

1Timothy 3:14–15

The Urgency of Ecclesiology: Why Proper Behavior and Structure in the Church Is So Important

Thursday, December 8, 2022 ◻ Read 1 Timothy 3:14–15

Questions from the Scripture text: What is the apostle doing (v14)? Despite what hope? What does this show about the urgency of what he has written? What possibility does he consider in v15? What about three things about the church fuel this urgency... Whose house is it? What is true about the church's God? What is the church's role/relationship to the truth?

Why is organizing the church God's way so urgent? 1Timothy 3:14–15 looks forward to the second reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these two verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **organizing the church God's way was urgent enough to write about because of its relationship to God, the character of God, and its purpose from God.**

Timothy had been Paul's apprentice for a long time. And Paul was hoping to be reunited with his apprentice soon. Now, in these two verses, Paul emphasizes the needfulness of this letter and therefore the urgency of its content: that Timothy ("you," singular) might know how to conduct himself. That he might know how to conduct himself as he puts a stop to creative theology in the church (cf. 1:3) and lead the church back into proper public ministry and organization (chs. 2–3). Why couldn't this wait? Why was it so urgent that it needed to be written right away?

The letter was urgent because the church is the household of God. God loves His creatures. God loves especially those creatures whom He made in His own image. How much more those whom He has created new *in His Son* (cf. Eph 2:10) and adopted as His family *in His Son* (cf. Gal 4:4–6)!

The apostle is about to argue that a man must prioritize his own household (cf. 5:8). But the church is to be treated as God's household! God's own family! In an ordinary family when everything has gone off the rails, it is necessary that the one appointed to lead the house immediately bring the family together and put everything back into order. Letting harm continue to them is to deny the faith and be worse than an unbeliever.

The letter was urgent because the church is the church of the living God. It is not the church of a figment of the imagination or the church of a distant and uninterested God. It is the church of Yahweh, the God Who is. Being is inherent to Himself, so there is nowhere that He is not. Everything continually depends upon Him for existence, so He is continuously active.

God especially makes Himself known in the midst of His people as Yahweh, the covenant God. The church is His house not only as a household but as a temple or, more specifically, a tabernacle. Jesus is the embodiment of this as "He Who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands" (cf. Rev 2:2). His immediate, active presence presses an urgency upon the church for reformation and repentance. So, the letter is urgent not only because of what it is to God (His household), but because of what God is to His church (the living God).

The letter was urgent because the church gets its purpose from God. It is "the pillar and ground [buttress] of the truth." The Lord has entrusted the church with the truth as a deposit and responsibility. He Who upholds His own truth through all generations has determined that His church would be the instrument through which He does so now.

If the world is going to hear the truth, it is going to hear it from the church. As believers are sanctified through God's truth (cf. Jn 17:17), the church is God's primary instrument for that (cf. Eph 4:11–29). The maintenance of the truth in the church is uninspiring to some and in our day, and positively offensive to others. But this Scripture tells us that maintenance of the truth in the church is necessary and urgent, and that proper organization in the church is necessary to it.

What about the church's identity makes it so urgent to do things the right way in it? How are you doing this in your church? What about God's identity makes it so urgent do things the right way in His church? What about the church's purpose/role especially necessitates doing things rightly in it?

Sample prayer: Lord, You have made the church both Your family and Your temple. But we have often been negligent about doing things Your way in it. We act as if You are not the living God Who are active in the midst of Your church. The maintenance of the truth has suffered, in the world and for believers, because we have not guarded the truth in the church, and we have not followed Your prescribed order for how the church would do so. Forgive us, Lord, and grant unto us repentance, we ask in Jesus's Name, AMEN!

ARP87 "The Lord's Foundation" or TPH404 "The Church's One Foundation"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

First Timothy 3 verses 14 and 15. These are God's words. 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. So far the reading of God's inspired. And inherent word.

These verses. The apostle. Communicates the urgency of the things that are in the letter. It's very interesting. Timothy was his apprentice for years. Has planted multiple churches with him in particular, in emphasis, in emphasis. Um, Or they work for. For many years. And, And so he's probably familiar with all of these things already.

And, Paul is going to Lord willing be there soon. He hopes to come to him shortly. And yet, if he's delayed. He wants Timothy to have these things already and already be putting them into practice and so the implication is These are things that you need to. Be committing to or recommitting to as quickly as possible.

There's a great sense of urgency here. These things I write to you. Though I hope to come too shortly. Obviously he's writing to him, Timothy has the letter in his hands he can see that he's writing. And it's a way of speaking. That says. Take notice of the importance.

That is attached to all of this. By the fact that I am writing. To you. And he's writing to him not just so that he will know something. Although there's lots of doctrine here we've seen that. We're not even three chapters in and We have discussed much and learn much from this letter theologically but it's not merely.

So that Timothy can have him improved doctor and it's especially, so that Timothy can have improved behavior, improved, actions improved conduct That you may know how you ought to conduct yourself. It's a letter for action. As the. The old saying goes, The Bible is a doing book. Uh, yes it's a believing book with the believing is also a part of doing Not just isn't that interesting, but having gear, Mind changed having.

Uh, what you rest upon changed? Whom you restable. Changed. And then of course, having your conduct changed. That means if that work. That's not incompatible with faith. This is how god works and those whom he brings to faith. He uses his word to change them, he uses his word to sanctify them.

If we're not being sanctified, if we are not desiring to respond and responding, Then god is not at work in us. And we must seek him from secret from him. It's not like we can do stuff, and if we do stuff then that makes god to be at work in us.

That's a converse error. But it is to It is given in order to produce. A difference in us. And so when we ask god for understanding, we should also ask God for responding and as we listen to his word, or read his word or listen to his word preached.

We should be desiring from god. Not only to convince Um, not only to instruct our minds that we have understanding and stir up our hearts. And convince our wills. But also to produce in us. Changed behavior. Well why? Why are the changes or commitments or why is the conduct that this letter is teaching y, is it so urgent?

And that's the Main point of the second half of verse 15 here. Which is. The other main point of our lesson is because of what the church is. And who's the church is? First of all, it's the house of god. A household of god, this is in two ways.

Often. Um, those who write commentaries are. Called by whomever bible scholars. Uh, well, say that you have to choose between one or the other. Well. Sometimes the one meaning of of scripture is indeed. A fuller meaning than than people. Understand. And the word house here is ord for household.

We have seen the word household several times in chapter 3 already and we'll see it again. In chapter 5, when it's talking about taking care of one's own household and if you don't take care of your own household, you have denied the faith and are worse than an unbeliever says.

First Timothy 5, Well what if it's god's household? And we don't conduct ourselves. Properly in it. If conducting myself improperly towards my own household is denying the faith and is worse than unbeliever. Then. What is? Failing to fulfill my god given duties as a church member. Or a church officer.

But denying the faith. And being worse than an unbeliever. This is god's household, god's family. Sometimes. When our sinful nature is getting. The better of us. And we address one another and word of rebuke. And one of the things that we might say is Come on you guys, we're family.

Well, that's one thing. And it's true. It's part of those. Places and relations. That god has appointed to us and our catechism question this week. For what if it's come on, god. Come on. Guys, we are God's. Household. But god's household isn't just a family, isn't And this is the other part i was talking about that.

Sometimes the bible scholars. Say you have to choose household. Here means family or household, here means temple. Well, god's family is a temple. It's he uses the same illustrations and they both have the word household and that's important here. And so not only are these people. Joined to god, adopted by god, united to christ and dwelt by the spirit, adopted by the father.

They're also the ones in whom God has chosen. To make his presence and glory known. They are. His temple. She is building upon the chief, cornerstone, the lord jesus, and who are themselves living stones. For the offering up of spiritual sacrifice. Unto God. And know what care ought to have been given.

Even as we're studying and hearing now and that Exodus passages. In the construction and maintenance of the tabernacle worship. And now there's something greater than the tabernacle. There's Christ himself and those who are joined to him. Christ to When his people are persecuted. Addresses are persecuted and says, why are you persecuting me?

Christ to receives even a cup of cold water given To one who is united to him. As given to him.

So that's a first reason. It's so urgent. To conduct ourselves well, is because the churches god's household, And, Then he turns out turns around and he focuses not on who the church is to god. But whom goddess who god is to the church. Which is the church of the living god.

He's not distant, he's near. He's not. He is not withdrawn. He's active. The picture that the lord jesus gives. Or maybe it's not even a picture. I guess the lampstand part is a picture. When he's addressing the churches and revelation chapter 2 and revelation chapter 3 and Um, And there are things that each of them need to work on similar situation to hear ephesus is one of them again, When jesus describes himself as the one who walks among the seven golden lampstands, The one who knows them.

He observes them, he listens to them. He's constantly interacting with them and among them and responding to them. So yeah in a situation that Timothy's in and we have indication in the letters that there are some difficulties in the church and Tim mitthy is as his name is Tim or us or tim ed.

That he's tempted to be a man, fearer and be intimidated. All those words coming from the same root using the same root. And yet. Paul reminds him of the living god. Is in the midst of this family. Is in the midst of this house. He is the living god, He who is and upon whom all the being of all other things depend He who acts and the continuing.

This is stating. Of all, of the things depend and he, who is Intimately. And vigorously. Active. In his church. So that we remember to deal with god in his church, interact with god in his church. And on that basis, interact with other people. And then, not just the Well.

What the church has to god, and who God is. Of him. This is the church but his purpose for the church. In the world. And To believers. So, So that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of god, which is the church of living god, the pillar and ground of the truth.

The foundation. And structural support. Or the structural support and foundation. You know.

Two words that describe the church's role as Maintaining and preserving. And facilitating. Uh, the holding up of god's truth. In the world to maintaining of God's

truth in the world. God works by his truth. And, Theological error. Harms. The world. Where's the world going to hurt? But where's the world going to hear?

The truth. If the church does not tell them. Is that? Well, god can use and it. Yes, he can use anything but he's decided to use the church. It's amazing how people will use, hypotheticals about god's ability. To be disobedient to god's prescriptions. The one who can do anything and the one who has decided to give his truth has decided to make the church, the pillar and ground of history.

Doesn't mean the church comes up with truth. But it sure means the church better stick to it. From the church makes itself, the source of truth, like the papists did, Then it fails to be the pillar and ground of god's truth. And becomes a prevailer of lies. And the world all around.

Descends into deep darkness. And now, That papist mindset has Much entered. With this anti-theological. Spirit. That is Or attitude. That isn't much of the church. With theology is considered. Boring and useless or even in many places outright offensive. But it's god. Who's given the church? This purpose. And that truth is the means by which he brings people to faith.

And he saves them. And for those who are believers, it's a means by which he sanctifies them makes them. Holy equips them for every good work, because he's going to say towards The end of the second letter to Timothy. And so, We are heartless towards the world and robbing and stunting the growth of believers.

If we don't participate in Operating properly within god's household. Among which he is living and active. The living god. And which he has given the purpose. Of being a pillar and grand for the truth.

So, each of your duty, Love the lord. Well, not only in your personal life, not only in your family life, not only in your vocational life, which for most of you is your family life. But in your church's life, as a church member, It's urgent because the church is the household of god.

And it is the church of the living god. And it is. Your part is your part in. The church which god has given the purpose of being the pillar and ground of the truth. And every member, Provides a little bit of structural integrity. We won't Go to ephesians 4 verse 11 to 29.

Now, We've we've done that much over the last few years. And we will do it again. But i hope you remember. How every member of the church is important. Has been given a part. In god. Building up of the church. Into christ the head. Let's pray and ask. The lord to be merciful.

To us and through us. In his church. And father in heavenly. Thank you for Your word, thank you for the apostles. Holy urgency with timothy Help. Also god. Who find it so easy to be. Urgent and vigorous about Things that are much less important. To help us to have a sense of urgency about.

Serving you well in your church.

Grant that. Not only you would Use each of us and the way that You have designed for the Members of your church and plan for each of us, specifically Whether you would glorify yourself in the church, and Magnify yourself before our faith and increase our Adoration of you and devotion to you.

Delight in, you dependence upon you.

Grant the ministry of your spirit. We pray to Work out in our minds and hearts, the fruit. From this portion of your word, we ask in jesus name, amen.