

Message Three

The Function of the Church

(2)

The Pillar and Base of the Truth

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:15; 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:15, 25; Titus 1:1, 14

I. As used in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, *truth* denotes the contents of God's New Testament economy—1 Tim. 1:4; 3:15; 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:15, 25; Titus 1:1, 14.

II. 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:

A. *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:

1. 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.
2. Because the Lord's recovery has the firm foundation of the truth, it is not hurt by any attack—2 Tim. 2:19.

B. The church is built with the divine life in Christ, a life which 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:
 - a. The recovery is built on something eternal and divine—God's life with its nature—John 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4.
 - b. For this reason, not even the gates of Hades can conquer the Lord's recovery—Matt. 16:18; Rev. 1:18.

C. Both the truth and the life are Christ Himself—John 14:6:

Message Three (continuation)

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:
 - a. If we are not clear about the truth and do not understand and know the truth, we will have no way to enjoy Christ as our life—Col. 1:5-6; 3:4.
 - b. In order to experience the Lord as life, we must know the truth—John 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:
 1. Truth is the shining, the expression, of the divine light—John 8:12, 32, 36.
 2. The standard of the truth should constantly be raised higher among all the churches in the Lord's recovery—1 Tim. 2:4; 3:15.
 3. We need to grow in life, be saved in life, be filled with life, and reign in life—Eph. 4:13-16; Rom. 5:10, 17.
- E. By life and truth Paul encouraged Timothy and inoculated him against the decline of the church—2 Tim. 1:1, 10; 2:15, 25:
 1. Though the churches may become degraded and many of the saints may backslide in unfaithfulness, the eternal life remains forever the same—1:1, 10.
 2. The word of the truth, rightly unfolded, enlightens the darkened people, inoculates against the poison, swallows up the death, and brings the distracted back to the proper track—2:15, 25.

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

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message Three (continuation)

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 which bears the truth and the base which 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 a 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 acknowledgment 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.

1 TIMOTHY, 2 TIMOTHY, TITUS

Message Three (continuation)

- 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; 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.