

The Pillar And Ground Of The Truth

Introduction. In 1 Timothy 3:15, Paul referred to the church as the “pillar and ground of the truth.” This verse follows a chapter of instructions from Paul to Timothy regarding the qualifications of elders and deacons of the local church. Paul’s intent is to impress Timothy with the importance of the church’s leadership by reminding him that the church must preserve, defend and proclaim the truth to future generations.

God has established His church in the midst of the world to hold up the truth as a pillar supports a roof; and to keep it unshaken as a firm foundation supports a building. If the church does not give support and steadiness to the divine truth, it might possibly perish from the earth.

I. *The Truth Defined*

A. The truth defined by exclusion.

1. It is not political truth.
 - a) The church does not and should not have any political connections.
 - b) The church is not the pillar and ground of ever-changing political theories.
2. It is not philosophy.
 - a) Philosophy is also an ever-changing field of study. What may be good philosophy today may be considered bad philosophy tomorrow.
 - b) Truth, on the other hand, is fixed and does not change.
3. It is not science.
 - a) Although the Bible does have statements which support science, it is not a science textbook.
 - b) Science is a lot like philosophy because it is particularly subject to change.
4. It is not theology.
 - a) Theology is at best nothing more than the word of God diluted by human opinion. It is divine truth which has been strained through human intellect.
 - b) Theology has perhaps done more over the centuries to divide the Lord’s body than anything else.

B. The truth defined by inclusion.

1. It is the facts of the gospel.
 - a) God loved the world (John 3:16; James 1:17-18).
 - b) Jesus died, was buried and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
2. It is the commands of the gospel.
 - a) One must believe, repent and be baptized (Acts 16:31; 2:38).

- b) One must then be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10).
- 3. It is the promises of the gospel.
 - a) There is care and protection of the Father (Matthew 6:33-34).
 - b) We can have eternal life (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

II. ***The Truth Preserved***

- A. Retain the standard of sound words (2 Timothy 1:13).
 - 1. The church must sound forth and hold fast the truth on the whole counsel of God.
 - 2. This will mean preaching and teaching on the church, sin, morality, the home, etc.
- B. Speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine (Titus 2:1).
 - 1. Titus was to teach and preach sound or healthy doctrine. This was in contrast to the false teachers which he was combating.
 - 2. All religious confusion has ultimately been brought about by a departure from sound doctrine.
- C. Exemplify the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
 - 1. We are the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14).
 - 2. Because we are "living epistles," we should strive to be doers of the word and not hearers only (2 Corinthians 3:2; James 1:22).

III. ***The Truth Proclaimed***

- A. The church is working under a commission and commandment (Mark 16:15-16).
 - 1. Because of this commission, we are forced to consider how we are reproducing spiritually. In how many hearts has the seed been planted by us? How many have been led in the direction of Christ because of something I did or said?
 - a) The example of the Thessalonians ought to be followed (1 Thessalonians 1:6-8).
 - b) If we will water and plant, God will cause the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6).
 - 2. The truth must be proclaimed in order to set a person free (John 8:32). If we do not have desire to set others free from sin, then we are lacking in our love.
- B. The Lord "opens doors" for those prepared to serve.
 - 1. The scriptures often speak of an "open door."
 - a) Paul had an "open door" at Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:9).
 - b) Paul had another "open door" at Troas (2 Corinthians 2:12-13).
 - c) But these doors are opened only when we are prepared (Revelation 3:8).
 - 2. Therefore, if we desire to have doors opened, we must prepare our-

selves.

- a) We all should be prepared for every good work (2 Timothy 2:20-22).
- b) This applies to congregations as well as individuals.
 - (1) Individuals must prepare themselves to be able to teach, or to lead souls to those ready to teach.
 - (2) Congregations must be ready to bring new converts into the family of God where they can be nurtured during a vital stage of their new life in Christ.
- c) What if we as individuals and as a congregation are not prepared? Can we really expect the Lord to us in His providence? Can we really expect Him to "open a door" for a congregation if it is made up of uncaring and unprepared Christians?

Conclusion. The truth of Christ is constant and never changes to meet the needs of the age. Therefore, the church must be emphatic in proclaiming this truth to mankind. The church must take her stand and proclaim to the world that divine truth has been settled for all time.

It is this spirit that encountered Pharisaic Judaism, met the philosophers on Mars Hill and marched triumphantly to Rome to topple paganism from its throne and bury it in a nameless grave. It is this same spirit that would conquer the world today, but not until we awaken to our responsibility and duty of being the pillar and ground of the truth.