

1 Timothy 3:14-16

<sup>14</sup>These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly;

<sup>15</sup>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, the pillar and ground of the truth.

<sup>16</sup>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 Church Is the Guardian and Proclaimer of The Truth*** **1 Timothy 3:14-16**

INTRO:

The last two times we were here in **1 Timothy 3:14-16**, we were attempting to get a vision of God's purpose for His local church in this place. We looked at two of the three pictures Paul painted for us in this text. *"I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."*

We discovered, first, that we create an atmosphere of spiritual growth by striving to continually be the family of God. We seek to follow God as our Father and to love our brothers and sisters in Christ actively. Second, we sustain an atmosphere or spiritual growth by recognizing that we are the church of the Living God. He is among us, in us, and is not silent. Today, we turn to the third and last picture which is a compound picture. We are in the language of our text, *"the pillar and support of the truth."* Our study will fall under two headings.

***I. What Does This Picture Mean?***

***II. How Do We Carry Out What This Picture Tells Us?***

***I. What Does This Picture Mean?***

**1 Timothy 3:14–16** *"These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; 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, 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.”***

A. The church is the pillar of the truth. This picture is strange to us in the twenty-first century. Pillars are not a common feature in our architecture. However, pillars were a prominent feature in Greek and Roman architecture in Paul’s day.

1. When we think of a pillar we usually think of pillars in a building supporting the roof. We see in our mind’s eye a Greek building with pillars in the front.

2. A second use of pillars might not be so obvious to us. Many times a pillar bore testimony to something. The term stele or stela is an archeological term for any upright stone or pillar. Many times it had an inscription as a monument, or a marker for a great event. Many times a stele bore testimony or was a witness of something. The Bible refers to stones or pillars like this several times. For example, in **Genesis 31:45**, the stone that was the witness of the covenant between Jacob and Laban.

***“So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar.”***

Remember our friend Samuel in **1 Samuel 7:12**?

***“Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and named it Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the LORD has helped us.’”***

3. Perhaps, the most important example for us is the two pillars which Solomon erected in the Temple in **1 Kings 7:13-22**. They were called ***Jachin***, which means ***“He shall establish,”*** and ***Boas***, which means ***“it is strength.”*** From this we learn that we are to be as His Church standing testimonies to the truth of God’s Word. I think the song that we used to teach our children contains the idea Paul is driving at here. *“Do you know O Christian you’re a sermon in shoes?/ Do you know O Christian you’re a sermon in shoes?/ Jesus counts upon you to spread the Gospel news/ So walk it and talk it a sermon in shoes.”*

4. We read a New Testament reference to this pillar idea in **Revelation 3:12** where John took down a letter (the Lord Jesus is dictating) to the church of Philadelphia. He wrote,

***“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.”***

Our Lord will make us a trophy of His grace. Our very presence will bear witness to His great grace and glory.

B. Second, the church is the protector of the Truth. He did not say the truth is built on the church. Rather, he wrote the Lord Christ charged His church to protect and support the truth. God gave His truth, the Word of God, and the Gospel to His church. This is a sacred trust. This is what we are to teach, preach, and live. The word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is our message. There are many so-called churches today that have forgotten this charge.

1. We are not only called to proclaim the truth we are sometimes called upon to defend and support it. In **Jude 3** we read,  
*“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”*

We do this with what we do in teaching it and in how the church lives the Bible.

2. We also read in,  
**1 Peter 3:15** *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”*

## ***II. How Do We Carry Out What This Picture Tells Us?***

A. So, we have discovered that we are to be three things as God’s church here.

1. First, we are God’s Family. We discovered this involved two major things. **[1]** God is Father of the family. We let Him lead. **[2]** We love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

2. Then we learned that we are the church of the living God. Which means **[1]** we need to love Christ in His Church and **[2]** we need to recognize Christ is always here with us in His Church and is concerned with what we do.

3. Today, we looked at the third and last picture in this passage. We are the pillar and the protection of the truth.

B. Again there are two things we must do.

1. First we must understand what the truth is. It is encapsulated for us in **verse 16**.  
*“By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: God who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.”*

This is the essence of the Gospel. We need to know what the Gospel is in our lives and live it as living testimonies to the World.

2. Second, we need to do our best to give this Gospel to others. **Philippians 2:14-16**, says,

*“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the Word of Life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.”*

There are two ways to translate the present participle rendered *“hold fast”* here. Hold fast to it, or hold it out to others. We need to be doing both as the church of God as His pillars and supporters of the truth.

**Hymn #280 *I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord***