

1Timothy 3:14–16

The REAL “Apostles’ Creed”

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What is the great mystery of godliness? Pastor leads his family in today’s “Hopewell @Home” passage. 1Timothy 3:14–16 prepares us for the opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these three verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that God has revealed the glorious truth that is His household policy; the means by which He works; and, the treasure that the church is to preserve, pass on, and proclaim.

Tuesday, April 5, 2022 ▪ Read 1Timothy 3:14–16

Questions from the Scripture text: How is the apostle communicating these things to Timothy (v14)? But what does he hope to do? What might happen (v15)? What does he want Timothy to know? In what is Timothy an elder—by what three names does the apostle call it? What is indisputably great (v16)? In what has God been manifested? In Whom was He vindicated? By whom was He seen? Where did they preach Him? Where has He been believed on? Up to where has He been received?

Next week’s Call to Worship, Prayer for Help, and first song all come from 1Timothy 3:14–16 so that we will see that we are singing God’s thoughts after Him with *The Apostles’ Creed*.

The apostle had begun writing to his elder understudy about the importance of maintaining sound doctrine (1:1–11) as the primary ministry of the elder (1:12–20).

To maintain this, there were things that must be done (2:1–10) and things that mustn’t be done (2:11–15).

For this maintenance the Spirit had provided overseers (of particular qualifications, 3:1–7) over the teaching and prayer, as well as deacons (of particular qualifications, 3:8–13) over the ministry of good works.

Now, in our passage, the apostle concludes this first half of the letter by emphasizing again that operating God’s church in God’s way is necessary unto the preservation of sound doctrine. The church is not only “the house of God” and “the church of the living God” but also “the pillar and ground of the truth.”

And the great truth, the great Spirit-explained mystery, of which the church is “pillar and ground” is the truth about God Himself.

And what is this truth? How has God revealed Himself to us? The Lord Jesus Christ. God has made His divine attributes known to us (cf. Rom 1:19) and visible in the creation (cf. Rom 1:20), but it is in Jesus that He has fully revealed Himself (cf. Jn 1:18, 14:7–9).

Specifically, God has revealed Himself in Jesus’s incarnation, redemption accomplished, proclamation, redemption applied, and reign.

We were under the guilt and power of sin, and any true godliness could only have come by God eliminating our sin’s guilt and neutralizing our sin’s power. Jesus as God Himself is “the mystery of godliness” (cf. 1:5a, 10b–11).

Incarnation. “God was manifested in the flesh.” If your English translation is based upon divergent minority texts, this verse will be less explicit, but still clear. Jesus is God in the flesh. This is how He came to deliver us—both to suffer what our sin deserved by His suffering, and to end its claim upon us by His death.

We could not suffer infinitely, but He had to become a man in order to suffer at all. We could not overcome death, but He had to become a man in order first to die, so that He might then defeat death. God was manifested in the flesh.

Redemption accomplished. “Justified in the Spirit.” The Spirit sustained the Lord Jesus in His earthly ministry (cf. Luk 3:22–23). He attested to Christ’s fitness for His office and mission. The Spirit sustained the Lord Jesus in His earthly obedience (cf. Luk 4:1), driving Him to that temptation in the wilderness, where the Spirit Who came upon Him would give Him victory in that obedience. And the Spirit declared Jesus to have been holy and undeserving of the cross, to be the Son of God with power, by raising Him from the dead (cf. Rom 1:4). In all of these ways, the Spirit justified, vindicated the Lord Jesus. He declared Jesus to be God, as He said. He declared Jesus to be holy, as He was. And He declared Jesus to have gained over sin and death that glorious victory, as He won.

Proclamation. “Seen by angels.” The word “angels” can mean “messengers” and more specifically “preachers” (cf. especially Rev 2:1, 2:8, 2:12, 2:18, 3:1, 3:7, 3:14). In this particular case, an important component of the gospel message (1Cor 15:3–8) is always that Jesus’s apostles were witnesses of His resurrection, having seen Him after being resurrected. “Preached among the nations.” Another important component of the gospel is that the truth about Jesus gets proclaimed to all the nations (cf. Luk 24:47; Ac 1:8). The apostles are witnesses to Jesus’s resurrection as they preach the gospel (cf. Luk 24:48; Jn 15:26–27; Ac 1:8).

Redemption applied. “Believed on in the world.” It’s one part of God’s saving work for Christ to be preached, but it’s another and necessary part of God’s saving work for Christ to be believed in. Repentance unto life is granted unto the nations (Ac 11:18).

Reign. “Received up in glory.” The ultimate end is not only that Jesus would be ascended and sit upon His throne while His enemies are put under His feet (Ps 110:1; Ac 2:32–35; 1Cor 15:25), but that at the last all enemies will be eliminated, and Jesus will reign forever in a New Heavens and New Earth in which righteousness dwells (2Pet 3:12–13, Rev 11:15–18).

Jesus, God Himself, saves sinners from both sin’s guilt and power. That is the mystery of godliness, and it is the great mission of the church and her officers to guard and proclaim this truth!

Why is the truth of the gospel important? What is that truth? How is it being preserved in the churches? What part are you called to have in its preservation?

Sample prayer: Father, thank You for giving Yourself for us and to us in the person of Your Son. By Your Spirit, help Your church to preserve and proclaim the truth of Your gospel. Forgive us for when we are unwilling to put forth the effort to understand sound doctrine, or when we downplay how necessary it is to have correct theology about the Trinity, about Christ, and about salvation. Help us to love Your truth, and grant unto us to know it more and more, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP110B “The LORD Has Spoken to My Lord” or TPH560 “The Apostles’ Creed”

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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 referenced above)

First Timothy 3 verses 14 through 16. 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. 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 and glory.

So for the reading of God's inspired and inherent work, The apostles about halfway through his letter to Timothy at this point and he's summarizing why he is writing even though he's about to come and would tell these things to Timothy personally, but there's possibility in God's providence is there always, is that you won't be able to get to the place, you want to get to, in the time that you want to get to it.

And so he sends the letter ahead of time, even though a lot a letter would arrive about as quickly as a person but this would just go with whoever was going that way. Even if Paul was not able to go that way. So why was it so important for him to get this letter sent ahead of time?

And the answer is because the church needs to be operated Jesus's way. It can't be done any which way you want. It is God's house. First of all, verse 15, God's house God's temple, but more than just God's temple. God's household often, when you guys are discussing how to do something in this house, if one of you knows the way that I have said that I would prefer for it to be done, you'll say well daddy likes it done this way, sometimes you're not correct when you say that.

But sometimes you say that and that's a recognition that this is a house in which for our benefit to follow, Christ's better. There is an order in which God has put me as the head and gives me responsibility. Of course not to lead by my win but to try to oversee things as our most glorifying to God and most good for all of us.

Well you have an imperfect head of household here but the church has a perfect head of household And so we are not left to everybody do things. However, we think is best because we have one who not only knows what is best but has given us the way of operating his household, it's a church is God's house and it's also the church of the living God.

In other words, it's not just an assembly church. Is another word for assembly. It's an assembly of one who is alive. One, who is acting. So it's not just, we should do things God's way because he said, so and it's his house. We should do things God's way because He is the one who gathers his church and who sanctifies his church and perfects His church, We do things God's way because we trust Him to use it by His power for his ends.

It's a horrible thing when people are coming up with their own way of doing church because they think this is what will work. I've got news for them that's not what will work Even when you do things. God's way ultimately doing it. That way is not. What will work?

God is who will work and he is appointed his way of working. So there is a sense in which doing things this way is what will work, but only so much as you are, depending on him to use it and to do it. And one of the things by which God has determined to work, is especially his truth.

Faith comes by hearing hearing the Lord of Gods sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth and so on and so forth. It is God's will and God's way to work by His Word to work. By His truth theology matters. We need to get what the Bible says.

What the Bible teaches? What the Bible commands. We need to get it. Correct, because God's designed for his church is in the third place. The end of verse 15. To be the pillar and ground of the truth. And then he goes on to describe how wonderful this truth is without controversy.

Great is the mystery of godliness not that godliness is greatly mysterious as many ridiculously misinterpret. This verse The word mystery is especially in the New Testament means something that we would not have known. Unless God had told us, but he has told us. So, it's ordinarily something that has been revealed.

Not something that is mysterious. But something that we must believe what God says about it. Because he is the way we know about it. He has revealed it to us. And so verse 16 starts by saying is got not only has God made the church the Peller and ground of the truth.

But look at how great is the truth that God has entrusted to the church to believe and to teach and to pass down and to proclaim to the world. Look at how great is that truth and that's the content of verse 16, which is why we have this passage this week.

So we come to the end of the hymnal and trying to prepare the generation to come, which is you guys. Most of you mom. And I will try and hang around as long as God lets us to try and prepare the generation to come to sing out of the back, half of the red book, conscientiously knowing that we are singing God's thoughts.

After him that we are not using merely human compositions. And so we've started in 152 or maybe 151. I can't remember if 151 was single and we've, we've come now almost, to the end of the hymnal, each song that we've sung weak by week, using a passage to, or studying a passage in which the thoughts of that song are opened up from the Bible.

This week we came to the Apostles Creed and I thought, Am I going to find a passage that

Sufficiently communicates. This Are we gonna come to the conclusion? Then it's really just two man-made and this is what we came up with this. Great mystery of godliness, This great summary of the truth that the Lord has entrusted to his church as His way of glorifying himself and working in his church.

So, you know, maybe we should recite first Timothy 3:16 and well, God hasn't given the reset recitation of creeds as a part of worship. But those

who recite the so-called apostles Creed, which is not written, by apostles might do better to recite 1st Timothy. 3:16 first. God was manifested in the flesh.

Now, English translations that are based on that minority of passages that was that has lately been unearthed in the history of the church actually doesn't have the don't have the word God there. But the text of the New Testament used in the church throughout the ages because it is the pillar and ground of truth.

And because it is the Church of the Living. God, as he has preserved, his word, pure and entire as we as we confess the vast majority in those that have been considered a lot. They say God. God was manifested in the flesh. Incarnation Jesus is God, in the flesh.

He's not a picture of God. We are created in the image of God. Jesus himself is God and He is unto us. The image of God, He came to deliver us, He had to suffer what our sin deserved by his suffering and he had to end since claim upon us by his death.

He had to absorb the wrath of God and he had to bring this out from under the power of sin. We could not suffer infinitely. So we needed someone who could So he had to be gone but that brings up a problem or that produces a problem because God cannot suffer at all.

And so he had to become, man, in order to suffer, we could not overcome death needed him. Who in whom was life to to be the one who dies in our place overcome death. But again, God cannot die or to use the language or to refer to the language of the apostle in Acts 20:28 20:32 somewhere in there.

I don't know why both references are stuck in my mind there, but that the church was purchased by the blood of God. Oh God cannot bleed. He has to add to himself humanity in order to bleed. So the first great part of this truth that the church is guarding and passing down and proclaiming, God was manifested in the flesh.

The second part redemption has been fully accomplished justified in the spirit. The Holy Spirit, of course, carried Jesus along throughout his eternal ministry, his throughout his earthly ministry, you have at his ordination, so to speak. It has baptism at the start of his public ministry. The Holy Spirit descending upon him, like a dove.

You have the Holy Spirit being the one who drives him out into the wilderness and sustains him as he renders, that refusal to sin and obedience to God, according to the scripture that we need to have counted for us, as if we had refused to sin. And as if we had obeyed God, according to the scripture, and then the Spirit, of course, carrying him along even unto that obedience, which is his death on the cross.

And then the spirit to declaring him to have defeated death, declaring him to have been righteous and obedient declaring him to have finished paying for our sin by raising him again from the dead. And of course, there are places where it says God raised him up. And there are places where it says the Lord Jesus arose himself and he himself said he had authority to take up his life again and then very there to complete it.

There is in Romans 1:4 that he was declared by the spirit to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. And so the spirit has vindicated or declared affirmed before, all at every point throughout Jesus accomplishing our redemption in his life and death and resurrection that this is what he was doing.

And that's what the word justified means here. That declaration that Jesus is who he says he is. That Jesus has been righteous. That Jesus has been obedient to that. Jesus is completed his mission. That Jesus is God, the Son. So, God was manifested in the flesh. Incarnation justified in the spirit, the accomplishing of redemption.

Seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles. The proclamation of the gospel, The word, angels means messengers. Sometimes it refers to heavenly beings who are messengers from God to humanity, and sometimes, especially in the wake of Pentecost, it refers to preachers messengers from Jesus, to his church. And we see this most plainly I think in Revelation to and three to the angel of this church.

To the angel of that church, the angel of that church. Why? Because those letters had to be preached. Not just read, but expounded upon and Preston to the people, by the proclamation of the preacher. The those churches desperately earned urgently needed to hear those words of Jesus. So, We live in an age of superstition, which people will write fiction books about the angels assigned to this one and the angels assigned to that one.

And yes, scripture does indicate that even little ones have an angel who stands before God in heaven. Not not necessarily that they have one angel that's assigned to them lifelong but that God attends to his people. And if God uses holy beings as servants on errands, for the sake of little ones that we should treasure and respect and serve and love his little ones, But the word angels here and the word angels, and a few other places, and in the New Testament, especially means preachers.

And this is what Jesus said you are my witnesses. He said to the apostles and he sent them as the first great preachers and seen by angels then is connected to preached among the Gentiles. Remember when the Lord Jesus at the end of leap, 24 was talking to the apostles and he was telling them that the scriptures.

Not only said that the son of man had to suffer and after three days rise again. But that, in his name, repentance and permission. Remission of sins had to be preached to all the nations beginning at Jerusalem, and that they were as witnesses. And this is one of the great themes that we have seen in the early part of the book of Acts.

As we've been hearing it preached in the morning services that the apostles were witnesses of the resurrected Jesus. As they preached him proclaimed him first in Jerusalem and Judea, and we'll hear about him preached in Samaria. And then to the nations as we continue through the book of Acts.

So the proclamation of Christ is itself. The a part of the mystery of godliness, this deposit of truth, that the church has, Not only that, God has come in the flesh, not only that he's accomplished redemption but that it is His message to the world. Hit is His will that the world would hear

proclaimed, his salvation and therefore, when those who come and preach do.

So, they're not just giving good news that this has been done. They're giving good news that they are on an official mission from God that because he is determined to save from all the earth He has sent preachers with the message of the gospel witnesses sent by the Lord.

Jesus Christ himself. And then the application of redemption believed on in the world. This is part of God's truth. This is part of God's mission because he's the one who's giving the faith. It would only be half of a redemption if it was only accomplished. But not, also applied, But Jesus by his Spirit using the preached word is, the one who is saving, is the one who is giving in all of the world faith in himself, by the word that he sends to be proclaimed and by the Spirit who continues to attest to the fact.

Even as Jesus's preached, the Spirit comes, and he works in people's hearts, and he does what he did in Jesus's ministry. He says, Jesus is God the Son. He says, Jesus has obeyed perfectly, He says, Jesus has atoned completely. Jesus has risen from the dead. And as the Spirit testifies with the word in the heart of the person who years they come to faith, This too is a work of God and so this believed on in the world is not just reporting a historical fact or predicting a historical future.

It is talking about the continued. It has continuing to talk about the work of God in as described, truly by the Word of God, which is the message of the church. God gives faith and what a comforting message. What? A comforting part of the message to those who hear the other parts of it and they're trying to believe, but they just can't bring their hearts or their minds to accept it.

And then we find out. God is the one who gives the faith believed on in the world. Praise God. And then received up in glory, not just redemption applied, but then the rain of God in Jesus Christ. Not just now, as he has ascended, and has taken his seat on the throne, and he has poured at the spirit, and his enemies are being made of footstool for his feet.

And his elect are being gathered into him. But there's a new heaven and a new earth coming in which righteousness, dwells and the king shall reign forever and ever the reign of Jesus Christ. Of course, is already begun all authority in heaven and earth has been given to him but the glorifying and of that rain is still to come to some extent.

Thy kingdom come thy will be done. And the bride says, with the Spirit come Lord Jesus received up in glory, He is glorified already, and he will be glorified fully and perfectly forever. All of his enemies, even death itself. The last enemy to be defeated will be banished and this description of what God has done in Jesus Christ.

In 1st Timothy 3 verse 16. This is that truth of which he has made his church, the pillar and the ground and everything else that he said earlier in the chapter Earlier in the book, whether he was talking about the importance of maintaining sound doctrine, the first half of chapter 1 and that this maintenance of the sound doctrine was a primary ministry of the elder and second half of chapter 1, the prayer lifting up of holy hands things that must be done in the church first half of or first two thirds of chapter two, what mustn't to be done in the church having women, ruler, teach last third of chapter two and then the first part of chapter 3 you know having elders choosing elders of a certain type to do a certain work choosing deacons of a certain.

It's a lot of details, but why was it important? So that these truths that are summarized in verse 16 would be maintained in the church because it's God's house and this is how he wants it done. And he's the one who's active, So he is the one whom we trust to use this truth.

Let's pray and ask him because it even in our own family in our own hearts our gracious God and her heavenly Father. Thank you for giving yourself in the person of your son, by the power of your spirit. And we pray O God that you would help us to believe and hold to this wonderful truth that you have revealed that we would not have known in other.

In another way truly great. Is this your truth about Godliness and we pray that you would make us godly through the faith in Christ in which you have counted us righteous and through the working out of that faith in which you make us more and more righteous like He is even in our thinking and our and our conduct glorify yourself, O God and your church.

And Grant that this household would be a faithful, a believing, and practicing according to the truth that you give us, that this household would be a faithful part of your church, raise up other such houses of God and strengthen your household O God in the earth and cause her to come again into days of strength and life, grant, that elders.

And deacons would be chosen the right way and function the right way that everyone would have their role. According to the way that you assigned, that holy hands would be lifted and prayer. By all men, that good works would be done and beautiful godliness. Displayed on all the women that the preachers would be doctrinal, preachers guarding your truth, and that sound doctrine would be maintained that kind of doctrine.

That produces godliness, help us O God, to follow the first half of this letter. Help us to follow your whole word, have mercy and bring times of refreshing and Reformation and revival. We ask In Jesus name. Amen.