

## Message Five

### **Upholding the Truth and Testifying to the Truth That the Church Is the Pillar and Base of the Truth and the Corporate Manifestation of God in the Flesh**

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:15-16; 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:15; John 18:37

#### **I. The church is the supporting pillar and holding base of the truth— 1 Tim. 3:15:**

- A. The Lord wants His church to know Him as the truth in order to testify concerning Him as the truth—John 14:6; 18:37; 1 John 1:6; 5:20.
- B. *Truth* in 1 Timothy 3:15 refers to the real things revealed in God's Word, which are mainly Christ as the embodiment of God and the church as the Body of Christ—2:4; Col. 2:9, 19.
- C. The truth is the Triune God, having Christ as the embodiment, center, and expression to produce the church as the Body of Christ, the house of God, and the kingdom of God—v. 9; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; 1 Tim. 3:15; John 3:3, 5.
- D. The church bears Christ as the reality; the church testifies to the whole universe that Christ, and Christ alone, is the reality—1:14, 17; 14:6.
- E. As the pillar that bears the truth and the base that upholds the pillar, the church testifies the reality, the truth, of Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4.
- F. The kind of church that we build up depends on the kind of truth that we teach; thus, there is the desperate need of the living truth to produce the church, to help the church to exist, and to build up the church—1 Tim. 3:15.
- G. The greatest need that we must meet is to bring the saints into the truth; all the saints should be trained in the divine revelation—2:4.

#### **II. All the saints need to uphold the truth—3:9, 15; 2 Tim. 2:15:**

- A. The supporting pillar and holding base of the truth are the entire church, including all the saints; every member of the church is part of the pillar and base that uphold the truth—1 Tim. 3:15.
- B. The church being the pillar and base of the truth implies that every member of the church should know the truth; thus, we should make a decision to learn the truth—2:4:
  1. The church, including every believer, must uphold the truth—3:9.
  2. In order for the church to be strong, every brother and sister must uphold the truth by learning the truth, experiencing the truth, and being able to speak the truth—2:4.
  3. If we practice the truth in the daily church life, we will be able to bear some responsibility in upholding the truth—2 John 4; 3 John 3-4, 8.

#### **III. We need to uphold the truth and testify to the truth that the church is the corporate manifestation of God in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:15-16:**

- A. God's manifestation was first in Christ as an individual expression in the flesh—v. 16; Col. 2:9; John 1:1, 14:
  1. The New Testament does not say that the Son of God was incarnated; it reveals that God was manifested in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:15-16:

- a. God was manifested in the flesh not only as the Son but as the entire God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.
- b. The entire God and not only God the Son was incarnated; hence, Christ in His incarnation was the entire God manifested in the flesh:
  - (1) In His ministry in the stage of incarnation, Christ brought the infinite God into the finite man; in Christ the infinite God and the finite man became one—John 8:58; 7:6; 12:24.
  - (2) Through incarnation the divine incorporation—God in His Divine Trinity coinhering mutually and working together as one—was brought into humanity; Christ is therefore the incorporation of the Triune God with the tripartite man—14:10-11.
- 2. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily—Col. 2:9:
  - a. *All the fullness of the Godhead* refers to the entire Godhead, to the complete God.
  - b. Since the Godhead comprises the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the fullness of the Godhead must be the fullness of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.
  - c. That all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily means that the Triune God is embodied in Him—John 14:10.
  - d. As the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead, Christ is not only the Son of God but also the entire God.
- B. First Timothy 3:15-16 indicates that not only Christ Himself as the Head is the manifestation of God in the flesh but also that the church as the Body of Christ and the house of God is the manifestation of God in the flesh—the mystery of godliness:
  - 1. *Godliness* in verse 16 refers not only to piety but to the living of God in the church, that is, God as life lived out in the church to be expressed:
    - a. Both Christ and the church are the mystery of godliness, expressing God in the flesh.
    - b. The church life is the expression of God; therefore, the mystery of godliness is the living of a proper church—1 Cor. 1:6; 14:24-25.
  - 2. God is manifested in the church—the house of God and the Body of Christ—as the enlarged corporate expression in the flesh—Eph. 2:19; 1:22-23:
    - a. The manifestation of God in the flesh began with Christ when He was on earth—John 14:9.
    - b. The manifestation of God in the flesh continues with the church, which is the increase, enlargement, and multiplication of the manifestation of God in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:15-16.
    - c. Such a church becomes the continuation of Christ’s manifestation of God in the flesh—Christ lived out of the church as the manifestation of God.
  - 3. The great mystery of godliness is that God has become man so that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead to produce a corporate God-man for the manifestation of God in the flesh—Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4; Eph. 4:24.