

May 2nd The House of God
May 9th The Ecclesia of the Living God
May 16th The Pillar and Ground of the Truth

INTRODUCTION

You remember that we studied through the doctrine of the selection of deacons during the first few months of last year. So we are skipping 1 Timothy 3:8-13, having been over them together so recently.

We are to govern our conduct in the church by what we have been taught so far in this letter

-Chapter 1 - we are to maintain sound doctrine

-Chapter 2 - we are to pray, and to act as is appropriate for men and as is appropriate for women in worship

-Chapter 3 - we are to choose for pastors and deacons only such men as are qualified

and we are to govern our conduct in the church by what we will be taught in the remaining three chapters of this letter.

As we consider these things we are taught, about how to conduct ourselves in the church, we do so in light of what the church is. What we call, “the church” is here described in three terms, each of which helps put these instructions to our conscience in such a way as to convince us of the true and binding nature of the instructions.

What we call, ‘the church’ is here described as

1. the house of God
2. the church or assembly or congregation of the living God
3. the pillar and ground of the truth

Today we consider the first. God willing, we will take up the other two each of the next two weeks.

We behave ourselves, or conduct ourselves in the church, as our Lord has taught us by His apostle, in light of the fact that what we call, “the church” is the very house of God.

TEXT

1 Timothy 3:14-15

BODY

We behave ourselves, or conduct ourselves in the church, as our Lord has taught us by His apostle, in light of the fact that what we call, “the church” is the very house of God.

- I. In the Old Covenant, a Man-Made Structure Was the House of God
 - A. Of course God does not need a house for Himself
 - 1. as if He needs shelter
 - 2. as if He can be contained in a structure
 - 3. as if He is not omnipresent: everywhere all the time,
 - B. But He is merciful to us sinful creatures; He condescends to show Himself present among His people; He is “God with us;” He shows us where we may come to worship Him, to express our repentance and seek forgiveness of sins from Him, to be justified in His sight through faith in Him, to give Him thanks, to pray to Him about what troubles us
 - C. First, from the time of Moses to the time of David, the Tabernacle
 - 1. Jesus called the tabernacle “the house of God” Matthew 12:4
 - D. Then, from the time of Solomon to the time Jesus came, the Temple
 - 1. Jesus called the temple God’s house Matthew 21:13 , quoting Isaiah 56:7
 - E. Ordered by God how it should be built, then built by the hands of men, as the Holy Spirit enabled them
 - F. Worship in it to be performed
 - 1. just as God commanded
 - 2. by priests and servants ordained as God directed
 - G. Worshipers came to the tabernacle or temple from time to time, then left
 - H. When the tabernacle, the tent, was still the place of worship, the righteous, who had faith in God’s promises, delighted to be in that house, did not want to leave, and longed to remain there, like those who could remain there because they worked there, or even like birds who had found a place to nest there
 - I. When the temple was a huge place in Jerusalem, which it was when the Lord Jesus came, some of the righteous devoted themselves to God in the temple, and remained there, praying and looking for Christ to come, like the old widow Anna

In the Old Covenant, a man-made structure was the house of God

- II. Since Jesus Came and Instituted the New Covenant, the Tabernacle and Temple No Longer Are the House of God
- A. Matthew 23:37-24:2
 - B. The Old Covenant nation of Israel refused to worship God in His tabernacle and temple as He directed
 - 1. two of the first priests offered strange fire on the altar of incense
 - 2. later priests corrupted the worship, as Eli and his sons
 - 3. King David's men put the ark on a cart and touched it
 - 4. for hundreds of years Israel lost the Bible, and didn't even have a copy or know what it said, until a copy was found during remodeling of the temple
 - 5. the worshipers would worship idols, then come to the temple to worship God
 - 6. the worshipers even worshiped idols in the temple itself, as the angel showed Ezekiel
 - 7. when, after the exile, the nation had the scriptures again, and turned away from idolatry, the scribes and Pharisees, along with the chief priests and Sadducees, so perverted what the Bible said as to set aside the true meaning of God's commands in favor of their man-made traditions
 - C. So, Christ at last called it not "the house of God" or "My house," but "your house" and told them it was being left to them desolate, then He left it and has not returned
 - D. When Jesus died, the veil in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, showing that the whole ceremonial system of the Old Covenant, including the temple itself, was abrogated, cancelled, expired
 - E. Within one generation, in A.D. 70. the temple was utterly torn down, just as Jesus had said, and it has remained so for 2,000 years

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III. Now the Church is the House of God

- A. 1 Tim 3:15 "the house of God"
- B. The time has come when true worshipers do not worship at a temple in Jerusalem; but we lift up holy hands in prayer in all places; and wherever two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus Christ, He is present with us by His Holy Spirit
- C. Not meaning that the church building is the house of God; no, it is only a physical structure where we can be sheltered from cold and rain and from the heat of summer
- D. Instead, the disciples of Jesus Christ whom He has gathered together are God's house
- E. Think what blessedness!
 - 1. one day here is better than a thousand elsewhere
 - 2. we would rather be here than in the finest luxury the world can offer

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IV. We Need to Know How to Behave in the House of God

- A. Clearly, in the OT, men were not allowed to do whatever they pleased in the house of God
- B. You know from your own house that the members of the household are not allowed to do whatever comes naturally in your house
- C. In a corrupt household, where things are not as they should be, someone other than the master of the house sets and enforces the rules of behavior
- D. But in a household where things are as they should be, the master of the house sets the rules and enforces them, and the members of the household obey them
- E. Remember what happened to
 - 1. those men who did not obey the laws of the house of God
 - a) Nadab and Abihu
 - b) Eli and his sons
 - c) Uzzah
 - 2. let us in the house of God not repeat that folly
 - a) not fall into the condemnation of the devil
 - b) not fall into the snare of the devil
- F. We are to govern our conduct in the church by what we have been taught so far in this letter
 - 1. -Chapter 1 - we are to maintain sound doctrine
 - 2. -Chapter 2 - we are to pray, and to act as is appropriate for men and as is appropriate for women in worship
 - 3. -Chapter 3 - we are to choose for pastors and deacons only such men as are qualified
- G. And we are to govern our conduct in the church by what we will be taught in the remaining three chapters of this letter.

CONCLUSION

This letter in the Bible instructs us how one ought to conduct himself, how he ought to behave in the church. To convince us of the truth of this, to press on our conscience the importance of it, the scriptures here speak to us in light of what the church really *is*. What we call “the church” is the very house of God.

In the Old Covenant, a man-made structure was the house of God

Since Jesus Came and instituted the New Covenant, the tabernacle and temple no longer are the house of God

Now the church is the house of God

We need to know how to behave in the house of God

Stephen - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Psalm 84:1-2

Thad - Scripture Reading - Psalm 84:3-10

Roel - Congregational Prayer

Benediction: Psalm 84:11-12

Rita - Prelude

Rita - Trinity 432 "Jesus, What a Friend for Sinners"

Allison - Trinity 2 "God, My King"

Allison - Trinity 421 "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me"

JRY

in light of the fact that the church is the very house of God

Calvin:

not only has he received us to be his children by the grace of adoption, but he also dwelleth in the midst of us.

Poole:

a people in and amongst whom he dwelleth, and amongst whom he is worshipped; and of whom he hath a great care, and for which he hath a great love, Christ having died for it

Gill:

called a house, in allusion either to an edifice, it being a spiritual house built of lively stories, or true believers, upon the foundation Jesus Christ, and who also is the door into it; the pillars of it are the ministers of the Gospel; and the windows are the ordinances, and which also are the entertainment in it: or else to a family, as this is sometimes called the household of God, and of faith; the family named of Christ, of which he is the master; and in which are fathers, young men and children; in which ministers are stewards; and which is regulated by good and wholesome laws: and it is called the house of God, because as an edifice, it is of his building and repairing, and in which he dwells; and as a family, is what he provides for

Clarke:

in allusion to the ancient tabernacle; which was God's house, and in which the symbol of the Divine Majesty dwelt. So the Christian Church is God's house, and every believer is a habitation of God through the Spirit.

Barnes:

The church is called the "house of God," because it is that in which he dwells. Formerly, his unique residence was in the temple at Jerusalem; now that the temple is destroyed, it is the church of Christ, among his people.

VWS:

An O.T. phrase, used of the temple.

Ellicott:

The image is from the Old Testament, where "the house of God" denotes, in the first place, the Temple of Jerusalem, and, in the second, the covenant-people. It is here used for the congregation of believers among whom God dwells—the true and enduring Church of living souls. Of this great spiritual temple, the corner-stone of which is Christ, the Jerusalem house on Mount Zion, with its marvellous work and its gorgeous and elaborate symbolism, was the poor, perishable, hand-wrought model.

Fairbairn:

in former times the expression "house of God" had been much associated with the material fabric of the temple, which was, in a sense that nothing of like sort could be in the gospel dispensation, the habitation or dwelling-place of Deity (2Ch_5:14; Isa_56:7; Mat_21:13). But even in Old Testament times, the more enlightened believers understood that the temple, with its sacred furniture and services, was an emblem of God's fellowship with His people, who therefore were then, as now, the only proper habitation of God on earth: hence such passages as Num_12:7, Isa_66:2; and those in which habitual communion with God is identified with dwelling in His house, Psa_23:6, Psa_27:4; or having God Himself for a sanctuary and dwelling-place, Psa_90:1, Eze_11:16. There was a mutual indwelling—they in God, and God in them. But, in accordance with the spiritual character of the new dispensation, this truth is

brought out more distinctly now, and that, too, in earlier parts of Scripture than in the passage before us. Thus, in Eph_2:20-22, the church, as composed of believing Jews and Gentiles, is represented as a glorious building, raised on Christ as the foundation: an holy temple in the Lord, or habitation of God through the Spirit. A quite similar representation is given in 1Pe_2:5; 1Pe_4:17, and again in Heb_3:6, where, with reference to Christ as a Son in His own house, it is added: "Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." In these passages, the house, temple, or habitation of God is plainly associated with individuals, the individuals addressed by the apostle, contemplated as in living union with Christ; and in the strict sense it can only be predicated of such that they are God's house; for in their case alone is there the real link that connects the human with the divine—the spiritual habitation with the glorious inhabitant.

Carroll:

It is a house for divine habitation. The letter to the Ephesians expresses the thought. (See Eph_2:21-22.)

RWP:

Probably here "household of God," that is "the family of God" rather than "the house (or temple) of God." Christians as yet had no separate houses of worship and oikos commonly means "household." Christians are the naos (sanctuary) of God (1Co_3:16.; 2Co_6:16), and Paul calls them oikeioi tou theou (Eph_2:19) "members of God's family." It is conduct as members of God's family (oikos) that Paul has in mind.

1 Tim 3:15b

TYN the housse of God which is the congregacion of the livinge God the pillar and grounde of trueth
GEN ye house of God, which is the Church of the liuing God, the pillar and ground of trueth.

KJV the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

NKJV the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

ESV the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth