

“Called to BE the Church”

1 Timothy 3:8-16

12/12/20

WELCOME:

(1 minute)

INTRO:

(3 minutes)

- **Q:** Have you ever built something, and when finished, realized you built it wrong?!
- **Illustration:** Importance of Directions (IKEA)
 - I had to build a bed from IKEA
 - Skimmed over directions to save time
 - Several pieces left out b/c I “eye-balled” it
 - Bed was standing, but could **NOT** hold my weight
 - Not until I re-read/followed directions was bed okay
 - ****LEARNED** → (1) Instructions matter; (2) b/c every detail serves a purpose ******

RECAP & CONTEXT:

(2 minutes)

- **Where we started:** Timothy to lead Church of Ephesus
 - Called to **PROCLAIM** the Gospel
 - Called to **GUARD** the Gospel
 - Called to **CELEBRATE** the Gospel
 - Called to **FIGHT** for the Gospel
- **Where we are going** (purpose for letter): Book Overview
 - Roles & functions w/in the Church

- Leadership qualifications for the church
- Purpose for the church (in whole)
- ****How the Church is to point others towards Jesus****
- **Where we are now: Current Situation**
 - Addressing the roles w/in local church
 - 1. Overseers (*last week*)
 - 2. Deacons
 - 3. Church body
 - Providing qualifications for each role
 - Defining functions of each role
 - Pointing to Gospel as purpose for each role
- **Sermon Title: “Called to BE the Church”**

BIG IDEA:

(1 minute)

- **Big Idea: The Church is to represent Christ to the world!**
 - The Church—the collective body of Believers (Christians)—are called to **BE** the hands and feet of Christ!
 - Paul wrote these instructions to specifically outline the **roles**, **functions** and **conduct** for each member within the (local) church.

PRAY:

(1 minute)

READ:

(1 minute)

- **Text: 1 Timothy 3:8-16**

⁸ Deacons, likewise, should be worthy of respect, not hypocritical, not drinking a lot of wine, not greedy for money, ⁹ holding **the mystery of the faith** with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ They must also be tested first; if they prove blameless, then they can serve as deacons.

¹¹ Wives, likewise, should be worthy of respect, not slanderers, self-controlled, faithful in everything. ¹² Deacons are to be husbands of one wife, managing their children and their own households competently. ¹³ **For those who have served well as deacons acquire a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.**

¹⁴ I write these things to you, hoping to come to you soon. ¹⁵ But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. ¹⁶ And most certainly, the mystery of godliness is great:

*He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated in the Spirit,
seen by angels,
preached among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.*

PREVIEW:

(1 minute)

- **Main Points:**

- 1 – **Servant Leadership** (v.8-13)
- 2 – **Corporate Conduct** (v.14-15)
- 3 – **Mystery of Godliness** (v.16)

PILLAR 1: **Servant Leadership**

(15 minutes)

(v.8)

- “Deacons, likewise, should be...”

- Paul connects qualifications of Deacons to Overseers
- [Some Overseer qualifications listed below, (v.2-7)]
 - Above reproach
 - Self-controlled
 - Sensible
 - Etc.
- Qualifications of Deacons listed & explained
 - ****There are 9 Qualifications**** (v.8-12)
 - 1. Worthy of respect
 - How you carry yourself
 - How you treat others
 - Decisions/choices you make
 - 2. Not hypocritical
 - Does what he/she says they will do
 - 'Yes' means yes & 'no' means no
 - 3. Not drinking a lot of wine
 - **TRANSLATION:** Drunk or Drunkard
 - Exhibit Christ-like Character
 - Similar to OS's "*self-controlled*"
 - 4. Not Greedy for money
 - Not living for themselves (selfish)
 - In contrast → Eyes set on Jesus
 - 5. Holding the mystery of faith w/ a clear conscience
 - **"Mystery of Faith"** = the Gospel

(v.9)

- Jesus spoke in parables → was a mystery to those who God did not reveal Himself to
 - **“Clear Conscience”** =
 - Knows the Gospel
 - Understands the Gospel
 - Believes the Gospel
- 6. Must be tested
 - Not a new convert
 - **“Tested”** = Experienced Spiritual Warfare
- 7. Proved blameless
 - During test, lived out said belief
 - Reliant on God despite the hardship
- 8. Husband to one wife
 - **CONTEXT:** Culturally relevant
 - **HOW:** physically + emotionally
 - **(v.11)** → Wives, too, have a role!
 - 1. Worthy of respect
 - 2. Not slanderers (gossip)
 - 3. Self-controlled
 - 4. Faithful in everything
- 9. Manage children & household competently
 - Capable of leading family well
 - Love family how Christ loves the Church

(v.12)

- Why Qualifications are listed
 - Points to character of the deacon
 - Importance of **BE-ing** real-deal w/ others
 - Deacon qualities overlap w/ Overseer qualities
 - **REVEALS** → Overseers possess Deacon characteristics
 - **BUT** → Deacons do not possess all Overseer characteristics
 - **THEREFORE** → Overseers can be Deacons, but Deacons cannot be Overseers
 - **REASON** → ****B/c Deacons are called to serve & Overseers are called to lead...**
 - Deacons serve a different FUNCTION w/in leadership
 - Paul separates OS & DE b/c they are/have different (purpose)
 - **CONTEXT:** Culture understood function of a “Deacon”
 - Although the functions are not listed in 1 Tim. 3, people knew what it entailed b/c...
 - (1) “Deacon” was regularly used = “to serve”
 - (2) Church understood **Acts 6:1-6** (Introduction of Deacons)

In those days, as the disciples were increasing in number, there arose a complaint by the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebraic Jews that their widows were being

overlooked in the daily distribution. ² The Twelve summoned the whole company of the disciples and said, "It would not be right for us to give up preaching the word of God to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, **whom we can appoint to this duty.** ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵ **This proposal pleased the whole company.** So they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a convert from Antioch. ⁶ They had them stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

(v.13)

- **NOTICE** → Proposal of deacons *pleased* the Church
- **LIKEWISE** → Serving well as a Deacon = 2 outcomes:
 - Acquire a good standing (for **SELF**)
 - A great boldness in the faith (for **JESUS**)
- **THEREFORE** → Deacons were those called to serve, so Overseers would be free to lead
 - They are not the same
 - Knowing the biblical functions **AND** qualifications matter
 - Importance of "**BE-ing**" who God called you to be
- **ILLUSTRATION:** Reiterate Ikea bed illustration

- W/o knowing how each piece worked (or where it went), the bed was incomplete
- ****Might look right, but WON'T work right****

- **APPLICATION:**

- **(READ)** → ****This instruction (1 Tim. 3) matters b/c each detail equips God's people to fulfil their purpose w/in His design for the Church!!****

PILLAR 2: Corporate Conduct
(v. 14-15)

(15 minutes)

- Why Paul gave this instruction

¹⁴ I write these things to you, hoping to come to you soon. ¹⁵ But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

- Text Breakdown:

- “So, you will know” = Aware of God’s design
- “Conduct” = What you do & how you do it
- “In God’s household” = the Church
- “The Church” = God’s people (Christians)
- “Christians” = pillar & foundation of the truth
 - “BE-ing” Christ’s ambassadors to the world

- Conduct = **BE-ing** the Church (a ministry calling)

- Paul gives instruction, so every Christians know how to conduct themselves as part of God's Church (v.14-15)
- **THEREFORE** → Every Christian is called to "ministry"
 - **Role & Function may differ**
 - **BUT** → Call to "BE" remains
- **CONTEXT:** Shocking to Jewish Audience
 - Jews viewed religion as rigid & obligatory
 - Only certain tribes or people should conduct religious activity
 - Levites = tribal ancestry (law)
 - Pharisees = Ideology (b-collar)
 - Sadducees = Ideology (w-collar)
 - **BUT** → Paul says every Christian **can** and **must** b/c they are the Church
- Paul proves this w/ his own life...
 - He had education & formerly was a Pharisee
 - **BUT** → Became a Christian & lived on mission as a "tent maker"
 - ****Proved "ministry" is NOT a POSITION to HOLD, but a CALL to "BE"****
 - ****"BE-ing"** the Church cannot be turned on/off – it's a part of who the Christian is
- **REASON** → Why biblical roles & qualifications matter
 - Understand call of every Christian
 - Know the function of their specific call

- Live out their call in all places at all times
- It's not about BRINGING people to church, but about BEING the church
 - Not wrong to bring/invite people to church
 - **BUT** → wrong to end witnessing there
 - **WHY** → B/c Christ says “*BE-ing*” the church is how disciples are made & replicated
 - It's not about a place, but a people
 - (Acts 1:8) → Christians equipped for mission

*⁸“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, **and you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

- **ILLUSTRATION:** Death of Child in Uganda
 - Visiting a village to preach the Gospel in
 - News came that a child had just died
 - Went to hut where village was consoling the family
 - Dad told me, “*We don't need to say anything, we just need to BE.*”
 - Made eye contact and could feel the pain of parents
 - The father of boy looked at my dad and patted his heart and then touched his hand
 - ******Ministry took place by **BE-ing** Christ's ambassadors in that village & “mourning w/ those who mourn.”

- **APPLICATION:**

- **Q:** How are you BE-ing the church and living on mission where God has placed you?
- **Q:** Are you living intentionally to make Jesus known, or do you think that's just for pastors and leaders of the church?

PILLAR 3: Mystery of Godliness

(10 minutes)

(v.16)

- What is the “Mystery of Godliness”?
 - **MoG** = The *Gospel* + *Game plan*
- It all points back to Jesus

(line 1-3)

- (1) “He was manifested in the flesh” → **John 1:14**

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- (2) “Vindicated in the Spirit” → **Romans 1:3-4**

- “Vindicate” = *prove* or *justify*

³ concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was a descendant of David according to the flesh ⁴ and was appointed to be the powerful Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead.

- (3) “Seen by angels” = Jesus was glorified
 - For **who** He is → the GOD-man
 - For **what** He did → Life, death, resurrection

(line 4-6)

- The Church gets to be involved
 - (4) “*Preached among the nations*”
 - Witnessing & sharing Jesus
 - (5) “*Believed on in the world*”
 - Living out faith as example for others
 - (6) “*Taken up in glory*”
 - The Church will be reunited w/ Christ again!
 - **THEREFORE** → **“BE-ing” the church is a blessing!!!**
 - We get to be involved in God’s glory

○ *“It is a mystery, not in the sense that no one understands it, but that no one could understand it if God had not made it known.”* — Pastor Mark Dever

- **ILLUSTRATION:** Pablo Picasso Artwork Museum
 - Unique style of painting (angles & perspective)
 - Visited museum & was confused by certain paintings
 - I did **NOT** know what I was looking at until the description of art piece was revealed to me
 - **LIKEWISE...**
 - 1. **The world CANNOT understand “Christianity” w/o the Church BE-ing**
 - 2. **The Church could NOT know how to BE w/o God’s instructions (Bible) given to us**

- **APPLICATION:**

- **Q:** Have you embraced the call to **BE** Jesus' hands and feet, and are you resting in Him?
- **Q:** Do you have a joy in *getting to* **BE** Jesus' ambassadors to the world?

RESTATE MAIN POINTS & BIG IDEA:

(4 minute)

- **Main Points:**

- 1 – **Servant Leadership** (v.8-13)
- 2 – **Corporate Conduct** (v.14-15)
- 3 – **Mystery of Godliness** (v.16)

- **Big Idea:**

- ****The Church is called to represent Jesus to the world by "BE-ing" His hands & feet!****

- **APPLICATION:**

- **Q:** Are you living out your call to **BE** the Church, or are you simply showing up & attending a "church service"?
- **A:** Pastor Kyle Idleman said it this way in his book, "Not a Fan":

▪ *"The biggest threat to the church today is **fans** who call themselves Christians but aren't actually interested in **following** Christ. They want to be close enough to Jesus to get all the benefits, but not so close that it requires anything from them."*

- **Q:** So, are you living as a **Fan** or a **Follower**?

CLOSE / PRAY:

(1 minutes)