

The importance of right conduct and right foundations

Although we progress in life, in relationships, in the church we often need to go back to our roots, our basics, to be reminded of what we're really about and where we're going in life. It is easy for us to go through the motions of being a Christian, whilst having lost our passion for Christ, our foundations on Him for life and godliness, and our God given purpose. This happened to the early church in Galatia that left Christ to go back to the law, the church in Corinth that had multiple moral issues to contend with, and the church at Ephesus, where Paul had left Timothy, that had lost its love that it had at first.

1 Timothy 3: 14 – 16

Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, 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. Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great:

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

1) The importance of right conduct

- In today's world morality – what is right and wrong – is blurred by liberalism, worldliness, subjectivism, and various other voices that pull us away from the truth.
 - On close inspection these voices aren't all that different from each other and are often interrelated.
 - Liberalism attacks the absolute truth of God's Word and opens up everything and everyone to be right and true.
 - It is based on subjective worldliness rather than objective facts – if it feels good or feels right then it must be right. Or, everyone is doing it so it must be right.
- Not everything can be true – black can't be white, and white can't be black. Blue can't be orange, and orange can't be blue no matter how much we try to convince ourselves that it is.
- Paul is stressing the importance of right conduct in the church
 - Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household.
 - Right conduct in God's household is how God's people – God's family – God's church conduct themselves in every aspect of their lives, and not only in church meetings.
 - Philippians 1: 27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.
- Right conduct doesn't come naturally, that's why it needs to be taught
 - I am writing you these instructions.
 - However, instruction needs to be taken personally and obeyed for it to become right conduct in our lives
- Weren't Paul's writings his own opinions? Why should we obey them?
 - 1 Thessalonians 2: 13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.
- Right conduct
 - Honours Christ where bad conduct brings His name into disrepute
 - Brings godly order into the family, church, and society
 - Develops good relationships

2) The importance of right foundations

- Teaching right conduct without right foundations is like trying to grow apples without an apple tree.
- Jesus spoke about good and bad trees
 - Matthew 7: 16 – 18 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.
- 1 Timothy 3: 15 if I am delayed, 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.
 - Paul is referring to the church, that means all of us who believe in Jesus Christ and have committed our lives to following Him, as the pillar and foundation of the truth.
 - This means that we are responsible for keeping and spreading the truth of God, His purposes, and His morality in society.
- It isn't the church as an institution, but the church as the household of God – the gathering of the family of believers – that's the foundation and pillar of truth.
- What are the foundations of the church?
 - The Gospel
 - Romans 15: 20 It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.
 - The Word of God
 - Ephesians 2: 19 – 20 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.
 - Jesus Christ
 - 1 Corinthians 3: 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

3) Christ, the source of true devotion

- Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great:
He appeared in the flesh,
was vindicated by the Spirit,
was seen by angels,
was preached among the nations,
was believed on in the world,
was taken up in glory.
- He appeared in the flesh
 - We worship a God who became man and understands us and our weaknesses, but without sin
- He was vindicated by the Spirit
 - His name was cleared of blasphemy and He was proven to be right in all His claims to deity and Lord and Saviour
- He was seen by angels
 - Angels attended to Him and attested of His resurrection at His empty tomb
- He was preached among the nations
 - His name has been proclaimed to every nation in the world
- He was believed on in the world
 - He has followers in every nation who believe in Him
- He was taken up in glory
 - He was glorified with the glory that He had with the Father before the creation of the world
- Do you know Him?
- If you know Him you will also know the mystery of all godliness and will live accordingly