

“Significant, Strategic, Servants”

Introduction to Deacon Ministry

April 7, 2024

INTRO ...The Deacon Ministry!!!!

1 Timothy 3:14-16 *I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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.*

...The Reason why we Have 1 Timothy...is to clarify the “STRATEGY” of this thing we call “The Church”

What Am I Supposed to be Doing?

(1) There is an “OUGHT TO” in Their Lives! [WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO BE DOING?] ...v. 15 ...This passage introduces us to a “Divine Expectation” that sits upon “The Church” and all who are in the church!

“He reminds him that the Church is the house of God and in God’s own house a man ought to be upon his best behavior, for it is no light thing to draw near unto the Lord. A poor man who is called to visit a prince or king will anxiously enquire how he ought to act. We, poor creatures that we are, when we are admitted into the Church which is the house of God, should enquire what conduct will be decorous and comely in those who are admitted into the Presence of the great King and permitted to dwell within His palace gates.” **Charles Spurgeon**, “What the Church Should Be” (1878)

“All who teach the young, all who are parents, all who are persons of age and experience, all who occupy influential positions and especially all deacons, elders and preachers should pray the Lord that they may know how they may behave themselves in the house of God, ... We need to learn the ways of the house, the customs of the palace.” **Charles Spurgeon**, “What the Church Should Be” (1878)

...What Creates Your “OUGHT-TO’s”?

— **God creates individuals and attaches them** (with all their uniqueness, talents, personality, intellect, etc.) **to HIS PURPOSE!** —Adam & Eve ... Moses ... Job! ...Jonah

At the beginning of the Church’s Mission

Matthew 28:18-20 *And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Acts 1:8 *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

Near the End of the N.T. Chapter

1 Peter 4:7-11 *The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. ⁸ Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹ Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

WHERE Am I?

(2) A Setting Called THE CHURCH and the Priority of TRUTH in This World.

1 Timothy 3:14-16 *...I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ 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.*

...This passage is Driven by the Importance of Its Setting! — *“the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.”*

— What is This Setting Called “The Church”? ... the ‘eklesia’ = the called out ones

? — Have I Engaged THIS SETTING with the Appropriate Sense of Uniqueness (amidst all the other “social settings” that make up my life)? (Family ...School ...Sports/Drama club ...Friend Group ...

- It has “household features” ...
- It is a “pillar and buttress of the truth” ...

“In the process of explaining his purpose for writing to Timothy, the apostle Paul defines the church by its relationship to the truth: “...the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth” (1 Tim. 3:14–15).” **Phillip Ryken**, 1Timothy, Reformed Exp. Comm.

“The “Church of God” itself, in its full sense, is a company of persons called out by the Holy Spirit from among the rest of mankind, banded together for the holy purpose of the defense, and the propagation of the Truth of God. ...the simple meaning of my text is just this — it is the business of the Church of God to maintain, to propagate, to uphold, to spread, and to defend the Truth as it is in Jesus — wherever that Church may be placed!” **Charles Spurgeon**, “Conservative and Aggressive” (1861)

John 18:37-38 *“...For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” ³⁸ Pilate said to him, ‘What is truth?’*

“The whole of you who really love God are set for the maintenance of the Truth of God in the world! Under God the Holy Spirit, the cause of Truth depends upon you — you are its pillar and its basement! ...The Church stands steadfast and unmovable as a pillar of Truth fixed on its base. If you find not the Truth of God anywhere else, you will find it in the Church of the living God, which is Truth’s castle and stronghold. ...When the Truth of God is given up, everything is given up! The very idea of a Church involves the retaining of the Truth with constant steadfastness and if this is neglected, the so-called church has nothing left in it but the name! As a pillar and its base are always in one place, so will the Church be a fixed, permanent and unalterable column of Gospel Truth — and woe to her if she is not!” **Charles Spurgeon**, What the Church Should Be” (1878)

“...it is the Church’s business to maintain the Truth of God with all her might. She is set as a bronze wall and an iron pillar against all error. However men may cringe or bow, there stands the column fast and firm, fixed on its pedestal, set on its base. So should the Church in all ages stand fast to Truth and yield to no error, nor concealment of doctrine, nor change of ordinance! The Church of the Apostles is the model of the Church of today.” **Charles Spurgeon**, *What the Church Should Be* (1878)

...The church is rightly recognized by numerous markers— it cares for the poor and engages social justice (Orphanages, Hospitals, Salvation Army, etc.) ...it provides social, friendship connections (may be a dominant feature in America—my peeps) **...But this unique ‘holy purpose of the defense, and the propagation of the Truth of God’ is NEVER at the Margins of the Church’s Calling—Thus it can never be at the margin of the church member’s calling!**

? —**How Big a Deal is Such a Concept in Our World?** ...How important is it that there exist some kind of “Human Plumblines” —a Reference Point for Human Existence & Destiny ...a “Tuning Fork” that would bring HARMONY to Creation!!

1 Timothy 4:1-6 ...the departure of faith is preceded by a departure from sound doctrine!

1 Timothy 1:9-11 ...understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

“Whatever is contrary to sound doctrine” ...consider each of the preceding words—and do so with the conscious awareness that it is “sound doctrine” that provides the necessary “contrariness” in our world to “counteract” these forces!!

“...the distinction between light and darkness can be seen as the distinction between truth and error, between freedom and bondage, between life and death. Truth is not simply knowledge untainted by life’s biases and conventions: it is the reality of God Himself (Jn 7:17; 8:47; 1Jn 3:10). ...To be in the truth is to be in God, to be free, to have life. To be separated from the truth is to be mired in darkness, falsehood, and corruption with the stink of death hanging over everything.” **David Wells**, “God in the Wasteland”

- **The absence of or departure from “Sound Doctrine” is a “Society Wrecker”!!**—it creates a condition of “DISORIENTATION” that cannot be righted!

NOTE (v. 11)— “Sound Doctrine” is “in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God” —which the church has been ENTRUSTED!

A Setting with a Strategy

1 Timothy 3:14-16 ...I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ 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.

...What are the “Strategic THESE THINGS” that Paul has linked to this High Calling of the Church—the pillar and buttress of the Truth?

- **1 Timothy 1** ...a Warning about Departing from the Truth and the vital role of teaching (i.e., the Ministry of the Word)
- **1 Timothy 2** ... “First of all, then, I urge PRAYER” (v. 1) ...an understanding of the roles of men & women (v. 8-15)
- **1 Timothy 3** ... The Strategic Office of Elder (v. 1-7) ...The Strategic Office of Deacon (v. 8-13)

What Informs & Drives a Deacon Ministry ...Acts 6 and the Likely Origin of the Deacon Ministry

Acts 6:1-7 *Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ² And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” ⁵ And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶ These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.*

⁷ And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

- A Need to Protect the Ministry of the Word ...The Ministry of the Word of TRUTH is the Priority!
- A Need to Care for the Household ...