

The Household of God

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[0:00] It's wonderful to be with you guys this morning. My wife informs me that the last time I was here was two years ago, which is hard to believe! Though I meet regularly with Sean and Ed, and I help out with your pastoral team.

And it's just been wonderful to visit, of course, but also to hear about all the things that the Lord's doing in and through Trinity Cambridge. And it's a privilege to come to you this morning with greetings from our church in Haverhill Mass.

And we are grateful for you guys. We're coming up on 10 years ago this September that we sent you guys out, a small crew, to start Trinity Cambridge. And here we are. You've grown and you're prospering and serving the life and mission of God here in East Cambridge.

Well, we're going to look at 1 Timothy this morning, chapter 3. So I hope you have your Bibles with you, either on your phone or a paper Bible, to open up to 1 Timothy 3. I think we'll have the words to watch on the screen, but it's better to have your own Bible right in front of you.

As you turn there, let me ask, anyone here ever been on a tour of the White House? Some of you guys? Great. I've actually never been there, though we lived in that area for seven years.

[1:14] I never got a chance to go there. The White House is an amazing building with a profound history. There's the central executive residence, then there's the east wing and the west wing.

There's a chief usher who runs everything, 55,000 square feet, 132 rooms, 35 bathrooms, 412 doors, 147 windows, 28 fireplaces, 8 staircases, 3 elevators, 5 full-time chefs, a tennis court, bowling alley, a movie theater, a jogging track, a swimming pool, and a putting green.

And it receives 30,000 visitors every week. It's been home to the president since 1800 with only two breaks. One time when the British burned it in 1812, and then under President Truman when it underwent reconstruction.

It's run by a chief usher who has a staff of 90 in a budget of \$10 million, perhaps the most important house in the whole world, mostly, though, because of who it houses, perhaps one of the most powerful political figures in the whole world, the president of the United States.

It's an amazing house and maybe the most important house in the world, but there's a more important house than the White House that houses somebody way more important than the president of the United States.

[2:40] Any guesses on that house? It's called the local church. It's called Trinity Cambridge Church, among all the different churches throughout the world that house the people of God and God himself as he dwells with his people.

This house, your house, is more important, more prestigious, more profound than the White House. And that's what we're going to learn today as we look at God's word.

We're going to look at 1 Timothy chapter 3, 14 through 16 and learn about the important role of the household of God, your local church. So let's pray, and then we'll read God's word.

Lord, we thank you for your word, and I thank you for this church, this house that you dwell in. And I thank you for what you're doing in and through this church.

And I pray today, Lord, that you would speak to your people and encourage and refresh and call them anew to the things that you consider most important. Help me, Lord, to explain your truth clearly and well.

[3:40] And I pray, Spirit of God, would you move in power and speak to your people and glorify your name, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. 1 Timothy chapter 3, starting in verse 14, says, God's word from 1 Timothy chapter 3.

These three verses contain some of the most important material in this whole letter. This section that we just read is a pivot point where Paul brings into sharp focus really what the whole letter is

about.

1 Timothy is a letter to Timothy from Paul as Timothy is being sent to the church in Ephesus. And Paul wants Timothy to understand the most important things for the church in Ephesus.

And via Paul, being inspired to write God's word here, we come to understand the most important things about any church. This church in Ephesus is struggling.

It has issues. It is apparently straying from the gospel and straying from its purpose. And so Paul has sent Timothy to reestablish this church in the gospel and reestablish its priorities.

[5 : 24] He grounds all that he is saying on the reality that the church is the household of God. And the great gospel of God shapes and drives everything.

And the church itself is called to be a steward of the gospel. The church is the household of God and the steward of the gospel. And we need to understand this important truth.

Trinity Cambridge Church needs to understand this important truth. That the church is the very household of God and the steward of the gospel. And that's really what I want to talk about. I just want to go through this section of scripture and talk first about the idea of it being the household of God.

And then secondly, the idea of it being the steward of the gospel. So first, the household of God, verses 14 and 15. Paul has sent Timothy to Ephesus.

This is likely after the church has grown quite a bit. If you back up in the story of the church in Ephesus in Acts chapter 19 and 20, we learn about this church.

[6 : 29] It's a church that has grown very fast and is very large, likely in the thousands from what we can tell. And reading the different data, that's in Acts 19 and 20.

And Paul actually in Acts 20 says goodbye, farewell to the Ephesian elders. And he warns them about fierce wolves that would come in, even from among their own elders.

And to creep in from the flock and cause devastation, drawing disciples away from the Lord. And from what we can tell, that's already happened. Paul, at this point, has been through his first imprisonment, likely has traveled to Spain and been on another mission, and then sent Timothy back to the church in Ephesus because it's in trouble.

The reality is that wolves have crept in and have affected the sheep and even some of the shepherds themselves. And so this letter actually is very helpful in discerning what does a wolf look like?

What does a shepherd look like? What are sheep called to do? In this chapter that we're in, in chapter 3, Paul takes a good bit of time to talk about what a shepherd looks like, what an elder looks like.

[7 : 41] And he lays out the qualifications and qualities of an elder. And then he spends time, right after that, laying out the qualities and qualifications of a deacon.

These two important church offices that are to be occupied by qualified men. And for deacons, we would understand women as well to serve in that role. So he's addressing the church.

He wants the church to be healthy. And he recognizes the church needs good leaders. It needs qualified elders. It needs qualified deacons. But what he's saying here isn't just for elders and deacons.

He actually wants everybody to understand how to behave in the church of God, in the household of God. So verse 15, he says he is teaching so that you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God.

Really, this means everybody. It's important for all of us to understand how to behave, how to live, what priorities and choices to make, what behavior to pursue as part of the household of God.

[8 : 46] And so in this letter, he's going to talk about not just elders and deacons, but he's going to talk about men and women, husbands and wives, the brethren in general, believers. He's going to address women, older women, older men, younger women and men, widows, slaves, masters, and the rich.

Really everybody. And he's going to instruct Timothy how they are to live in light of being part of the household of God, in light of the gospel. He is going to give motivations for right behavior.

He's going to lay out truth, and he does that in the passage we looked at. We have motivations in this passage for right behavior. And that's so important to understand as well. It's one thing to know kind of what we ought to be doing, what we ought to believe and do as part of the church, but having right motivations, allowing the deep truths of God in the hands of the Holy Spirit to work in

our minds and hearts motivation to pursue the right behavior in the church and the right priorities. It's not enough to merely mimic behavior. We are to be motivated by God himself and his truth and what we read in this text. And so I want to take time to look at what we see in this text that motivates us.

So first, the Ephesian church is described as the household of God. It's the household of God. It's a family. It's a household. It's like a regular household that we all have been a part of.

[10:19] We understand how households work. It's a group of people who are together, who are related, who are called to live life together. But the emphasis here is not that it's just a household. Certainly that's true.

And there's a lot of truth in that to understand that we are brothers and sisters, that we are to relate to one another as a family. But it is the household of God. It's not just a household of Christians. It's not just a household of people that are particularly religious and devoted to some truth. It is not a household of people that have similar interests. It's not a household of people pursuing business together.

It's not just another institution in society. It is a unique household because it is the household of God himself.

Way more important than any of those other things. All those other things, of course, have their place. And we can search scripture and understand where they fit under God's plan for humanity.

[11:19] But the household of God has a priority that exceeds all these other institutions. It is a household of none other than the infinite, almighty, holy, good, and glorious creator and sustainer of the whole universe.

Your church, among all the churches, is the household of God. And to be the household of God should carry with it a sense of reverence and a sense of, wow, this is amazing.

This is the household of God. And I get to be part of this household. We need to be careful that we just don't move past that term, household of God, and not grasp what's going on. Because if we look elsewhere in scripture, when people live in the presence of God, when we are in the presence of God, there is something about that that is awe-inspiring and awesome.

Isaiah chapter 6, we read about what goes on in the presence of God. It says, Isaiah is seeing what it looks like, what it feels like, what it is like to be in the presence of God.

In the very throne room of God. And yet, your church is the household of God. The same God dwells here in your midst. Here on Sundays.

[13:20] Here during the week as you gather in his name. He dwells with you. The Holy One, whom the Seraphim worship day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

This God, the Glorious One, dwells with you. The one who dwells in unapproachable light. The one who is constantly worshipped day and night. Those angels worship the Lord, not because it's just their job, like they get hired to be worshippers there as Seraphim angels.

No, they behold God. They see him. And they can't help but say day and night, because they see God in all of his glory, in all of his goodness, all of his wisdom, all of his beauty and splendor.

They can't help but say day and night, holy, holy, holy is the Lord. And this is your God who dwells with you, Trinity Cambridge. You are the household of God.

Now, it's important that we not diminish the impact of that truth by saying, well, Paul's talking about the church, capital C, the whole church.

[14:28] Now, certainly, there are implications and truths about the whole church here. But he's not addressing the whole church. He's addressing the church in Ephesus.

He's addressing a church full of people like you and me. He's addressing a church that's called to have officers, elders and deacons. It's called to walk according to the gospel.

That's called to be light and salt where they are, just like you guys. Yes. He's speaking to a church, a local church. Now, the whole church is made up of local churches, but every local church is the household of God.

Paul goes on to describe the church in Ephesus in a slightly different way that they might understand and be motivated in how they think about church. He says that one may ought to know how to behave in the household of God.

And then it says this, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. That word church, we use that a lot.

[15 : 33] The English word church comes from the combination of Lord, a Greek word for Lord, Kyrios and Oikos, Lord's house. That's really where it comes from. But in scripture, the word is ecclesia, which is close to the Spanish iglesia, which means a gathering.

And so the gathering, the church is the gathering of the living God, the gathering of God's people. It's the gathering of the living God. It's interesting to see how Paul is using language here to emphasize things.

And so he says first, the household of God, that ought to be motivation enough for us to value our local church. But then he says it is the gathering, the assembly, the church of the living God. He adds the word living there. Do you see that? Do you catch that extra word there? Why would he add that? Well, in scripture, we can look elsewhere in scripture to see where this word living is used and attached to God.

And I'll just go quickly through some verses, but I want you to see that it's used to emphasize the fact that he's real, he's active, he's present, and he demands our faith and obedience.

[16 : 39] He's the living God. He's not just the distant God. He's not just the idea of God. He's the living and present and glorious God. And so the church is the assembly of the living God.

So these different verses, David says, for who is this circumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? So that adds emphasis, the living God.

How can he defy the armies of the living God? Daniel, it says, I make a decree that in all my royal dominion, people are to tremble in fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever.

Psalms 42, my soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? Peter says of Jesus, you are the Christ, the son of the living God.

Matthew 26, the high priest said to him, I adjure you by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ. First Thessalonians, for they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

[17 : 43] And Hebrews 12, you have come to Mount Zion to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. So all these scriptures use this word living God to give us this sense of the fact that he's real, he's alive, he's present, he's holy, he's glorious.

So this is the assembly. Trinity Cambridge Church is the assembly of the living God. He is alive. He's here with you. He's holy. He's glorious. He's active. He's real.

This is the church of the living God. And so we ought to understand that as we are called to be part of our local church.

There should be a sense of all sorts of things, right? When we get that reverence and respect and gratitude and eagerness and zeal, the desire to participate, the wonder of the privilege of being counted among God's people.

If you were to visit Buckingham Palace, I think you'd have a sense like this, right? You'd understand a little bit of the sense of reverence and regard there.

[18 : 45] Now, when you went on a tour there, you know, if you were with your group and you just started to scoff and said, you know, after looking at the 775 different rooms, like, I don't know.

It's kind of a dumpy. I think I've seen better. And like, whose house is this, by the way? Everyone in your tour group would be like looking at you. What? What are you thinking? It's because you understand this is the house of the royal family of the king of England.

And as it was said, the sun never set on the British Empire. There's a prestige there with the royal family. And so you would be reverent. How much more your local church?

Because it is the household of God. It is the gathering of the living God. And so we ought to have a regard and a respect and a love and a sense of just fresh gratitude for our local church when we get these things.

Paul is teaching these things to Timothy that he might teach the church that they might understand what they're doing. They might understand the importance, the priority, that they might be motivated to participate and behave appropriately as members of the church in Ephesus.

[20 : 03] And, of course, by implication for us as members of our local church. He goes on to describe the church more, though. He then says it's the pillar and buttress of the truth. That may seem a little bit odd, mainly because we don't use those terms in architecture.

Paul is living in a world where they would have understood these terms. But buttress is just a word for foundation. In ancient buildings, particularly in that part of the world, if they were going to be

large, had to have a good foundation.

It's an earthquake-ridden part of the world. And if you're going to have a secure building and if it's going to be a big and glorious building, you need to have a good foundation, a solid foundation.

And so he's describing the church as the buttress of the truth. It's a foundation. But it isn't just the buttress of the truth. It is the pillar of the truth as well. And so pillars, we don't use pillars.

But right there in Ephesus was a glorious building. I think we showed a picture. There is a picture of the temple of Artemis, a recreation of the temple. As best as we can understand what it looked like.

[21 : 08] It was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. An amazing building. It had a great foundation. Then had these 127 60-foot pillars, six foot across.

Gigantic pillars. What were the pillars there for? Well, they held up the roof. But more than that, if you were to be in Ephesus, you could not miss this temple. And the most prominent aspect of the temple would be the pillars.

The pillars were how the temple was represented to the city of Ephesus. And yet the temple was founded on this foundation as well. And it housed, at least as the Ephesians formerly thought, the deity Artemis.

And the people were known to say, great is Artemis of the Ephesians. And Paul is tying all these things together from what we can tell as he's teaching Timothy about a building that is far greater and more glorious than that temple that everyone knows about.

And so he says the church is the pillar and buttress of the truth. He's connecting it to the temple in a way that they would have understood. And there are two aspects to that. He's saying that the church is the buttress of the truth.

[22 : 22] It is the foundation. It's the thing that supports the truth. Isn't that interesting? It's a different way because elsewhere in Scripture we know again and again that it works the other way around.

The church is supported and given life and created by the gospel, by the truth, right? The truth is what creates the church. The truth is the ultimate foundation of the church.

And Paul isn't meaning to say, no, no, no, I've changed my mind on that. No, that's not what he's saying. He's bringing a different angle to this truth that the church in Ephesus would understand.

That not only were you created by this truth, but you actually are stewards of the truth.

You as a building are ones that preserve and steward the gospel for the sake of God's purposes, for his glory in and around and beyond Ephesus. But not only are you that foundation that provides a secure place to keep the truth and be faithful to the truth and guard the truth, but you also display the truth, pillars.

You are the display of the glory of God, of the truth of God, the deep and glorious and eternal truths of God, culminating in the revelation of the gospel. You are the display to the world that when they look at the church, they would say, that's the place that houses God.

[23 : 37] That's what God looks like. I see those pillars. They are visible for all of us. The church is to be the pillar and buttress of the truth, both.

It is the visible and active manifestation of the reality of God's kingdom via the gospel. It is the stable and enduring place for the truth to dwell and for the church to put that truth on display to the world.

This is really important to understand. The church is not like a side point here. The local church is central to keeping and guarding the gospel and displaying the fruit of the gospel to the world.

It has both those activities. I imagine you guys, as living in and around Boston, have been to the MFA. Anyone here been to the Museum of Fine Arts?

Yesterday, great. We love the MFA. I grew up going there. And one of the things, I have like these old childhood memories of going there and looking at the Egyptian display that's been there.

[24 : 51] They've had that display actually since almost the very founding of the MFA back in the 1800s. An amazing display. 60,000 different pieces in the Egyptian collection.

There are tiles from the time of Ramses III. There's an old kingdom. Pharaoh and his wife's statue that's perfectly preserved. There's ancient artwork. And then lots of scary mummies and stuff.

I always got scared as a kid in that room. The MFA is the steward of lots of priceless history and art. And they do a wonderful job stewarding that.

But we're not called to be a museum that merely stewards things. The church is not a place merely to house some quaint artifact. Some interesting artifact.

Yes, indeed, we're called to steward these things. But we're to put those things on full display in an active way to the whole world. And in such an active way, in such a compelling way by God's grace, that the world would behold and come.

[25 : 53] They would come as tourists. But then as a result of coming and beholding and seeing, whether that's on a Sunday or as you're out in the community, as the church is the church, they would come and join in with the household of God.

The church is not a museum in that sense of a steward that is idle, just sitting on top of these truths. But the church is a place of the living God's activity through the gospel, in and through the church, putting it on display that the world might see and be drawn in.

And that means we both go out and we draw people in as the church. The church is the household of God. The assembly of the living God, the pillar and buttress of the truth.

So just a few ideas for application to think about. First, I think that this truth tells us that we should never, we should never tire of pursuing the good of our local church.

We should never tire of pursuing the good of this local church, Trinity, Cambridge. We should not tire. Why? Because this is the household of God, the living God, the pillar and buttress of the truth.

[27 : 06] There's no greater purpose ultimately than his purpose in and through local churches. So we should not tire. And if we get tired, let's draw near the Lord and get help from one another that we might renew our zeal for God's purposes in and through the church because this is God's priority, clearly, from Scripture.

So let us all find ways to serve in the local church as well. Now, I wasn't brought in as an advertisement for the ministry fair, just so you know. It just happened to work out well. But yes, serve.

We should all be participating in serving what God's doing in and through here. And we should understand the priority of the local church. This is not just a parallel institution along with all the others, as important as they might be.

Things like work and family and social groups and so forth have their place, but they are to ultimately orbit around the priority of the local church. In its proper place, yes, that can be misunderstood.

But the Bible sorts that out and never diminishes the priority of the local church. So just some things to think about and to look at your own life. Are you aligned with these truths yourself?

[28 : 18] Because these are God's truths and this is God's priority. Second, this passage teaches us about the mystery of godliness. And of course, this all connects in. Great indeed, we confess, Paul says, 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. If you read in Acts chapter 19, you'll see a similar phrase.

When there was a great riot, it says in Acts 19, 28, when they heard this, they were enraged and were crying out, great is Artemis of the Ephesians. And later on, verse 34, when they recognized that he was a Jew, speaking of Paul, actually it was someone else, not Paul, for about two hours, they all cried out with one voice, great is Artemis of the Ephesians.

So they're shouting, great is Artemis of the Ephesians. They're all chanting this. It's very likely that was part of their regular worship in the temple, to say great is Artemis of the Ephesians. So when Paul says, great indeed is the mystery of godliness, he is tapping into that same thing.

But he's not saying great is Artemis. He's saying great is the mystery of godliness. Ultimately, he's going to talk about Jesus. So this household of God, this pillar and buttress of the truth, is to be a place that shows how they live and how they love each other and how they relate to the community, that great is the mystery of godliness.

[29 : 41] Great is Jesus. Excuse me. So Paul's saying that, and then he has this phrasing that says, 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.

He never mentions the name of the person, but we all know the name of this person is Jesus. And so this is probably a hymn that they would have known. And it's a hymn that has three pairs of statements.

And these statements all talk about Christ both being shown in basically the heavens or the spiritual world and in the earth or the physical world.

And so he is manifested in the flesh. He took on flesh. He became a human. God himself took on flesh, became a real human and lived among us, lived a perfectly righteous life, fulfilled the law, and then offered up that righteous life as a human and as God himself in the flesh on the cross.

Dying for our sins, dying in our place to pay for our sins. He was manifest in the flesh in all these real ways. To the point of going to the cross, being buried, and then rising from the dead.

[30 : 59] In the flesh. New creation. Ascending in the flesh as well. He was manifested in the flesh. He was shown in the flesh. He is God in the flesh. But he's also vindicated by the Spirit.

From the beginning of his life. At his baptism. Through his miracles. And of course through his resurrection. Vindicated. The Holy Spirit vindicated. Said this is more than just a man.

This is the God man. This is the Son of God in the flesh. Who died for sin. And the Spirit raised him in power. To life eternal. He's vindicated by the Spirit.

This is who Jesus is. In the flesh vindicated by the Spirit. Seen by angels. His whole life. His birth was announced by the angels. The angels ministered to him throughout his life.

In the Garden of Gethsemane. There are angels. On the resurrection morning. There are angels. He was seen by the angels. The angels saw him throughout. But not just the angels. He's not just seen by the angels.

[31 : 57] He's proclaimed among the nations. This truth of who God is. This mystery of godliness. This mystery of true worship. And really that's what the word godliness means. It's devotion.

It's worship. It was a word that was common actually in that culture. For your devotion to somebody like Artemis. But Paul's saying there's true godliness here. The mystery of godliness is about Jesus. And he is seen by the angels. But he's also proclaimed among the nations. The secret and the truth and this mystery. And the mystery is not in the sense of we think of a mystery murder.

It just means a truth that is so deep it's beyond comprehension. Previously hidden. Now known but not fully known. This mystery of who God in the flesh Jesus is. Is seen by the angels.

It's proclaimed among the nations as well though. This truth of who God is. This reality of God visiting us. And providing salvation through his death and resurrection. Is proclaimed.

[32 : 53] Is to be proclaimed. And will be proclaimed among all peoples. Not just the angels. Not just heaven. Heaven knows all about him. But all of the earth will know. Every knee will bow.

Every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. He's believed on in the world. The world is believing in him. More and more. I spent a month in South Asia recently.

And there's amazing things going on there. People believing on Jesus. Jesus. And he's taken up in glory. He's in the heavens right now.

Reigning and ruling. Paul wants all this truth. These are all gospel truths. They are all truths about the good news of Jesus. Who he is. And what that means for us.

And this is a great thing Paul says. Great is this mystery of godliness. Great is this truth. Great is this thing that you steward. Great is this thing that is working among you to put on display the glory of God.

[33 : 52] It is truly great. And this is a hymn in Greek. It would rhyme and make sense. Even more so. But we can understand its meaning here. And understand what's going on.

This reality. He is great. The gospel. The good news. The truth of God is the greatest thing we can understand and experience and proclaim.

And again this is set alongside the false worship that's going on in Ephesus. Calling the church in Ephesus to understand who they are. And the true worship that God has for them. To be motivated and propelled in their lives.

To prioritize their lives in light of these truths. To gladly serve and to know how to behave in the household of God because of these truths. Your ability to behave appropriately in this church and with this church comes from getting these truths.

Comes from getting the gospel. And it's goodness and glory and greatness. And God wants you to be motivated by him. And God wants you to be motivated by him. Don't settle for tired duty.

[35 : 07] These truths should empower you and motivate you. And cause you to do things that are wise and good and true. Can you imagine if you were alive in 1984?

And that might be true for some of us who were alive in 1984. Most of you guys are probably not alive in 1984. And you were watching the Super Bowl back in 1984. Sean's looking at me like, where are you going right now, Paul?

You're watching the Super Bowl and there's this really weird commercial that comes on. Around the book 1984. And it's, somebody runs up an aisle and throws a big hammer at a screen.

It's an advertisement for a new computer called a Macintosh. And it's 1984. And let's just say for some reason you knew, you just got a sense, something's going to, this is going to be pretty big. And you knew. And I don't know, maybe, maybe, maybe I, you time traveled or whatever. You just understood this was the beginning of Apple Computer. And that this was going to go on to become probably the most successful company, one of the most successful companies ever.

[36 : 12] And you knew, watching that commercial, what was ahead. You knew the implications of this weird commercial during the Super Bowl back then in 1984. And you decided to, as a result, take your \$1,000 that you had put away in savings and invested in this Apple Computer.

Because that was the initial public offering. And you, if you know the reality, right, that that \$1,000 invested in 1984 would be worth \$1.6 million today.

You would be motivated, if you knew all that, wouldn't you, to take whatever money you have and invest in them. Well, I'm giving you an inside scoop on God's priorities and what God is doing and the most glorious thing you can invest in possibly.

And it's meant to carry that same sense, as if you were in 1984 knowing what was going to happen. You would prioritize your life in light with that. You would find \$1,000 somehow to invest.

How much more would we understand that this is the household of God? The assembly of the living God. The pillar and buttress of the truth. And that great is this mystery of godliness.

[37 : 18] Great is this gospel. We would be motivated, and I believe that's what the Lord wants for us. And so, my brothers and sisters, everyone here, I want you to hear what God's saying.

And I want you to be freshly motivated, not because I'm telling you this, but because God tells you this through his word. I want you to not settle for anything less than consistent zeal for God's purposes in and through this local church.

It's interesting that Paul uses a hymn to bring them to the gospel. And that just points to a key way that we stay freshly motivated, freshly aware of the gospel.

It's through things like hymns and creeds and confessions and good books. And if you are waning in your zeal, let me encourage you to take advantage of the means of grace God has for you.

And don't stop until you feel yourself refreshed and renewed in the greatness of the mystery of godliness of the gospel. Until you feel yourself with fresh faith for God's purpose in and through this local church.

[38 : 25] If you are lacking in zeal, I just encourage you to pursue these things. And one more thing. Philemon chapter 6, Paul says something very insightful to Philemon, his friend.

He's talking to Philemon on behalf of his other friend, Onesimus, who's Philemon's slave, actually. He's trying to motivate Philemon to do the right thing. And he says this in chapter, in verse 6 of Philemon.

And I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Interesting, isn't it?

He wants him to be active in sharing what he has so that he would understand how much he has. And an important way that we are freshly aware of how much we have and how good it is by giving it away.

And there are thousands of people around you who don't have what you have. And you are probably only going to understand how great it is if you are regularly giving it away to them.

[39 : 28] And it starts just with prayer. It starts just with being a genuine friend to them. Genuinely loving them. But then looking for opportunities to tell them about God's love and about his truth.

And finding ways to serve them and not giving up. Your zeal is connected to how regular you are in giving away what you have. So that might be your cure for greater zeal.

Pray and look for. And then take bold steps. Ask for boldness. Get people to pray for you so you can give away what you have. Well, I hope that this has helped you understand these truths.

I hope that this has stirred you. And I trust that God is working. Let me pray for you. And then I'll let the team come up. So, Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the amazing truths that are here.

And I thank you for this church. That is the household of God. The living God. Pillar and buttress of the truth. That the good news is stewarded here and put on display.

[40 : 32] And I pray you would do so more and more and more. Because great is our God. We ask these things in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.