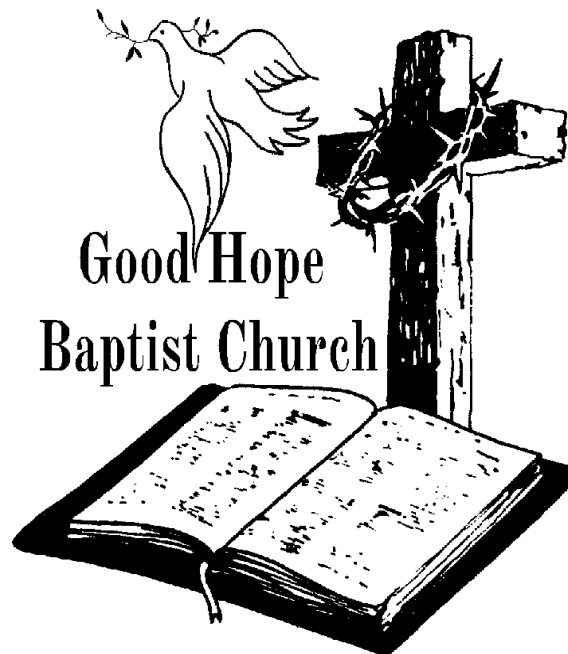


The House of God

1 Timothy 3:15



Living Together In The Love Of God

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FOCAL Read Responsively 1 Timothy 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, **which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**

I want to start out this sermon today not by talking about the Lord (though He is my favorite subject), but about our enemy Satan (my least favorite subject). When people think of Satan they often think of a cartoon character with a pointy tail and a red suit with a pitchfork - or else they make him into a god that can read minds and do all things. Satan is neither of these things. Satan is a created being, an archangel, someone who - receiving all the blessings of God - decided to walk away from the One Who lovingly created him. Satan is evil - but he isn't all powerful, nor is he stupid.

Satan is a master at what he does. He was created to be General over all the angels, so he understands the best way to attack and destroy his Enemy. Satan hates God, and hates God's agenda. But the devil knows that the best way to hinder God's work is not by attacking God nor by attacking the work from the outside.

Satan knows that the best way to destroy the work of God is from the inside out.

How did Satan cause the fall of humanity? Did he scare Adam into betraying God? No, but he worked from the inside out. Satan convinced Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit. When she did, **she gave to Adam who was with her (Genesis 3:6), and he did eat, and they eyes of both of them were opened to sin.** When Satan

wanted to attack Israel how did he do it? The Bible says:

1 Chronicles 21:1 ... Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

The devil has learned that an outward attack is not nearly as effective as an inward attack. Look at the early Church. It was growing by leaps and bounds. The Bible says:

Acts 6:7 ... the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

The presence of the Church and the Gospel of Christ grew so strong that people were turning away from their false gods, and bringing their old false holy books to the town squares.

Acts 19:18-20 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Persecuted and afflicted from without, the Church kept on growing. Everything the devil did - whether it be the sending of Saul of Tarsus to the Roman Caesars banning of Christianity as an act of treason - had no effect. Then the devil had a brainstorm. A Roman Emperor by the

name of **Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus** came to the throne. Known as **Constantine** by his followers, he ordered a formal end to the persecution of Christians. The so called **Edict of Milan** (AD 313) decreed freedom for Christians, and returned previously confiscated properties and meeting places. This was not a bad thing, but a blessing. However Constantine bound the state to the Church.

Whereas previous Caesars made pagan faiths part of the state, Constantine made Christianity the prominent state religion. Constantine saw it as his duty to ensure that God was properly worshiped in his empire, and what proper worship consisted of was for the Church to determine.

The State supported Church began to demand that all people submit to it. Unbelievers were, in time, forced into the Church at the point of the sword. They brought with them their pagan practices, perverting the Gospel message. Satan once more demonstrated that the best attack comes from the inside out.

I could go on and on throughout history demonstrating this principle of Satan. America was founded by **Pilgrims - Christians who left England to escape religious persecution**. Our country was founded on freedom of religion - a key truth only found in Christianity. We have seen attacks come against the Church from the outside, but the greatest attacks still come from the inside. **Satan has flooded local Churches with leadership that does not have a high view of the Scripture or of the Church.** Seminaries

teach prospective pastors that the Bible has error in it.

A common teaching heard among liberal professors is "**The Bible contains the Word of God, but is not the Word of God**". These professors enter the Churches, trying to pervert God's Word from the inside out.

Not that we weren't warned about this. The Apostle Paul ordered the Pastors of Ephesus to not only **feed the Church of God which He purchased with His own Blood**, but

Acts 20:28-30 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

he warned that **wolves would enter in among the Pastorate, not sparing the flock**. Satan always attacks the work of God from the inside out.

Do You Have A HIGH View or a low view of The Church?

The Devil has a low view of the Church, and the world itself has a low view of the Church. How does God view His Church? Read the focal text with me:

FOCAL 1 Timothy 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou

mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

a Notice how God talks about the Unity of His Church. It is the Church of the living God. It is not Churches - plural - but Church.

There is but One Church under One Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. There may be many denominations - separations among the people for minor points - but every local Church is a part of the One Church, and it stands together following One Lord Jesus Christ.

God's people stand with the Lord Who saved them. The Scripture says:

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

God is working in His Church, and His Church works with God. There are those who profess to be "Church" but are not for they have rejected the Word of God and stand apart from the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Yet God has reserved to Himself a remnant.** Elisha wept in prayer before God saying:

Romans 11:3 (quoting 1 Kings 19:10) ... **Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am**

left alone, and they seek my life.

I've felt that way myself many times. "**Lord, it seems as if there are so few. Where are the Christians? Am I alone in standing for you?**" I know you have felt that way, too. God's reply to Elisha, to you, and to I is:

Romans 11:4 I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

God has reserved to Himself some Godly men who will stand up for what is right, and do what is right though all the world be inflamed! God is in control, and His Church is not defeated - not by a long shot.

FOCAL 1 Timothy 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

b Notice also **the Church is the House of God**. God is it's Architect and it's Builder. We are not building the Church, but God is. Jesus said:

Matthew 16:18 upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The Church is the Pillar and Ground of the truth. Jesus is building His Church on the Truth of His Gospel and on the Truth of His Word. Jesus did not start His

Church with His shed Blood, then abandon it to build itself. He is the Builder of His Church, and we are together bound to Him our Cornerstone:

Ephesians 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

In Christ Jesus we are:

Ephesians 2:22 builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

God prophesied of His Church:

Psalms 46:5-6 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. 6 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

A few years ago ever preacher I know jumped on the "Purpose Driven Bandwagon", trying to force the Church to grow using Rick Warren's Saddleback agenda. Every Church I am intimately acquainted with that tried this method of growth either stayed the same, or else lost members. **Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it (Psalm 127:1)**

C The Church is God's House, so He provides for it. He gives us direction and guidance by His Word.

We, like Israel, often foolishly choose Sauls to lead us - but God the builder has His Man ready, a man who

loves Him and his Church.

We live in a welfare state in America today, but **welfare has never fared well for the people**. Those on welfare often become burdens on the state. God said in his Word:

1 Timothy 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Do you think that God would command that we **provide for those of our own house, and yet not provide for His own? Absolutely not - away with such foolishness!** The Church is God's House, and He provides for His House.

**God Demands That Leaders In His Church
Have A High View Of The Church
And A Dedication To Him**

FOCAL 1 Timothy 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

The Apostle Paul - hindered by Roman imprisonment - could not come to Ephesus to guide the growing Church there. So in the Book of 1 Timothy he wrote under the inspiration of God to one of his converts, a young man he trained to be a missionary. He wrote so that the Church would "**know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the**

living God".

Since Satan knows that the most effective attack against God's work is from the inside out, Paul addressed the issue of leaders in the local Church. If Godly leaders are chosen to the *offices* of the Church the the Church will be both protected as well as nourished.

Two different *offices* or "official positions" are given to the local Church by God. These are the office of the Bishop (also called Overseer or Pastor), and the office of the Deacon. Both of these offices were established in the Book of Acts. The **Bishop or Overseer** (also called **Pastor**) was given by God to **build up the saints, and equip them for the work of the ministry**. He is to teach the Word of God with the goal of unifying the local Church into one cohesive body. The Apostle said:

Ephesians 4:11-12 ^(NASB) {God} gave some as **pastors and teachers ... for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;**

The office of the **Deacon** was established in the Book of Acts when trouble started in the early Church over the physical needs of the Body.

Acts 6:1-4 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples

unto them, and said, **It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.**

What are the qualities that God expects in His Pastors and Deacons, in the leadership of His Church? Though the Pastor and Deacons have different areas of service, their qualifications are quite similar.

Context 1 Timothy 3:2, 4 A bishop then must be ... the husband of one wife ... {4} One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

Context 1 Timothy 3:12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

Let's look at the checklist:

- ✓ Pastors and Deacons are to be **the husband of one wife**. These are God called MEN.

The Church is the pillar and ground of the truth - not the creator of it. We uphold God's Word, and His Word - like it or not - says these leaders are Godly MEN.

I know that this is not *politically correct* in our world

today - but God calls men to leadership roles in His Church. The text clearly states that they are to be **the husbands of one wife**. These Godly men are each *dedicated to one woman*. A Godly man is not a womanizer. These Godly men are **men**. There is no way that you can be "**the husband of one wife**" biblically speaking and not be a man. He is a man, he is dedicated to his wife, and **he is a father to his children**. Whether **Pastor or Deacon** the leader is to "**rule their own houses well**". They are to be MEN. I know that is probably offensive to some who hear this or read this, but that is the plain sense of the Scripture. They are not to be dictators or tyrants, but to follow the Biblical role of husband and wife. The Bible asks this question:

Context 1 Timothy 3:5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

Word Study The word translated "**rule**" is the Greek PROISTEMI, which means "**to preside over or maintain order over**", not to dictate. He should be maintaining order in his house *before* he accepts a call to maintain order in God's House.

The household is the Christian husband's stewardship, entrusted to him by God. If he does not care for this smaller stewardship by "**loving his wife as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it**" (Ephesians 5:25), then it makes sense that he will not care for the LARGER STEWARDSHIP of the Church.

Context 1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be

blameless ...

Context 1 Timothy 3:10 let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

- ✓ Pastors and Deacons - though not perfect nor sinless - are to be **blameless**

Illustrate Both Pastor as well as Deacon is to be **blameless**. Now, does that mean we are perfect? No, absolutely not. We all err. But we are to be blameless. Let me illustrate. When I was a little boy I - like most children - would do things that made no sense. I would poke holes in furniture to see what was behind the cloth, or take something apart to see what made it work. When I got caught momma would say, "**Now who's to BLAME for this?**" Who made the mess? Who destroyed my property. You know what I'd do? Try to blame somebody else. **Mark did it. Julie did it.** When the woods were on fire from a match I lit, "**it was spontaneous combustion - an act of God!**" That never worked, by the way.

If God has called you to be a leader you shouldn't go around playing with matches and starting fires like a six year old. This is God's House - please, be blameless in how you conduct yourselves.

Context 1 Timothy 3:3 {The Pastor is} **Not given to wine not greedy of filthy lucre**

Context 1 Timothy 3:8 Likewise must the **deacons**

be not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

- ✓ Pastors and Deacons are to be **good examples for the Church**

Love should be the driving force behind a God called leader. It's not about what I want, but about what God's people need.

Godly leaders don't stagger around drunk, nor do they come to fleece the sheep. In fact, we are to carefully consider our actions, lest we inadvertently bring a breach into the Church. The Apostle Paul said:

Romans 14:15 ^(NIV) **If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.**

The Godly leader is not just to avoid sin, but must love the people! That should show in how you carry yourselves. The Scripture says:

Romans 14:19-21 ^(NIV) **Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.**

The Godly leader must always remember that he is an example to the **Church of the Living God**. We make every effort to walk peaceably and in a way that will honor the Lord and build up His Church.

Context 1 Timothy 3:8-9 Likewise must the **deacons be grave, not doubletongued** 9 Holding the **mystery of the faith in a pure conscience**.

- ✓ Pastors and Deacons are to **be serious about doing God's work, and must control our tongues**

God's leaders need to take what they are doing very seriously. That's what it means when it says that they must be **grave**. That doesn't mean that they cannot have a sense of humor. As a matter of fact, I believe a sense of humor helps if you are in a leadership position. Learn to laugh at yourself, and to relax rather than take everything personally.

Word Study God's leaders **must not be doubletongued**. This is the Greek **DILOGOS**, which means "**to have two sets of words**". We who lead need to be honest in our speech, and forthright in what we say. **We should be trustworthy in our speech**.

FOCAL 1 Timothy 3:6 **Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil**.

- ✓ Pastors and Deacons are to **be mature in their faith, committed followers of Christ**

The Church is **the pillar and ground of the truth**. We do not create truth - but we uphold God's truth. That is why the Godly leader must know - and lovingly pursue - the truths of the Scripture. The Bible says "**not a novice**".

New believers - and old believers who never study their Bibles - should never be accepted or called by the Church to be Pastors or Deacons.

1 Peter 5:2-4 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

- ✓ Pastors and Deacons are to **be protect and provide guidance through God's Word, but are not called as lords but examples**

We must stand on the truth - but are *never* the stand on the neck of the Church. The Church belongs to God. It is His Temple. He lives in the midst of His people. He said:

2 Corinthians 6:16-18 ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Godly leaders stand on and support the Word of God. This is what God calls us to be. The Church is God's method to change the world. Our work is God's Work, and God's Work is Kingdom work.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



FOCAL Read Responsively 1 Timothy 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, **which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**

Genesis 3:6; 1 Chronicles 21:1; Acts 6:7; Acts 19:18-20; Acts 20:28-30

Do You Have A HIGH View or a low view of The Church?

a Notice how God talks about the Unity of His Church. _____

Ephesians 4:4-6; Romans 11:3; Romans 11:4

b Notice also the Church is the House of God. _____

Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 2:21; Ephesians 2:22; Psalms 46:5-6; Psalm 127:1

c The Church is God's House, so He provides for it.

_____ 1 Timothy 5:8

God Demands That Leaders In His Church Have A High View Of The Church And A Dedication To Him

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against God's work is from the inside out, Paul addressed the issue of leaders in the local Church. If Godly leaders are chosen to the *offices* of the Church the the Church will be both protected as well as nourished.

Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:2, 4; 1 Timothy 3:12; 1 Timothy 3:5; Ephesians 5:25; 1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Timothy 3:10; 1 Timothy 3:3; 1 Timothy 3:8; Romans 14:15; Romans 14:19-21; 1 Timothy 3:8-9; 1 Timothy 3:6; 1 Peter 5:2-4; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18

- ✓ Pastors and Deacons are to be **the husband of one wife**. These are God called MEN.
- ✓ Pastors and Deacons - though not perfect nor sinless - are to be **blameless**
- ✓ Pastors and Deacons are to be **good examples for the Church**
- ✓ Pastors and Deacons are to be **mature in their faith, committed followers of Christ**
- ✓ Pastors and Deacons are to be **protect and provide guidance through God's Word, but are not called as lords but examples**