

1 Timothy
B.) The Church and its members
5. 3:14-16 Proper conduct at Church
3:16
“Living whole in a fractured world”

I. Introduction

II. Vs. 16a The truth about Humpty Dumpty

III. Vs. 16b Three secret truths

I. Introduction

Last week we focused our attention upon Paul’s threefold description of the church:

- **House of God**: We are the family of God
- **Church of the living God**: We are called out of the world and called into living God
- **Pillar and ground of truth**: We are in the business by our lives and words of tearing down the illusions that people are being deceived by.

In that description we learned the amazing truths of who we are in Christ and the possibilities that we now have to change the course of history one soul at a time. There is one sole reason why this is a reality,.....are you ready for this? **GOD DWELLS AMONG HIS PEOPLE!** His church is made of ordinary people like you and me as His channels to release the power and life among this world. Furthermore God is so confident of this that He has no other plan. This morning our focus is upon one single verse that most believe was an early church hymn that was sung as a confession of faith. This one verse is “**THE TRUTH**” that everything else is built upon it is the pillar and ground that Paul spoke about in verse 15. With Jesus we can forget the manuals on how to do things better because we have Emmanuel who has transformed us.

II. Vs. 16a The truth about Humpty Dumpty

Paul frames this with the words, “*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:*” When Paul describes this as a great “*mystery*” he doesn’t mean that what he is about to say is impossible to figure out instead he means that what he is about to reveal is THE significant truth and that there is nothing more important than this. The fact that this truth was a sung by believers causes us to realize that to those who are not believers in Christ this still is a secret. We need only to look at our own lives to see what this revealed secret has done, a sort of before and after of our life experience.

- **Before:** We were plague with the same “*death, disease, despair and disillusionment*” that every other human experienced. We tried to fill the holes of our life with any and everything (*good, bad or indifferent*) that would give us a moments rest from the awfulness of the life we experienced. But all we saw is a grave yard of ideas and ideals, people’s attempts to escape the inevitable. Hegel the German philosopher described this groping as, “*History teaching us that history teaches us nothing.*” The reason for this is that we are missing pieces of truth about ourselves because we are missing truths about God and our relationship to Him.
- **After:** When we have come to faith in Christ and discovered the mystery Paul describes, victory becomes our way of life. We are more than mere survivors, we are conquerors in Christ. We aren’t numbing our life down to get by, we are stimulated by living a new life. We are no longer satisfied by temporary happiness of escaping things, we are filled with endless joy and peace despite our present circumstance. Life has meaning and purpose and our passion becomes taking as many with us as we can.

Paul also tells what realm this truth is in when he calls it the “mystery of godliness” the actual Greek word does not contain the word for “God” in it and the closest English translation would be “*wholeness*” William Barclay defined the word by saying that godliness is, “*Living in such a way that you are aware of what life requires of you.*” In the 70’s we used to say that we need to “*Get our lives together*” which of course infers that we weren’t together and instead were fractured. Paul is about to reveal **THE SECRET of living whole in a fractured world**. The simplest explanation to our

fractured existence it that we are like Old *Humpty Dumpty* who had a “Great FALL”. And like Humpty all the king’s horses and all the king’s men couldn’t put Humpty back together again. But what Paul declares here is that what the world’s kings couldn’t do the KING of KING did not by merely putting us back together, He created us a NEW!

III. Vs. 16b Three secret truths

Vs. 16b The secret to wholeness is not a philosophy, the secret is a Person! And not just any person but *God the Son who is revealed in three pairs of contrasting truth that are both visible and invisible.*

1. **God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit:** What this is saying to us is that Jesus appeared as a man normal in appearance, He entered life as a man as we did. He understood life in this fallen world as we do, hard work, pain, and loss of a loved one, poverty, rejection and suffering were all the experiences that He experienced. Jesus ate and slept experienced the same bodily functions as we do. Paul wants us to know that Jesus being “**THE SECRET**” is to be understood in the application of Him to every situation and limitation that we have. There is no new situation that can come up that some little words will pop up and say, “*Sorry this application of Jesus will not work in making your life whole*”. Even though Jesus lived life looking like an ordinary man in a world full of corruption He didn’t affect Him the way it does us, He was never not whole, He always functioned as “*perfect man*”. When John looked back upon his experiences with the Jesus in this world some 70 years later he wrote in John 1:14 that, “*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” Jesus had a daily beauty in

life through every situation that made the rest of humanity look ugly by comparison. His grace, compassion, love, and mercy always on display for everyone. That is what Paul means by the phrase “*justified in the spirit*” as there was a continual witness the reality that in every situation and circumstance that Jesus faced He always acted “*right*”. The **Father testified to this in three separate occasions:**

- Matthew 3:17: At the **beginning** of Jesus’ ministry at His baptism
- Matthew 17:5: At the **mid-point** of His ministry as he was transfigured
- John 12:28: Finally at the **end** of His ministry just before his crucifixion

Jesus always acted in words and deeds as a person perfectly secure in His Father’s love. Jesus passed this acceptance onto us as we are told by Paul in Ephesians 1:6 that we are “*accepted in the Beloved*”! Jesus earned this designation because He always did right we have inherited this designation by trusting in Jesus work as God the Father sees us in His Son. When the world is rattling our life and we are being persuaded to see ourselves in the eyes of the world Jesus breaks through and reminds us that we belong to Him and are loved in a way that nothing can ever separate us from His love.

2. **Seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles:** These are invisible “*seen by angels*” and visible truths “*preached among the Gentiles*”. The word “seen” in the Greek is where we get our English word “*eyeball*”, which tells us that **the angels studied Him, He was under their constant observation.** They were at His birth, completely amazed at His incarnation having seen Him glorified in heaven. They were there to strengthen Him at the beginning of his ministry during those 40 days and nights of temptation in the wilderness. They were with Him in the garden of Gethsemane watching as He dropped great drops of blood. They stood watch over

His tomb and stood beside His disciples as He ascended into glory. These angels knew His majesty as they worshipped Him, for His power and greatness. But there is one thing they never knew personally: **The greatness of His forgiving love.** As our sin was placed upon Him who knew no sin they understood something that they had never seen prior the height, depth, breath and length of God's redeeming love! That is why it is left up too forgiven mankind who alone has experienced the love of God to proclaim Jesus. We of all of God's creation understand what our Creator has done out of love to those who rejected Him. What an amazing privilege it is to tell folks as lost as I was that they can experience His unending love. "*There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*", Save Jesus!

3. **Believed on in the world, received up in glory:** Not only is applying Jesus to our lives guaranteed to transform us but applying Him will work any time and any place in the world. People have testified from all walks of life, from every geographical location, from every age and from every state of moral decay of the change that has occurred in their life simply because they have trusted in Him. No matter how bad our personal fall and failure, how badly broken and foolish our decisions have been with Jesus there is a 100% certainty of change. That is the power only Jesus has to change lives when we in the world believe upon Him, it's a miracle that has been happening for thousands of years and those of us who have received Him are a part of that miracle. When Jesus was here on earth only those who could speak with Him or came near Him could be transformed. If He was in Jerusalem and you were somewhere else and needed Him to change your

life you were out of luck. But His Ascension means that He is perfectly able to transform your life everywhere at any time with everyone. We now live life presently in His power that is constantly available to us! **Christianity is not a way of doing special things. It is a special way of doing everything.** It's an everyday, moment by moment life He offers us as Ruth Graham placed over her kitchen "*Divine service performed here three times daily*".

That's what Christianity is, **Jesus is the secret of life.** He is how we live whole in a fractured world! Christianity is not a religion, religion is man's quest groping, fumbling is search for something that can get through the day. Christianity is about a living person who has made victorious living available for all who will trust Him, He is the great mystery of life that will no longer be a mystery if you simple trust Him.