

¹⁴ These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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.

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³ forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Introduction

We are now back into our series on 1 Timothy after our Christmas and New Year break.

There are 6 more sermons planned for this series which will take us to the end of February.

After our communion service on the 3rd March I plan to go back to the Psalms for a short series until Easter. (5 messages on the Psalms)

The reason that I mention this is that I would like members of O.I.C. who are willing to take the prayer sessions on a Sunday during the series on the Psalms.

If you are interested in this challenge, please come and see me.

I will arrange a special meeting in early February for everybody to have some training.

1 Timothy Chapter 3: v. 14 begins a new section of the letter which we are studying.

This particular section begins here and goes through to chapter 4: v. 16.

The section is held together by two verses. These verses are 3:14 and 4:13.

Paul speaks about his desire to join Timothy at Ephesus in the future, but for now Paul instructs Timothy how to act in the interim period.

Within this section all of the major themes of the letter are repeated in a slightly different way.

Paul clearly sets out his aim of writing this letter.

It was written to promote godly living as a means for the advance of the gospel.

(Chapter 3: v. 14-16)

It was also written to resist the false teachers in the Church. (4: v. 1-5)

Paul's aim was to encourage Timothy to be a model for truth, leadership, and the advancement of the gospel through godly living. (4: v. 6-16)

The central section which we are now about to begin provides a **summary of the whole letter** and Paul explains to Timothy the main things that he must do.

The section of this letter breaks down into three parts.

1. Focus on godly living and truth – Chapter 3: v. 14-16.
2. An awareness of false teachers who deny godly living and the truth of God's word in chapter 4: v. 1-5.
3. A Challenge to Timothy to be an example of godly living and truth. – 4: v. 6-16.

Due to the fact that there is so much in this section, I am going to deal with part one and two today and part three next week the 20th January.

1. **Focus on godly living and truth – 3: v. 14-16.**

Paul is concerned that Timothy should focus upon the important issues concerning the Church. He tells Timothy that Godliness is essential.

a) Godliness is essential – 3: v. 15a.

Our first focus is about conduct in the House of God.

It is important that we understand the meaning of “conduct in the house of God”. The Greek word that Paul uses is “oikos” and it is translated as “household” in the N.A.S.B.

Paul’s metaphor here is not that of a building, but of a family of believers.

Believers in Jesus are members of God’s household.

They have a responsibility to conduct themselves according to God’s teaching.

This is made clear in other parts of the New Testament.

Ephesians 2: v. 19 – 21 in N.K.J.

¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

Paul is concerned with Christian conduct and Christian relationships.

The Church at OIC is God’s household. Every true believer at OIC is indwelt by the living God, through His Holy Spirit.

Paul uses the phrase “living God”. This connects with the heritage of the Old Testament.

Joshua 3: v. 10.

¹⁰ And Joshua said, “By this you shall know that the living God *is* among you, and *that* He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites:

1 Samuel 17: v. 26.

²⁶ Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, “What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”

Psalms 42: v. 2.

² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God?

Paul speaks of the “living God” to challenge the believers about the reality of God’s presence in the life of the believers.

There is a song that we sometimes sing which has these words:

“Be Still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here”

The words are very challenging, and sometimes I get the feeling that many people regard the living God as a presence, outside of themselves.

However, the Bible is clear that God’s presence is inside of ourselves.

This makes the challenge to godly living for every believer, essential, and not optional.

b) Godliness enables the truth of God’s presence to be displayed. – 3: 15-16.

The Church of the living God is described by Paul as the pillar and ground of the truth. The words pillar and foundation is used in other translations.

In Ephesus where Timothy was the Pastor of a Church, there was a very large structure. It was a Temple dedicated to the goddess “Diana”.

The Temple roof was held up by 100 pillars.

The function of foundations and pillars are to provide strength and stability for the whole structure.

People will not want to enter a building which is not structurally sound.

In Japan many buildings are earthquake proof, their foundations are built to withstand some quite severe earthquakes.

People are much happier to live in buildings that have these good foundations.

Paul uses this illustration to highlight the essential role of godly living with the fellowship of the Church.

This godly living provides **strength and visibility to the truth**.

This visible presence of God, displayed through our behaviour, can actually be seen by people.

This gives strength to the Gospel that we preach.

A Gospel that doesn't change hearts and behaviour is no gospel at all.

Godliness in the life of a believer promotes the Gospel more than anything else.

People will notice our life before they read the Bible.

They will read the Bible through our life.

When people notice our life is different, then we can point them to the truth of the Gospel that changed our lives.

It is a challenge for all of us believers in Jesus Christ to live godly lives.

However, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, it is possible.

We may not be perfect, but God can perfect the things that are required in our lives as we surrender to the Holy Spirit's control.

(show slide of Queen Elizabeth and Buckingham Palace)

If you were invited to afternoon tea with Queen Elizabeth in Buckingham Palace, London, you would want to do lots of preparation work.

You would need to find out the dress code, what should you wear?

You would need to find out how to address the Queen.

Your conduction would need to measure up to this wonderful occasion of having an audience with Queen Elizabeth in London.

As a Christian our audience is with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who has rescued us and placed us in His household.

This demands godly living and a respectful relationship.

In v. 16 we have an amazing declaration of the gospel by Paul.

v. 16 in the N.L.T. & N.K.J.

1 Timothy 3:16 New Living Translation (NLT)

¹⁶ Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith:

Christ was revealed in a human body
and vindicated by the Spirit.

He was seen by angels
and announced to the nations.

He was believed in throughout the world
and taken to heaven in glory.

1 Timothy 3:16 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁶ 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 "mystery of godliness" refers to the gospel message which was hidden in the Old Testament and now revealed in the New testament.

Although Bible commentators look on these 6 statements in different ways, I think that the simple chronological progression is the best way of interpreting the text.

God was manifest in the flesh = the virgin birth, God became a man.

This is the most important part of the Christmas story.

It is amazing to think that the creator of this whole world and everything in it was reduced to a tiny seed and grew in the womb of a virgin and eventually became the God Man.

God was indeed manifest in the flesh.

This is the beginning of the gospel message that we proclaim.

Justified in the Spirit = This is a little more difficult to understand.

The word "Justified" means to declare righteous.

Because this statement comes after God becoming a man, it must refer to Jesus.

How was Jesus declared "righteous"?

Firstly, this was done by the Father –**Matthew 3: v. 17**.

¹⁷ And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Secondly, it was done by Jesus who died on the cross for our sins

2 Corinthians 5: v. 21.

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Thirdly it was done through the resurrection of Jesus. – The Holy Spirit raised Jesus Christ from the dead, because the death of Jesus Christ was final and complete, nothing could be added to it. Jesus said Himself on the cross, "it is finished"

This is why we can be completely justified in the sight of God, because Jesus and His work on the cross dealt with our justification in the sight of God.

Seen by Angels = Throughout the early ministry of Jesus Christ, Angels witnessed every part of the story. An Angel spoke to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus into her womb. (Luke 1: v. 26-35) Angels witnessed to the Shepherds on the hillside of Bethlehem declaring the birth of God's Son. (Luke 2: v. 8-20)

Angels revealed the resurrection of Jesus and commanded the women to share this truth with the disciples. (Matt. 28: v. 1-8)

Preached among the Gentiles = The story starts in the acts of the Apostles, but continues today. We know that Jesus was to be the Jewish Messiah.

However, initially Jesus was rejected by the Jewish Leaders.

This gave a window of opportunity for the Gentiles.

For 2,000 years the Gospel has been preached to the Gentiles.

One day that window of opportunity will close, but while it is open, we must preach the gospel to all peoples, but also not to neglect the Jewish People.

I believe that one day there will be a Revival amongst the Jewish people.!!!

We will have to wait and see how God works amongst His chosen people in Israel and with Jewish people world-wide.

Believed on in the world = There are millions of Christians world-wide.

This is a testimony to the truth of the gospel which cuts across, culture, language and hardened hearts.

Received up in glory = This is the enthronement in glory, and not the ascension of Jesus going up to Heaven as quoted by Luke in Acts 1: v. 9-11.

The reason I say this is that it comes after the believing on in the world.

From the resurrection until the ascension was a short space of time.

In fact, it was only 40 days.

This was hardly enough time to get the gospel out to the whole world and for them to believe it.

(2 Thessalonians 1: v. 10)

¹⁰ when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

There is a sense that the Gospel benefits are not fully complete until the second coming of Jesus and the **resurrection of the believers**.

So here we have it, the **whole gospel in a small space**, from the virgin birth to the second coming of Jesus.

2. **Beware of false teaching which obscures God's goodness. – 4: v. 1-5.**

It is important that we notice that chapter 4: v. 1 is connected with what precedes in chapter 3: v. 14-16. In the original manuscripts there were no chapters, and the English word "now" is used as the connective word.

In chapter 4: v. 1-5 Paul informs Timothy about the danger that the false teachers posed, and what Timothy's response should be.

In order to discover the teaching behind these verses, I am going to ask a number of questions.

a) What was the problem – 4: v. 1-3a.

The problem in the Church was the false teachers.

b) What was going to happen to these false teachers?

These false teachers would abandon their faith.

We have already been taught in 1 Timothy chapter 1: v. 19-20 that two church leaders, Hymenaeus and Alexander have made a shipwreck of their faith.

Although the false teachers were operating within the church, they had departed from the truth of their original faith.

These false teachers were focusing on legalism and the Law and not on a faith in Jesus Christ. Basically their confidence had shifted from Jesus Christ to themselves and their **own thinking about God's word**.

c) When are these false teachers going to operate in the Church?

We are told by the text in **4: v. 1** that these false teachers are going to operate in the "**later times**". We need to understand this phrase "**later times**".

It is sometimes translated "**last times**" or "**end times**".

The New Testament understands this description to cover the whole period between the first and second comings of Jesus Christ.

Jesus alludes to the rise of false teachers in Matthew 24: v. 10, but more clearly Paul tells us in **Acts 20: v. 29** that false teachers will rise up from within the Church at Ephesus.

d) How will this false teaching happen?

It will happen because "satan" is at work.

Satan is always trying to **distract and divert people from the truth of God's word, which includes the truth of the gospel**.

We are told here that satan works through **lies and deception**.

John 8: v. 44.

⁴⁴ You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.

We are told in v. 2 how these false teachers are able to speak lies and be hypocritical. These false teachers have their **consciences seared with a hot iron**.

This illustration about a hot iron is important. (4: v. 2)

If you were to get burnt on your skin through a hot iron it would cause considerable damage to the **nerve endings in your body**.

It would lead to a **loss of sensitivity and feeling.**

In the same way, **listening to the lies of the devil,** through **deceiving spirits** had made the false teachers **insensitive to the truth.**

We are living in the **last days of the last days** and more and more false teaching is coming into the Church.

We need to be very careful that we are **not deceived by satan and his schemes.**

The best way not to be deceived, is to **know the truth** clearly.

Satan's power is in his lies. If he is confronted with the **"truth"** it has the power to **destroy his lies.**

People who believe a lie are bound by that lie. It doesn't matter what that lie is.

It can be another religion like Shinto, Buddhism, Islam.

It could be a cult like the Jehovah's witnesses, the Mormons, or some other movement.

It can be an organisation claiming to be Christian like the Roman Catholic Church, the prosperity gospel, the liberal Church, or whatever Church is teaching a lie, whatever it might be.

If you believe any of these lies, then you are bound by that lie. Satan has you in his grip.

However, you can be set free from that lie, **by believing the truth.**

Jesus said in John 8: v. 32 " ...you shall know the **TRUTH**, and the **TRUTH** shall make you free.

May God help OIC to always remain true to the pure Gospel and also to the rest of God's word as it is clearly presented in the Bible.

e) **What were the false teachers teaching at this time in Ephesus?**

The false teachers were **forbidding people to marry and requiring that certain foods should not be eaten. (v.3)**

This teaching was a form of legalism.

This teaching denied the goodness of God in creation.

It was a direct attack on the teaching of Genesis about marriage.

Also it was an **attack about the goodness of God in providing foods to be eaten.**

There is nothing wrong with remaining single and not getting married and there is nothing wrong with not liking certain foods.

The deception comes when **we see these things as essential elements of Salvation.**

A human idea from man to offer Salvation, whatever that might be, is a **hallmark of all false religion.**

It is important that we stop here for a moment to realise that **anything which is contrary to scripture can be an entry point of demonic teaching.**

Most Christians would be alarmed if the basic gospel was attacked, but satan is **so subtle** that he uses other things which are more culturally acceptable, in order to lure people away from the Bible and its teaching.

Today, Bible believing Christianity is regarded as a negative thing.

The Press, especially the BBC, and most media attack conservative Christianity. They claim that it is totally out of date and irrelevant to the modern world.

Therefore, many Churches are compromising their faith, in order to be more culturally acceptable in the world today.

This is an entry point for satan in order to **divert and distract Christians away from the truth and authority of the Bible.**

Of course we need to **protect the pure Gospel,** but we also need to **protect all the major teachings of the Bible. We call this "Doctrine"**

It is not a secret that false teachers are operating in the Church to challenge God's teaching about creation.

Andy Stanley is the Pastor of a very large Church in the U.S.A.

Please go on to the web-site that challenges his teaching about creation and the Old Testament.

(christianheadlines.com)

Ken Ham and others from Answers in Genesis are challenging his teaching.

Christians need to be very discerning today about false teachers in the Church.

At O.I.C we now have an annual event called "Creation Sunday", this is so important. Last year Brian Osborne from A.I.G. really opened up the eyes of people at OIC and set many free to believe the truth about what Genesis teaches concerning creation.

There are many false teachers in the world today, be very careful who influences your thought patterns.

There is only one Bible and one Holy Spirit. This is why I encourage people to focus upon God's word, the Bible. Read it, meditate upon it, believe it, obey it, and the Holy Spirit of God will bless you.

Don't follow people, follow Jesus, through His word.

We do need good Bible teachers, but we definitely don't need false teachers.

f) What was the solution to this false teaching in Ephesus? (v. 3b-v.5)

The answer to this false teaching about marriage and food is to believe that what God has created is "good".

(Gen.1: v. 28-31 in N.K.J.)

²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

²⁹ And God said, "See, I have given you every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. ³⁰ Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for food"; and it was so. ³¹ Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

(Gen 2: v. 18-24 - in N.K.J.)

¹⁸ And the LORD God said, "*It is* not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." ¹⁹ Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. ²⁰ So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

²³ And Adam said:

"This *is* now bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man."

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

God's gifts are to be received with thanksgiving. – v. 3

However, Paul says it is only possible to do this if you believe the truth about God's word.

God created marriage and food to be gratefully shared by those who believe and know the truth. God created these things to bring mankind joy and to bring glory to God Himself.

1 Cor. 10: v. 31 in N.K.J.

³¹ Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

In v. 5 Paul concludes by telling us that marriage and eating of foods is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

That is exactly what I have done. I have shown you God's word, and if you receive it in prayer, you will not be bound by any teaching which is contrary to God's word.

Conclusion and Application

So what is the conclusion and application of my sermon today.?

1. Godly living and truth go side by side. If you believe the truth of the Gospel, and obey the teaching of the Bible you will live a life that is godly and glorifying to God.
2. Our godly lives speak clearly into the hearts of an unbelieving generation. Many people who we think are not interested in Christianity, will notice the way that we live our lives. If we live Holy and godly lives, they will see a difference that will either attract them or repel them.

2 Corinthians 2: v. 14-16.

¹⁴ Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. ¹⁵ For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶ To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?

3. Beware of False Teachers in the Church, they are everywhere.
The way to deal with false teaching is to **know and believe the truth for yourselves.** This will bring glory to God and a peace to your hearts.