

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Fall Term of 2026**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE TRUTH IN PAUL'S EPISTLES—
FIRST AND SECOND TIMOTHY AND TITUS**

Message Two

The Function of the Church

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:15; 2 Tim. 2:19-20;
John 14:2, 6; Eph. 2:19; Titus 1:1, 14; 1 Pet. 2:5

- I. The function of the church—the house of the living God—1 Tim. 3:15; 2 Tim. 2:20; John 14:2, 21, 23; 1 Pet. 2:5:**
- A. The desire of the Lord's heart is to gain the church; thus, we should treasure the church and love the church, even as the Lord does and as Paul did—Matt. 16:18; 13:44-46; Eph. 1:5, 9; 5:25-27; 2 Cor. 12:14-15.
 - B. The church is the church of God—1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:16:
 - 1. The expression *the church of God* indicates that the church is possessed by God and that the church has the nature of God and is constituted with the element of God—Acts 20:28; Gal. 1:13.
 - 2. The church is *of* God because it is produced of God as its source and has God as its nature and essence, which are divine, universal, and eternal—1 Cor. 10:32:
 - a. God is the nature and essence of the church; therefore, the church is divine—Rev. 1:12, 20.
 - b. The content of the church essentially is God Himself—1 Cor. 3:16-17.
 - C. The church of God is the house of the living God—1 Tim. 3:15:
 - 1. To Christ, the church is the Body; to God, the church is the house—Eph. 1:22-23; John 14:2.
 - 2. The house of God is the household of God—Eph. 2:19.
 - 3. In speaking of the church as the house of God, Paul refers to God as the living God—1 Tim. 3:15.
 - 4. As the house of God, the church is the dwelling place of God—Eph. 2:22.
- II. The function of the church—the pillar and base of the truth—1 Tim. 3:15; 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:15, 25; Titus 1:1, 14:**
- A. The Lord wants His church to know Him as the truth and to receive and enjoy Him as life—1 John 1:1-2, 5-6; John 11:25; 14:6; 18:37b:
 - 1. *Truth* means “reality,” denoting all 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—1 Tim. 2:4; Col. 2:9, 19.
 - 2. The foundation in 2 Timothy 2:19 is the church as the foundation of the truth; this corresponds with the base of the truth, which holds the truth, especially the truth of the resurrection of Christ—1 Tim. 3:15; Acts 4:33.
 - B. The church is built with the divine life in Christ, a life that is indestructible, unconquerable, and able to withstand decline into death from any source—1 Tim. 1:16; 6:12, 19; 2 Tim. 1:1, 10; Titus 1:2; 3:7:

1. The church is the firm foundation of God standing in the eternal life—2 Tim. 2:19.
2. The Lord's recovery is protected by the unconquerable divine life—Heb. 7:16; Acts 2:24.
- C. Both the truth and the life are Christ Himself—John 14:6:
 1. Life is the inward and intrinsic content, and truth is the outward definition and explanation—1:4; 18:37b; 8:12, 32, 36; 17:17.
 2. The experience of the Lord as life is contained in the Lord as the truth.
 3. In order to experience the Lord as life, we must know the truth—14:6; 11:25; 8:32, 36.
- D. The content of the church must be the growth of Christ in us as truth and life—Col. 2:19; 3:4.

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

- A. 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—Col. 2:9; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; 1 Tim. 3:15; John 3:3, 5.
- B. *Truth* in 1 Timothy 3:15 refers to the real things revealed in the New Testament concerning Christ and the church according to God's New Testament economy—Matt. 16:16, 18; Eph. 5:32:
 1. The church is the supporting pillar and holding base of these realities.
 2. A local church should be such a building that holds, bears, and testifies the truth, the reality, of Christ and the church.
- C. The church bears Christ as the reality; the church testifies to the whole universe that Christ, and Christ alone, is the reality—John 1:14, 17; 14:6.
- D. God's New Testament economy is composed of two mysteries: Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4:
 1. Christ and the church, the Head and the Body, are the contents of the reality of God's New Testament economy—Col. 1:18; 2:19.
 2. 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.

IV. In the church life we all need to come to the full knowledge of the truth—1 Tim. 2:4; 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1:

- A. Every saved person should have the full knowledge, a complete realization, of the real things revealed in God's Word—1 John 2:21.
- B. The full knowledge of the truth is a thorough apprehension of the truth, a full acknowledgement and appreciation of the reality of all the spiritual and divine things that we have received through faith—1 Tim. 2:4; 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:25.
- C. The present truth is the truth that is present with the believers, which they have already received and now possess—2 Pet. 1:12.
- D. To cut straight the word of the truth is to unfold without bias or distortion the reality of God's economy revealed in the New Testament—2 Tim. 2:15.
- E. For God's purpose, we must stand firm for the full knowledge of the truth and fight the good fight against the powers of darkness—1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7.
- F. The kind of church we build up depends on the kind of truth we teach—1 Tim. 3:15.