

**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

1 Tim. 3:15—But if I delay, *I write* that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

2 Tim. 2:19-20—However the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, The Lord knows those who are His, and, Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness. ²⁰But in a great house there are not only gold and silver vessels but also wooden and earthen; and some are unto honor, and some unto dishonor.

John 14:2—In My Father's house are many abodes; if *it were* not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

John 14:6—Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

Eph. 2:19—So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

Titus 1:1—Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's chosen ones and the full knowledge of the truth, which is according to godliness,

Titus 1:14—Not paying attention to Jewish myths and the commandments of men who turn away from the truth.

1 Pet. 2:5—You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

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:

1 Tim. 3:15—But if I delay, *I write* that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

2 Tim. 2:20—But in a great house there are not only gold and silver vessels but also wooden and earthen; and some are unto honor, and some unto dishonor.

John 14:2—In My Father's house are many abodes; if *it were* not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

John 14:21—He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.

John 14:23—Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

1 Pet. 2:5—You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

- 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.

Matt. 16:18—And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Matt. 13:44-46—The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid, and in his joy goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.

⁴⁵Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a merchant seeking fine pearls; ⁴⁶And finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Eph. 1:5—Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Eph. 1:9—Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,

Eph. 5:25-27—Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her ²⁶That He might sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the washing of the water in the word, ²⁷That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

2 Cor. 12:14-15—Behold, this third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden; for I do not seek what is yours but you. For the children ought not to store up for the parents, but the parents for the children. ¹⁵But I, I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent on behalf of your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved less?

- B. The church is the church of God—1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:16:

1 Cor. 1:2—To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, *who is* theirs and ours:

1 Cor. 10:32—Do not become a stumbling block, both to Jews and to Greeks and to the church of God;

1 Cor. 11:16—But if anyone seems to be contentious, we do not have such a custom of *being so*, neither the churches of God.

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.

Acts 20:28—Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.

Gal. 1:13—For you have heard of my manner of life formerly in Judaism, that I persecuted the church of God excessively and ravaged it.

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:

1 Cor. 10:32—Do not become a stumbling block, both to Jews and to Greeks and to the church of God;

- a. God is the nature and essence of the church; therefore, the church is divine—Rev. 1:12, 20.

Rev. 1:12—And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,

Rev. 1:20—The mystery of the seven stars which you saw upon My right hand and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

- b. The content of the church essentially is God Himself—1 Cor. 3:16-17.

1 Cor. 3:16-17—Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, *and* such are you.

- C. The church of God is the house of the living God—1 Tim. 3:15:

1 Tim. 3:15—But if I delay, *I write* that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

1. To Christ, the church is the Body; to God, the church is the house—Eph. 1:22-23; John 14:2.

Eph. 1:22-23—And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church, ²³Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

John 14:2—In My Father's house are many abodes; if *it were* not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

2. The house of God is the household of God—Eph. 2:19.

Eph. 2:19—So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

3. In speaking of the church as the house of God, Paul refers to God as the living God—1 Tim. 3:15.

1 Tim. 3:15—But if I delay, *I write* that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

4. As the house of God, the church is the dwelling place of God—Eph. 2:22.

Eph. 2:22—In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

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:

1 Tim. 3:15—But if I delay, *I write* that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

1 Tim. 2:4—Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

2 Tim. 2:15—Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, an unashamed workman, cutting straight the word of the truth.

2 Tim. 2:25—In meekness correcting those who oppose, if perhaps God may give them repentance unto the full knowledge of the truth,

Titus 1:1—Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's chosen ones and the full knowledge of the truth, which is according to godliness,

Titus 1:14—Not paying attention to Jewish myths and the commandments of men who turn away from the truth.

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 John 1:1-2—That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life²(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

1 John 1:5-6—And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;

John 11:25—Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

John 14:6—Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 18:37—Pilate said therefore to Him, So then You are a king? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I would testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.

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.

1 Tim. 2:4—Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

Col. 2:9—For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,

Col. 2:19—And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

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.

2 Tim. 2:19—However the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, The Lord knows those who are His, and, Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness.

1 Tim. 3:15—But if I delay, *I write* that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

Acts 4:33—And with great power the apostles gave testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

- 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 Tim. 1:16—But because of this I was shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ might display all His long-suffering for a pattern to those who are to believe on Him unto eternal life.

1 Tim. 6:12—Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called and have confessed the good confession before many witnesses.

1 Tim. 6:19—Laying away for themselves a good foundation as a treasure for the future, that they may lay hold on that which is really life.

2 Tim. 1:1—Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus,

2 Tim. 1:10—But now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel,

Titus 1:2—In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the times of the ages,

Titus 3:7—In order that having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

1. The church is the firm foundation of God standing in the eternal life—2 Tim. 2:19.

2 Tim. 2:19—However the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, The Lord knows those who are His, and, Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness.

2. The Lord's recovery is protected by the unconquerable divine life—Heb. 7:16; Acts 2:24.

Heb. 7:16—Who has been appointed not according to the law of a fleshy commandment but according to the power of an indestructible life.

Acts 2:24—Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, since it was not possible for Him to be held by it.

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

John 14:6—Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

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.

John 1:4—In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 18:37—Pilate said therefore to Him, So then You are a king? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I would testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.

John 8:12—Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 8:32—And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.

John 8:36—If therefore the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed.

John 17:17—Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

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.

John 14:6—Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 11:25—Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

John 8:32—And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.

John 8:36—If therefore the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed.

D. The content of the church must be the growth of Christ in us as truth and life—Col. 2:19; 3:4.

Col. 2:19—And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

Col. 3:4—When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

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

1 Tim. 3:15—But if I delay, *I write* that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

- 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.

Col. 2:9—For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,

Eph. 1:22-23—And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church, ²³Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Eph. 4:16—Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and *through* the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

1 Tim. 3:15—But if I delay, *I write* that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

John 3:3—Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5—Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

- 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 Tim. 3:15—But if I delay, *I write* that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

Matt. 16:16—And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Matt. 16:18—And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Eph. 5:32—This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

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.

John 1:14—And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

John 1:17—For the law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ.

John 14:6—Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

- 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:

Col. 2:2—That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

Eph. 3:4—By which, in reading *it*, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,

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.

Col. 1:18—And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Col. 2:19—And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

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:

1 Tim. 2:4—Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

1 Tim. 4:3—Who forbid marriage *and command* abstaining from foods, which God has created to be partaken of with thanksgiving by those who believe and have full knowledge of the truth.

2 Tim. 2:25—In meekness correcting those who oppose, if perhaps God may give them repentance unto the full knowledge of the truth,

2 Tim. 3:7—*And* are always learning yet never able to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

Titus 1:1—Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's chosen ones and the full knowledge of the truth, which is according to godliness,

- 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.

1 John 2:21—I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it and because no lie is of the truth.

- 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.

1 Tim. 2:4—Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

1 Tim. 4:3—Who forbid marriage *and command* abstaining from foods, which God has created to be partaken of with thanksgiving by those who believe and have full knowledge of the truth.

2 Tim. 2:25—In meekness correcting those who oppose, if perhaps God may give them repentance unto the full knowledge of the truth,

- 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.

2 Pet. 1:12—Therefore I will be ready always to remind you concerning these things, even though you know *them* and have been established in the present truth.

- 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.

2 Tim. 2:15—Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, an unashamed workman, cutting straight the word of the truth.

- 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.

1 Tim. 6:12—Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called and have confessed the good confession before many witnesses.

2 Tim. 4:7—I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.

- F. The kind of church we build up depends on the kind of truth we teach—1 Tim. 3:15.

1 Tim. 3:15—But if I delay, *I write* that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.