

**Fight the Good Fight**  
**1 Timothy 3:14-16 (Week 11) 11/16/2025**  
**Godliness in the House of God**

This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

*<sup>14</sup> I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, <sup>15</sup> if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. <sup>16</sup> Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:*

*He was manifested in the flesh,  
vindicated by the Spirit,  
seen by angels,  
proclaimed among the nations,  
believed on in the world,  
taken up in glory. (1 Timothy 3:14-16)*

### **Introduction and Review**

- **Today we'll** continue our study through **1 Timothy**.
- And we come to the **end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter**, which is **half-way** through **the letter**.
- But before we get to **the final three chapters**, we're going to take a little break.
- **Next week**, we'll have a **special guest speaker**, Topic, Passage?
- And then comes **Advent**.
- **Advent** is a time when we remember and celebrate **Christ's coming**.
- And so, from **November 30<sup>th</sup> to December 21<sup>st</sup>**
- Plus, the **Christmas Eve service on December 24<sup>th</sup>**,
- **Christ's Advent (his coming)** will be our focus.
- And so, **this would be a great time to invite people to church**.
- Not only can **the Christmas season generate interest in Christ Jesus**.
- But it's my prayer that these **Advent messages** will not only **encourage believers** as we prepare to celebrate Christ's coming.
- But also **help non-believers** better understand what Jesus' **coming can mean for them**.
- So, as we approach the Advent Season, I would ask you to **pray**.
- **Ask** God to give you the **boldness and courage** to invite someone to come to church.
- In fact, Brian has made **special invitation cards** to help you do that.
- And also pray for **me** as I prepare and then **deliver these Advent messages**.
- Pray what Paul requested of **the Ephesians Christians...**
- <sup>19</sup> ...that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel. (Ephesians 6:19)*
- And **that mystery** is found in our passage for today.

- So, now we turn to **1 Timothy 3:14-16**, which \_\_\_\_\_ read for us.
- In verses 1-13, which we looked at over the last two weeks,
- Paul instructed Timothy regarding **the qualifications for elders and deacons**.
- This is how your leaders should behave.
- And following these **specific qualifications** for leaders,
- Paul, then turns to his personal situation and **the purpose for writing this letter**.
- And that **purpose centers** on...

## The Household of God

- In **verse 14**, he begins...

***<sup>14</sup> I hope to come to you soon,***

- Paul was hoping and planning to visit **Ephesus**...

***but (he continues) I am writing these things to you so that, <sup>15</sup> if I delay...***

- In case he was detained, possibly by an **arrest or another shipwreck**.
- Paul wanted to **write down** for Timothy (and the church of **Ephesus**) instructions about...

### 1. Behavior in God's House

- Again **verse 14**...

***<sup>14</sup> ...I am writing these things to you so that, <sup>15</sup> if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God... (1 Timothy 3:14-15)***

- As I've mentioned before this is **Paul's purpose statement**,
- This is the **main reason** he wrote this letter to Timothy,
- and even though he didn't **state his purpose** until the middle of the letter.
- He's already been **instructing Timothy** regarding **behavior in the church**.
- In **Chapter 1** he charged Timothy to put a stop to **the improper behavior** of false teachers.
- And in **Chapter 2**, he not only makes it clear that **prayer** is **crucial behavior**,
- But he also gives **instruction** for how **men and women are to behave in the church**.
- **Then** in **Chapter 3:1-13** he lists what **proper behavior** looks like for **church leaders**.
- And Paul will continue, **throughout the rest** of this letter, to give instruction for how **one ought to behave in the household of God, the church of the living God**...
- **So, he's writing about behavior in God's house.**
- And if you remember, Paul already used this word **"household" (Greek oikos)**,
- earlier in this chapter, when he listed the **qualifications of both elders and deacons**.
- If **these men** are to be given responsibility for **leading/managing in the household of God**.
- They must first **manage their own households** (especially their children) **well!**

- And so using household (oikos) to describe the church makes sense.
- Because just as there are **biological children** in an **elder or deacon's household**....
- there are **spiritual children in the household of God**.
- Paul tells the **church in Galatia** that Christ came...

***<sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.***  
***(Galatians 4:5)***

- By grace through faith in Jesus Christ we are **redeemed**, (Jesus paid the price for our sins)
- and because of that we are then **adopted into the family of God**.
- Therefore, we are **brothers and sisters** in Christ.
- Each and every one of us **has a place in God's family, his Household**.

***which is the church of the living God***

- We're not the **church (the people)** of some **lifeless man** or **wooden idol**.
- Our God lives, **Jesus lives**, and therefore he interacts with us.
- **His Spirit** indwells and empowers us.
- **And his word** instructs us on how we ought to behave in his house.
- **HIS HOUSE, not our house**.
- The church is not just a place for believers to gather on Sunday Morning.
- The **church is God's residence**.
- In other words, the church is not simply **God's household to manage and rule, from afar**;
- It is also **his house, the place where God in his holiness dwells**.
- **Calvin writes...**

***There are good reasons why God should call the Church His House, for not only has He received us as His sons by the grace of adoption, but He Himself dwells in the midst of us.***  
***(John Calvin)***

- Paul had already made **this very point** to his letter to **the Ephesian church**...
- **He writes...**

***<sup>22</sup> In [Christ] you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.***  
***(Ephesians 2:22)***

- The church (the people) are **the house that God built**.
- This is so different from other religions, where buildings, temples, cathedrals are crucial.
- **This was certainly true in Pagan Ephesus**.
- **Ephesus** was the center of worship for **the goddess Diana**.
- Her temple (a great building) was one of **the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World**.
- But however impressive it **seemed from the outside**,
- It, like **all similar buildings** (temples devoted to false Gods) **was lifeless**.
- The **goddess in the temple** was nothing more than **a dead idol**.

- **By contrast**, Paul wanted to remind the **Ephesians** that **God's church**, is not a building,
- The Greek word for church is **ekklesia**, which refers to **a gathering of the called out ones...**
- **So, wherever the people, who have been called out by God gather**, that is the church.
- We are the **true temple of God**.
- As Paul had said to the **"Men of Athens"** ...

***<sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, (Acts 17:24)***

- Instead, **God lives, he dwells, in and among his people.**
- **And this**, I believe, is **magnified** when **the church assembles**.
- When **God's people** come together **for prayer and praise and worship and the word**.
- God takes **up residence** among them; **God is in the house**.
- And it doesn't matter how **large or small the gathering is**.
- **As Jesus said...**

***<sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. (Matthew 18:20)***

- **Certainly**, God's Spirit is **continually present** in the life of **each individual believer**.
- But when **his household, his sons and daughters gather**,
- There is a special sense of **his presence among us**.
- **And why is that?**
- **Well**, I think it's **because when we come together God can and does manifest himself** through each and every one of us.
- As we worship together, as we take in the word together, as we fellowship together,
- And as we **pray together, we are exposed to God's Spirit** that dwells in **every believer**.
- We are **"the church of the living God"** and as we **see God's Spirit** work in and through each of us, we **get a fuller a grander picture of God**.
- **And so**, I hope that helps you can **see why it is of utmost importance** that **God's children**,
- Those who make up the household where God dwells, **should behave as he instructs**.
- This is **the exact point** Paul made to the church in Corinth, that was struggling with **sexual sin...**
- **He commands...**

***<sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.***

- And what reasons does Paul give for **this command...**

***<sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)***

- For those who **were redeemed**, bought with a price of Christ's blood.
- They/WE are to behave in the household of God, **because we are the household of God**,

- We **are the temple of the Holy Spirit**.
- God's Spirit, which is Holy, dwells in each of us individually and corporately.
- And for his glory and our good, God calls this church to flee sin and behave as he instructs.
- Think about it this way, if Jesus knocked on your door and entered your house, sat on your couch.
- **How would that impact the way you behave?**
- **Well know this**, He has entered your house, or rather you are part of the house in which he dwells!
- **Let that truth from the word of God impact the way you live each moment of your life!**
- Okay, so I hope we've seen **the importance** of our **behavior in God's House**.
- Paul then gives us a brief yet powerful description of God's household, the church...
- And that description **declares the importance, not only of behavior, but of...**

## 2. Truth in God's House

- In verse 15, Paul describes the church of the living god as...

### *a pillar and buttress of the truth*

- Now we'll talk more about what these **architectural** terms mean shortly,
- But Paul is clearly **teaching** that **in the church, along with proper behavior, truth matters**.
- And unfortunately, **truth is mattering less and less in our culture**.
- As **Democratic political consultant James Carville** famously said...

### *Truth is relative. Truth is what you can make the voter believe is the truth. (James Carville)*

- For many in our culture, **truth is not absolute, it's what you think it is**,
- Or what you want it to be, **what makes your point** and further your agenda.
- This is tragically illustrated in the **ridiculous way** many in our culture cannot even acknowledge the **truth of what makes someone a man or a woman**.
- And unfortunately, this view of truth as relative has made its way into the church.
- In his book **No Place for Truth**, or, **Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?**
- **David Wells** argues that

### *The church is weak because it has exchanged the sensibilities of modern culture for the truth of Christ. (David Wells)*

- If **Wells is right**, then the church is **no longer the church**.
- **Because** the apostle Paul describes the church **by its relationship to the truth**.
- The church is not only a home for God and for his people, but also a **home for God's truth**.

### *a pillar and buttress of truth*

- Now what does this mean?
- Well let's **first see** what it doesn't mean.

- Roman Catholic **theologians** often use this verse to **argue against** the **doctrine** of **sola scriptura (Scripture alone)**.
- Bridges expresses this doctrine **in our core value** or **reliance on the word of God**.
- We believe that God's word is our absolute authority, our absolute truth.
- However, pointing to this verse in 1 Timothy, which calls the church a **pillar and buttress**...
- The **Catholic says**, see, the church is **the foundation for the truth**.
- Therefore, Scripture is not the **only place where truth about faith and practice can be found**.
- We must **obey church tradition** as well as **the Bible**.
- One problem with this view is that it **forgets Paul's previous letter** to the **Ephesians**...
- Where in **Chapter 2 verses 19 & 20** he writes...

***<sup>19</sup> ...you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, (Ephesians 2:19-20)***

- The **foundation** of the household of God (**which is the church**) is not the church,
- **It is the Word of God**. The word that was declared by the **prophets of the Old Testament**,
- written by the **apostles of the New Testament**,
- and **made incarnate by God's own Son**.
- **So**, the church is **not the foundation of truth**, **the word of God is...**
- **In fact**, here in **1 Timothy**, Paul doesn't **say the church is the foundation of anything**.
- **He says, the church is...**

### ***a pillar and buttress of truth***

- Now we can look at what these **architectural words** mean with regard to the truth.
- First, what is a **buttress**,

### **Here are some pictures...**

- As you can see, a **buttress** is not a building's foundation, **but part of its supporting structure**.
- **A buttress helps to stabilize the walls of a large building**.
- In the same way, **the church of Jesus Christ helps to stabilized or hold the truth steady**.
- The **people of God are people of the truth**.
- Not that we **produce the truth** but **as a buttress**,
- **We hold to, support and even defend the truth**.
- Now the other **word Paul** uses to describe the relationship between the church and truth is ***pillar***.

### **Here are some pictures...**

- The function of pillars is obvious; they **hold up the roof**.
- And to say that the church is **the pillar of the truth** is to say that it upholds or lifts up the truth for all the world to see.

- So, when Paul says that the church is a...

### ***buttress and pillar of the truth...***

- He's not teaching that **truth (doctrine)** comes from the church.
- He is teaching **something very practical**.
- Not that, **as the Roman Catholic says**, the church **determines the truth**,
- But instead, the church, which has **received the truth** from God through his word,
- Now, it has the responsibility to support, defend, lift up and even declare the truth.
- Which means as **sons and daughters** in God's household,
- **We must strive to know and to practice the truth.**
- We must endeavor to understand and live by (behave based on) the word of God.
- We've received the truth, **but if we are going to support and display it...**
- We must read it and study it and know it and **OBEY IT!**
- **AMEN!**
- So, we've seen the **Household of God**,
- Where the Holy God dwell with his people who are called to behave properly.
- And we've seen that this household is a house of truth.
- The Church of the living God is where **God's truth** is supported and displayed.
- **And what is at the heart of the truth that God's church is to support and display?**
- **Well, that takes us to...**

### **The Mystery of Godliness**

- Once Paul has described of the church as a **buttress and pillar of truth** He writes...

### ***<sup>16</sup> Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness... (1 Timothy 3:16)***

- So, there is a relationship between **truth and the mystery of godliness**.
- Now that word **godliness** in the Greek includes the **ideas of holiness, reverence, respect**.
- It relates back to how **one ought to behave in the household of God**.
- We are to behave in a **godly, holy, reverence, respectful way**.
- And, as we saw last week, when the **New Testament** uses the word "**mystery**"
- It's not referring to something that's unknown,
- but to something that was **long hidden but has now been revealed**.
- And the **Great mystery of the Old Testament** was how could a **sinful people be forgiven and redeemed by a Holy God**.
- Put simply, **the mystery is, how can sinful (ungodly) people be saved?**
- And In the **New Testament** this mystery is **variously referred** to as "**the mystery of faith**",
- "**the mystery of the gospel**", "**the mystery of Christ**"
- and here in 1 Timothy as "**the mystery of godliness**".



- These different phrases, all speak of the same mystery that was revealed through Jesus Christ.
- But each one **has a different emphasis**.
- The mystery of **faith** emphasizes that we are **saved not by works of the law by faith in Christ**.
- The mystery of **Christ** emphasizes that salvation is through **Christ alone**.
- The mystery of **the gospel** emphasizes that salvation **through Jesus Christ** is **good news** to all.
- And the mystery of **godliness** emphasizes that it is **through faith in Jesus Christ**,
- Who is the only godly sinless holy one, that we can be declared holy (godly) and can be saved.
- **“Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness”**
- Because **our godliness and thus our salvation** comes through **Jesus Christ** alone.
- This is the **central truth** that the church is called to **uphold and proclaim to the world**:
- the saving mystery of faith in Jesus Christ **that makes one acceptable to a Holy God**.
- Paul then reveals again **this mystery of godliness, in summary form**.
- How can one be godly, **how can one be acceptable to God**.
- And the answer is not what some would expect, it's not **about godly behavior**.
- Yes, Paul has been talking about the importance of **behavior in the household of God**.
- But the mystery reveals that it's not through our proper or godly behavior that we're saved.
- Instead, salvation is **through Christ alone**.
- So, **what follows in verse 16 are six lines** that are **most likely** part of an early Christian hymn.
- Because in the Greek the lines are **rhythmic**, and their **first words all rhyme**.
- So, we miss some of the beauty of this “hymn” **in the English translation**,
- but we can still **understand the meaning**.
- **Revealing the mystery of Godliness**, Paul writes...

***He was manifested in the flesh,  
vindicated by the Spirit,  
seen by angels,  
proclaimed among the nations,  
believed on in the world,  
taken up in glory. (1 Timothy 3:16)***

- This hymn is a very brief summary **about Jesus Christ**.
- It contains **the gospel truth** about **his work of salvation** in **outline form**.
- Each line describes a **different period or event in his life and ministry**.
- It's meant not as a **detailed explanation** but like many of the songs we sing,
- It's meant to draw our minds to truths **we are already aware of**.
- And it seems to follow a **somewhat chronological order**.



- It begins with...

## 1. Christ's Manifestation

### *He was manifested in the flesh*

- This is an **extremely brief summary** of Christ's incarnation (his advent, his coming into our world)
- All the way to his crucifixion (his death for our sins).
- **God was manifested in the flesh**, in physical form.
- **God the Son, from eternity past**, had lived in all the majesty of **his deity**.
- **Then at the fullness of time** he became **a man, he took on flesh**.
- This is the **incarnation**; this is what we celebrate at **Christmas**.
- **Emanuel God** with us and God as one of us.
- By taking **upon himself human flesh**, Christ became **one person with two natures**:
- He was both fully **divine** and fully **human**.
- Paul describes it this way in his **letter to the Philippians**...

***<sup>5</sup> ...Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. (Philippians 2:5-7)***

- **God the Son** became a man,
- Therefore, everything he did on this earth, he did in the flesh, in **a real human body**.
- He shared our nature (minus the sin), **and therefore he alone was the perfect God-man**.
- So that **he alone** could meet the requirements of God, he alone **was Godly**...
- And therefore, he alone could **offer himself as a sacrifice for our sin**.
- As Paul makes clear to the next verse in Philippians...

***<sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:8)***

- **Christ's initial manifestation in the flesh** took place in Bethlehem.
- But the reason **for his manifestation in the flesh** took place on the cross.
- When he became a man he received a **human nature and a physical fleshly body**...
- So that, on the cross, as the Scripture says,

***<sup>1</sup> ...Christ suffered in the flesh, (1 Peter 4:1)***

- And he died in the flesh. It was a **real body** that was nailed with real nails to a cross of real wood.
- It was a **real body that was punished for sin**:

***<sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree... (1 Peter 2:24)***

- Then it was a real body, **a corpse**, that was taken down from the cross, wrapped in linen, and laid in a tomb.

- God the Son did not just **manifest (appear)** in a body;
- The body (the flesh) in which he appeared was crucified, **was sacrificed for our sins**.
- The **flesh was dead and buried in a tomb**.
- But it did not stay there, and that brings us to the **second line in Paul's hymn...**

## 2. Christ's Vindication

- He was...

### *vindicated by the Spirit*

- That word **vindicated** means to **justify**,
- to declare that one is innocent or righteous,
- That they were or are right in what they said or did.
- **For example: we have the story of Daniel in the Lions Den.**
- Daniel continued to pray to God despite a law forbidding it.
- His accusers threw him into a den of lions, but God protected him.
- This led to **King Darius** publicly acknowledging the God of Israel, vindicating Daniel and his faith.
- Daniel had done and said what was right and true and, in the end, he was **vindicated**.
- Proven right, Justice prevailed.
- So, the fact that Jesus was vindicated by the Spirit, means that the Spirit in some way,
- showed that Jesus was/is just righteous, that what he said and did was right and true.
- Justice prevailed.
- And this specifically relates **to his crucifixion**.
- Jesus was crucified because of **what he said and did**,
- Specifically, he was accused of **the crime of blasphemy**, we see this in **Mark's Gospel**, during **His trial before the High Priest...**

*<sup>61</sup> ...the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" <sup>62</sup> And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." <sup>63</sup> And the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further witnesses do we need? <sup>64</sup> You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?" And they all condemned him as deserving death. (Mark 14:61-64)*

- Jesus was put to death for the **supposed crime** of blasphemy.
- He claimed to be the Christ (the Messiah) the Son of God and therefore the savior of the world.
- And so, what the Spirit did was **vindicate, prove that Jesus Christ was innocent of blasphemy because what he said was right and true**.
- He is who he said he is, **the Christ, the Son of God**.
- And how was Christ vindicated by the Spirit?

- **Through the Resurrection.**
- God the Father raised God the Son from the dead **by the power of God the Holy Spirit.**
- And in this way Jesus was...

### ***vindicated by the Spirit***

- When the Spirit raised Jesus from the dead,
- he confirmed that everything Jesus ever said or did was true.
- Although **Jesus Christ** was rejected by the world, **he was proven and approved by the Spirit.**
- As the apostle **Paul explained to the Romans...**

***<sup>4</sup> [Jesus] was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead... (Romans 1:4)***

- The resurrection was the Holy Spirit's vindication, verification, proof that Jesus is the Christ.
- The Son of God and the Savior of the World...
- **And that takes us to...**

### **3. Christ's Presentation**

- After Jesus was "***vindicated by the Spirit***" he was

### ***seen by angels***

- Now there are two possible **interpretations** of this word **angels** (**anglos** in the Greek).
- **First**, and this is the interpretation that most Bibles (including the ESV choose)
- That is anglos (**is translated or transliterated**) as angels, heavenly beings.
- And it's certainly true that **Christ was seen by angles.**
- They sang at his birth.
- They witnessed his life and ministry.
- After his temptation in the wilderness, they ministered to him.
- An angel appeared in the **Garden of Gethsemane** to strengthen Jesus for the work of the cross.
- They were at his tomb after **his resurrection.**
- And they **witnessed His ascension into heaven.**
- And if this is **the correct interpretation** then by declaring that Christ was "seen by angels"
- **Paul is saying that the mystery of godliness is known by the angels.**
- That **Christ's victory over sin and death** is seen and celebrated in heaven as well as on earth.
- And that is certainly true and worthy.
- However, as I will explain, it doesn't seem to **fit well** with the rest of the hymn.
- There is, however, another possible meaning for the word (**angelos**)
- When **translated** it simply means "**messenger**,"
- Which makes it **an appropriate word** for God's **heavenly messengers (angels).**
- But it can also refer to his **earthly messengers,**
- **And in this case that would be the apostles.**

- What Paul says about these messengers in **1 Timothy 3:16** was certainly true of the apostles:
- **they saw Jesus.**
- The apostles were eyewitnesses of his life and work, **and especially of his resurrection.**
- And **the apostles** make more sense in the **Chronological flow of the Hymn.**
- Because the next thing Jesus did after he was **vindicated by the Spirit (raised by the Spirit)**
- was to show himself to the apostles, to Peter, John, and the other disciples, **including Thomas.**
- Here's the sequence of **Paul's hymn:**
- first, the manifestation (incarnation to crucifixion); second, the resurrection; third, the presentation.
- This also seems to flow with **the theology of the hymn.**
- The **post resurrection** appearances of Jesus were essential to the plan of salvation.
- In order for the apostles (the future messengers of the gospel) to know that Jesus was the Christ,
- They had to see **his glorious resurrection body.**
- Otherwise, they wouldn't have been able to testify that he had defeated sin and death.
- Without their eyewitness testimony, we ourselves would have no evidence the resurrection.
- and the church of the living God would not be able to stand as a pillar and buttress to the gospel truth.
- The same cannot **be said of the angels and their testimony.**
- They glorified God when they **saw the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**
- But **our faith rests upon Jesus' appearance** to the apostles and their written record in Scripture.
- Our faith doesn't rest upon the angels or what they saw.
- So, we've seen Christ's **manifestation in the flesh, his vindication by the Spirit**
- and his **presentation** to messengers.
- And then comes...

#### 4. **Christ's Proclamation**

- This is another reason for thinking that "messengers" refers to the apostles. **Jesus was...**

#### ***proclaimed among the nations***

- Meaning all **the Gentile peoples of the world.**
- This clearly refers to the **apostles going forth and preaching of the gospel.**
- After the **presentation came the proclamation.**
- Having seen **the risen Christ**, the **apostles preached the risen Christ.**
- They had received their commission to do this from Jesus himself.
- Before **he ascended into heaven**, he said to them,

***<sup>18</sup> ... "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)***

- **The apostles** began to fulfill this **commission at Pentecost**.
- While they waited in **Jerusalem**, they were anointed by the **Holy Spirit** and began to speak in foreign tongues (other languages).
- The Bible **emphasizes** that the people who heard them were

***<sup>5</sup> ...devout men from every nation under heaven. (Acts 2:5)***

- When Peter stood up and addressed the crowd that day,
- he was preaching/proclaiming Jesus Christ among the nations.
- **And Pentecost** was only the beginning of **the worldwide work of the gospel**.
- Jesus Christ was preached, not only in Jerusalem, **but in Judea, and Samaria**,
- and to the uttermost parts of the earth.
- **And the gospel of Jesus Christ** continues to be proclaimed among the nations to this very day.
- This is part of the **great mystery of godliness**.
- What the church is doing today is essential to God's plan for the redemption of the world.
- To bring Jesus Christ and His godliness (and thus salvation) to the nations.
- The gospel is going to the nations **as the good news about Jesus Christ is proclaimed to every tribe, people, and language**.
- And what Biblically and logically **follows the proclamation** of Jesus Christ among the nations?

## **5. Christ's Reception**

- Wherever **Jesus Christ** is proclaimed, he is

***believed on in the world***

- **The first to believe** were the **first eyewitnesses of the resurrection**.
- They had heard the **proclamation** of Christ himself.
- And **John believed** even before he saw **the risen Christ**.
- When he heard the tomb was (almost) empty, he...

***<sup>4</sup> ...outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. (John 20:4-5)***

- As John stood in the doorway, he saw the burial cloth, still intact,
- and he tried to figure out what it all meant. **Finally, he went inside, where...**

***<sup>8</sup> ...he saw and believed; (John 20:8)***

- On the evidence of **the burial clothes**, he believed that Jesus had been raised from the dead.
- And John was **only the first to believe**.
- **Mary Magdalene** believed and told the disciples,

***<sup>18</sup> ...“I have seen the Lord”... (John 20:18)***

- The disciples were afraid at first, and some doubted,
- but when Jesus appeared to them, **they also believed**.
- Eventually, **even Thomas believed**, in spite of all his **initial doubts**.
- And as soon as **the apostles** began to preach the gospel to the nations,
- **others began to believe as well. On the day of Pentecost...**

***41 ...there were added that day about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41)***

- And **as the first church in Jerusalem** continued to preach the gospel,

***47 ...the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47)***

- And this process has continued throughout **church history**...
- It is doubtful whether a single day has gone by since the day Jesus rose from the tomb without someone believing in Him.
- The **global mission of Jesus Christ** is not **completed**; there is still work to done..
- But much has been accomplished.
- Despite over 2,000 years of **persecution and ridicule** from the world.
- Throughout our world, Jesus Christ is still believed on today.
- Each and every Christian in this room,
- and each and every Christian in churches throughout the world testify to this fact.
- Christianity is **the largest religion in the world**, with **about 2.3 billion** followers as of 2020.
- Now how many of those **2.3 billion people** truly believe, **we cannot know**.
- But we can know that it's through belief that the **mystery of godliness** is revealed.
- When you believe (trust in, put your faith in, give your life to) Jesus Christ.
- It's then that you receive His godliness, you are counted righteous by God through Christ.
- As Paul wrote to the Romans, we receive....

***22 the righteousness of God (Godliness) through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. (Romans 3:22)***

- So, if you have yet to believe in, to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior,
- you can do that today.
- You can put your faith in Christ's sacrificial work on the cross as the payment for your sins.
- And when you do, you are not only forgiven but you **receive the righteousness,**
- **the godliness of Jesus Christ.**
- And you then enter into the family (the household of God),
- For the apostle John wrote...

***12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, (John 1:12)***

- So, we've seen **Christ's manifestation, his vindication, his presentation, his proclamation and his reception.**
- And what's left in **this mystery of Godliness** is...

## 6. Christ's Glorification

### *He was, taken up in glory*

- This **final line** certainly begins with **Christ's ascension...**
- In the **book of Acts**, after **Jesus commissioned** his disciples to be his witness,
- to proclaim the gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the of the earth
- Luke then writes...

***<sup>9</sup> And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. (Acts 1:9)***

- Now chronologically the **ascension** took place before the proclamation and reception in the world.
- So, this might seem out of order.
- But if **"taken up to glory"** also refers to everything that **follows the ascension... Paul tells us...**

***<sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:36)***

- We know that **throughout eternity** God's people will be glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ for all he has done for us!
- And so **"taken up in glory"** should certainly come last in a hymn **celebrating Christ.**
- The important thing here is that ultimately and finally, **Jesus will be glorified!**
- **"Glory" (doxa)** is the word the Bible uses to describe **"brightness, splendor, or radiance."**
- In particular, it **refers to the glory and majesty of God."**
- By virtue of his resurrection, **Jesus is exalted and enthroned.**
- **He is seated at the right hand of God where He radiates the glory of God forever.**
- What better way to **end a hymn than with the glorious praise of the glorious Christ?**
- So, that's the **mystery of Godliness.**
- The mystery has been revealed to us, and it is (or HE is) **Jesus Christ.**
- His **manifestation** in the flesh, (from the **incarnation to the crucifixion**)
- His **vindication** by the Spirit through his **resurrection.**
- His **presentation** ("seen by messengers"),
- Who then **proclaimed him among the nations.**
- Which lead to His **reception by those who believed on Him in the world,**
- and finally, His **glorification** ("taken up in glory") his ascension and this eternal glorification.



- And so, the question is, what are we to do with this **revealed mystery of godliness**.
- Well, again for those who've yet to believe on the mystery revealed in Christ,
- **That's your application. Like John and Peter and Mary and Thomas and billions more...**
- **BELIEVE.**

- But what about those who've already believed in the revealed mystery of godliness.
- Well, let me suggest, knowing that we will be part of those who glorify Christ forever and ever.
- We should glorify Him today by remembering that we are part of...

***<sup>14</sup> ...the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:14-15)***

- And as such, we must behave in a glorifying godly way as the **Lord of our house commands**,
- And as part of our **glorifying godly behavior**, we must continue to uplift, display, defend the truth of the great mystery of Godliness.
- What we've seen today is a summary of the truth that we are to proclaim among the nations and in our neighborhoods.
- So that others in the world might believe in this mystery of Godliness,
- and become part of those who glorify Christ forever and ever.
- So bottom line, the God glorifying mystery has been proclaimed (revealed) to you,
- You must seek to glorify God by proclaiming to others.
- And one simple way you could do that, is to invite someone to join you for church during this Advent Season!

***Prayer***