

1 Timothy 3:14-16 - Who's In Charge of The House?

Imagine you invite someone over to your house for dinner. They walk in and immediately start making changes. They try moving your couch to a different spot, take your pictures down, try to convince you to remodel the kitchen. What would your genuine reaction be? You'd probably tell them to stop, because it's your house, not theirs. You get to decide how you want your personal house to look.

Or if you rent a house, can you just start remodeling? Can you break down the walls and redo the bathroom? No! Why? Because you aren't the owner. You may live there, but they own it.

Yet that is exactly what people do with the Church. God is the owner, yet they try to dictate to God how He should run His house, because they know better than He does. We do this all the time. We make decisions in the church and in our lives without ever consulting Him. We don't ask Him what He wants to do in the church or how He wants His church to run or what events He wants us to do.

Most of the time, we make committees and come up with events or ideas and then ask Him to bless them, not if He wants them. We treat Him as a butler rather than the owner. This is why Paul advises Timothy, after talking about leaders and services, that the essential thing is remembering that God is the one in charge, and to just let Him lead the Church.

In these last verses of chapter 3, Paul is reminding Timothy of two keys for successful ministry, remember who's in charge and remember what the foundation is!

1. Remember Who The Owner Is! V14-15

1. **3:14-15 - "14 These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; 15 but if I am delayed, 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,..."**
2. The word Church in the Greek is Ekklesia, it means a called out assembly for a purpose and was a general word in the Greek, not a specific one for believers. But a true church is a group of people called by God for His purpose. This is a great reminder that a church is the people, not the building. When we move from here, the Church is moving out of a building to another one. This building isn't the church, we are.

3. Paul wanted to tell Timothy all this in person, but knew circumstances could delay his return to Ephesus. So in case he didn't get the chance, he wanted to leave Timothy with everything he could to help him administer God's Church for the purpose that God desires for it. He wanted to give a guidebook for Timothy to know how he should conduct himself as a pastor and to properly lead God's church God's way.
4. Paul knew inevitably people would try to take control of the church. To run it their way, so Timothy needed to know how God wants His home to run, how His children should live, what it should be like as His house.
5. I've run across a lot of people that come to our church, say how much they didn't like their old church, then proceed to try to make our church their old church. Why are you trying to change the church? Didn't you leave it because you didn't like it?
6. Maybe you left it because you didn't really encounter God there. Then why are you trying to make this church become the same place where you could not encounter Him?
7. It is hard for us as humans to realize that church is not about a human pastor, it's not about a social club, it's not about events. It's hard for us to not be the hero of the story. But none of us are the hero or the savior of the church. Jesus is.
8. We had a problem, the mall didn't renew our contract here. We needed a new place. Some people likely believed they'd be the hero, finding the new home for Calvary Chapel of Puerto Rico. Guess what, God is taking care of it with us barely lifting a finger. We had to do a bit of grunt work but God placed all the right people in the right locations, and used it to teach many of us that it's His church and He won't allow His church to be homeless.
9. He is the hero, lord and owner of the house, He is the one in charge. Not you or me. A lot of people come up and try to get us to do fund raisers and ministry fairs and that we have to do this or that event. Guess what, God has shown through the years He does not want us to do fundraisers.
10. I've forgotten that at times, and then He showed me. We tried something that was kind of a fund raiser and I felt horrible, disgusted. Because it's not what He wanted. He let us do it. But it's not what He wanted for us. And I learned that lesson. I don't want to repeat it.
11. The Church is His house:
 1. He is the architect
 2. He is the builder

3. He provides for it
4. He lives in it
5. He is honored and rules there.
6. He purchased it with His own blood.

12. When a place claiming to be a church doesn't allow Him to rule it, He will simply leave. Look at the churches of revelation. Is there not one where He said He is outside knocking and they wouldn't let Him in? You can claim to be a church, you can even grow in numbers and influence, and yet God is not in it. You can actually succeed in building a church as a business. You absolutely can. But true transformation will never take place in many lives because it is not run by His Spirit but by human effort and ingenuity.
13. A better word than house is God's Household, or God's Family. And God has given His family food to live from, His word. This is why motivational speeches, thoughtful stories, or any of that will never truly feed you spiritually. I was blessed by Gabriel and Valeria. They shared how they felt they were spiritually starving at their church, and upon coming here, they finally feel they receive an actual meal.
14. It is by God's Word that we find the truth and are fed in His family, so why would we change the simple teaching and preaching of God's Word to anything else? Some people describe it as feeding goats instead of the sheep, as the Bible describes the unbelievers as goats and believers as sheep. Though we want unbelievers to come and be saved, we primarily want to feed the sheep, and by empowering and training the believers with His Word, they will then be able to speak to unbelievers and bring them to faith.
15. Because it's His family, kids sometimes need discipline, less they become tyrants and rebels, which is why a church does need rules and structure, so there are clear guidelines. But these are to train the kids, not punish them.
16. Church should also be the place of encouragement where weary believers find a family to encourage and build them up to continue fighting the good fight in a Christ rejecting world.
17. We, as His children and servants, don't get to call the shots. We are called to ask Him how we should conduct ourselves in His house and best serve Him and bring Him honor. It is not our church, it is His church, and we are invited to be part of it.

2. Remember The Foundation of The House! V15b-16

1. **3:15b-16 - "the pillar and ground of the truth. 16 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.”**

2. Jesus said in the Gospels to build on the solid foundation He has established, not on the sand, lest the storm waters take away the house. So God's people have to remember what the foundation of the church is.
3. A lot of churches build upon a pastor or figure. Some build on a denomination. Many grow decrepit and fossilize as their foundation is their legacy.
4. But a true church of God is built on the foundation of truth. Paul says the church is the pillar and ground of the truth. That doesn't mean the Church is the truth, but it is the place where the truth is proclaimed. Pillars in the ancient world where important edicts were posted so all could see.
5. This was an especially good example for Ephesus because the temple of Artemis/Diana had around 127 pillars. So it was a clear visual illustration for those who would hear as Paul described God's church.
6. The word ground can also mean bulwark. The Church is also the place where God's truth is taught and defended. A church has to be ready to stand for what God says is true, even when unpopular.
7. And what is the truth? Paul shares it in what scholars believe to be an ancient hymn or creed of the early church, and the whole message is a concise version of the Gospel and person of Jesus. The foundation the church is built on is based on the work of Jesus alone. We are but the columns on which His glory is proclaimed. Our duty is to display His power and life to the world. He is the hero of the story.
 1. God was manifested in the flesh: An essential truth of the Gospel is that Jesus is God become man. He shares both natures. He fully became human so He could become the savior of humanity. The incarnation, that God the Son added to His deity humanity.
 2. Justified by the Spirit: He was declared by the Spirit to be the righteous one, and though not everyone believed Him, he was vindicated by the Spirit, as the Spirit empowered Him in His humanity to do miracles and raise Himself from the dead. The Holy Spirit now convicts us of our sin and calls us to believe in the work and person of Jesus alone.
 3. Seen by angels: the Bible makes clear Angels actively observe and are amazed by the work of Jesus. They watched Him during His earthly ministry and even now are left confused and

studying how He works with humans. They are witnesses of the Gospel

1. *Spurgeon - "The apostle mentions this to show the greatness of our religion, since the noblest intellects are interested in it. Did you ever hear of angels hovering around the assemblies of philosophical societies?"*
2. *Spurgeon - "The Godhead was seen in Christ by angels, as they had never seen it before. They had beheld the attribute of justice, they had seen the attribute of power, they had marked the attribute of wisdom, and seen the Prerogative of sovereignty; but never had angels seen love, and condescension, and tenderness, and pity, in God as they saw these things resplendent in the person and the life of Christ."*
4. Preached among the Gentiles: Another way of translating it is preached unto the nations. Paul himself was involved in that the whole world would hear the good news. The Gospel is for all people. A call to come and receive the life of Jesus, believe in His forgiveness of sin and promise of life. To be brought into a personal relationship with Him and experience His life in you.
 1. I would not neglect saying this today, I want to invite you, if you haven't done so, to truly embrace His life. To truly believe the Gospel. He has forgiven you and made it possible for you to have a personal relationship with Him and receive His life. So step in and do so! It is a free gift He has made available to you! All you have to do is believe in His truth, and you will be made part of His household!
5. Believed on in the world: as the Gospel has gone out to all corners, we today testify that He has been believed on in the world. As His Word goes forth, it builds faith in the hearts of people and they believe Him.
 1. *Spurgeon - "God's way of creating faith in men's hearts is not by pictures, music, or symbols, but by the hearing of the word of God. This may seem a strange thing, and strange let it seem, for it is a mystery, and a great mystery, but a fact beyond all controversy; for ever let the church maintain that Christ is to be preached unto the Gentiles."*

6. Received up in glory: in Acts 1 the disciples saw Him ascend back into Heaven, to sit at the Father's right hand as He had completed the work of salvation. He now waits there, praying and interceding for us so we may stand strong in faith, knowing He will return in the same glory for His church.
8. The key to Christian transformation is ultimately this truth on which we build the church, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As we behold the hero, Jesus, we are transformed by His life. As we get to know Him personally, we are transformed . As we believe and listen to His Word, we are transformed.
3. He is the owner, lord and master of the house. He builds His church and has declared the gates of hell will never overcome it. So we must behold and proclaim Him. We must seek what He wants for His family, and run the church, not by human wisdom or ingenuity, not by business practices or promotional gimmicks or flashing lights and events, but by His Spirit and leading as the Head of the House and the only true hero of the church!

Discussion Questions:

1. Who is really in charge of the Church?

We emphasized that the Church belongs to God, not us. What are some ways we can unintentionally begin treating the Church as though it belongs to us? What might it look like to genuinely let Jesus lead?

2. How does knowing that the Church is a “family” change the way we treat one another?

The message describes the Church as God’s household or family, where believers are fed by God's Word, encouraged, disciplined, and built up. How should this affect the way we respond to other people in the church?

3. Have you ever tried to get God to bless something you decided to do rather than asking Him what He wanted?

The message challenges the tendency to make our plans first and then ask God to bless them. Why is it sometimes difficult to seek God's direction before making our plans, especially in ministry or church life?

4. What happens when a church builds its foundation on something other than Jesus?

The message warns against building a church around a pastor, denomination, tradition, legacy, or human methods. Though these aren’t bad in and of themselves, what are some dangers of building a church this way? Why is it essential for the Church to remain grounded in the truth of the Gospel and the person of Jesus?

5. Which part of the Gospel in verse 16 stands out most to you?

Paul describes Jesus as God manifested in the flesh, justified by the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, and received up in glory. Which of these truths about Jesus most strengthens your faith, and why?

6. If Jesus is the Head and “hero” of the Church, what should change in the way we serve?

The message concludes that we should seek what Jesus wants for His family rather than relying on human wisdom, ingenuity, business practices, or our own ideas. What is one area of your life or service where you need to surrender control and allow Jesus to take His rightful place?