right?

I've got to bring my life into alignment with him, not the other way around.

Eugene Peterson puts it this way.

The Bible isn't consumed with getting us to believe in God.

It assumes that everyone more or less does.

What it's interested in is our response to him.

Will we let God be who he is, majestic and holy, vast and wondrous?

Or will we always be trying to whittle him down to size, confining him within boundaries we're comfortable with?

But then we aren't dealing with the God of creation, the God of exodus, the God of resurrection.

Rather, we're dealing with a reproduction made in our own image, something that's attractive to the masses so it can be marketed to the masses.

To guard against all such blasphemous chumminess with the Almighty, the Bible talks of the fear of the Lord.

And it does so not to scare us, but to bring us to an awesome attention before the overwhelming grandeur of God.

If God's real, it only makes sense that I align with him and not try to make him my personal assistant that makes my life a little better.

I'm going to bring him into my life to fix some things for me, to correct a few problems, to do what I need him to do.

You don't bring the God of the universe who spoke the universe into existence into your life as your personal assistant.

If you've been made alive with Christ, Paul's telling us here, and this is, again, what Paul's telling us here in verses 14 and 15.

He says, I hope to come to you soon, but I'm writing these things to you so that if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God.

So if you've been made alive in Christ, this is what it looks like to live with other people who have been made alive in Christ as well.

The church is designed by who God is, not only to declare what God is like, which Paul does in verse 16, but to also demonstrate godly love or demonstrate who God is.

I just want to run through, we've been talking about this for months now, so I just want to run through a list of some of the things that we've seen over the last couple months, a description of what it looks like to walk with God and to demonstrate God's love as his church in fellowship with other believers.

In chapter 1, 3-4, Paul says that if we're being designed by who God is, that we'll teach the truth.

Then in verse 5, he says, we'll practice what we preach.

In verse eight, he says, we won't use God's rules to promote ourselves at other people's expenses, right?

We'll follow God's rules because we love him and wanna look like him, not to manipulate other people.

He says also that God's grace will give us the freedom to admit and confess our sin to one another.

Also says your sin and faults, your sin and your faults will be bigger in your eyes than other people's sins and faults.

That doesn't happen on our own, right?

Also, if we're changed by God, then love will confront those who are teaching or living out of step with God's truth.

It says at the beginning of chapter 2 that we'll pray, and we'll pray, and we'll pray some more for everyone.

Not just the people we like, not just the people that are close to us, but we'll pray for everyone.

He also says in 2.8 that men will lift hands in prayer, not throw hands in a fight or a quarrel all the time.

He also says women will desire to adorn themselves with God-glorifying good works, not necessarily be obsessed with the hottest clothes and jewelry.

And he also says that leadership will be dignified in the church.

And he gives a whole list of what it means to lead in a dignified way.

That's what it looks like.

To be the church of the living God is to uphold truth and godliness with our lips and with our lives.

You know, we see our living God at work changing hearts and lives in our midst all the time.

But that also means that he's really there and he really cares about our lives and both individually and our lives together.

And as we see at the end of the passage here, that not only are we called to live out that truth, not only are we called to live out godliness, but we're called to declare the mystery of godliness, to declare the gospel to our friends, our neighbors, our loved ones, everyone around us.

A living God that's still working in the world means that the church confesses the mystery of godliness.

Now, real quick, we've tried to give you, over the past couple of years,

just some tools to help you simplify the gospel, to make it memorable and easy to share, kind of like Paul does at the end of chapter three here.

He gives them a little hymn to help them remember the content of the gospel.

We've typically used kind of like a four-word breakdown of the gospel, God, man, Christ, response.

I'm not gonna break it down right now for you, but that's one of the go-to ones.

Or if you're a little bit older, you might remember like the Romans Road, where there's a couple of verses in Romans that clearly explain the gospel.

Well, Bob Johnson has drawn my attention to a more visual way.

So God, man, Christ response, you got to remember words, right?

And then you got to remember some words that go with it.

Still got to remember words.

The gospel is news, it's words.

But Bob Johnson's drawn my attention to a little more visual way of explaining the gospel, which is used by, and I think it was invented by, the duck commander, Phil Robertson.

So it must be good.

And it kind of goes like this.

So some of you received these bookmarks on the way in.

If you didn't, there'll be some guys at the door on the way out that'll hand some bookmarks to you that have these visuals on it.

And in the meantime, I'm going to ask my assistant, Sophia, to come up.

Because Bob made me this visual.

It hangs on the wall in my office.

And I'll hold it up.

So if you're way in the back and you can't see it, don't worry.

You'll get a bookmark with this stuff on it too.

But I'll just explain it really quickly.

All right, so here's how this goes.

Again, this is just a tool to help you declare the mystery of godliness, right?

The gospel.

First thing that we have here is an arrow pointing down, right?

Indicating that God loved the world so much that he sent his only son to be born of a virgin in human form to bring the word of God to people on earth.

You can come up here and not hold it over your head if you want.

That looks uncomfortable.

All right, next is a cross.

He was crucified on a cross and shed his blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

Now, the only one that's a little confusing, and I'll help you with it right now, is that there's an upside down U, right?

And that's supposed to be a tomb, right?

It's supposed to look like a tomb because he was buried in a tomb, but he didn't stay there.

And we got an arrow pointing up after the tomb.

Then on the third day, he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to be at the right hand of

of God the Father, right?

So up out of the tomb, ascended to be at the right hand of God the Father.

But we got one more arrow pointing down because someday he will return to earth to judge the living and the dead to be with his people for all of eternity.

All right, you can have a seat.

Great job.

Pretty easy, right?

And if you're a little more visually oriented, I think the pictures can be super helpful.

So again, there's gonna be some guys in the back that make sure that you get a little copy of that with the explanation on it.

It's just a tool, right?

It's a tool to help us declare the mystery of godliness because the mystery of godliness, as Paul says, is great, right?

And great is our God who has shown us his matchless glory in his son, Jesus, who is our living hope that we celebrate today.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, you are great and matchless in your beauty and splendor.

Lord, you didn't seek to show and demonstrate your glory and your power and your might by riding first and foremost in on a white horse to stamp down and destroy your enemies.

But Lord, you came and died for your enemies.

Lord, you exercised your might and power to give yourself up at great cost, at the cost of your life, on behalf of your people.

Lord, you served your people in the only way that would cost you anything, and it cost you everything.

Lord, you are great and beautiful beyond description to marvelous for words, as the songwriter says.

So Lord, we celebrate you and what you've done, both at a point in history, but also in our hearts and in our lives.

And we ask that you would continue to do that, Lord, both in us and through us in other people's lives as well.

Lord, thank you for the gift of your son.

Thank you for the resurrection power and the living hope that we have in him.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.