

Conducting Ourselves in the House of God

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References: 1 Timothy 3, Acts 20:28; Acts 1:4-8; John 14:15-17; John 14:20-21; John 14:23; John 14:26; John 16:7-13; Ephesians 5:18

The Household of God

My pleasure to be with you again today, and I'm going to ask you to take your Bibles and turn back with me to 1st Timothy chapter 3, please. 1st Timothy chapter 3. I don't know if you were keeping up with the news or the weather, but they had a pretty bad storm in Ottawa. A lot of flooding going on and a lot of insulations made and things like that, so I didn't hear anything about Vancouver. I'm assuming you probably did very well. We did not get the brunt of it here either in the area that we were living. Thank you. So, just a side note, I should say.

As some of you know—probably not too many of you—July the 4th was the 250th anniversary of the United States of America, their celebration. And they had it all planned and everything was to be just right. And they had to wait on the weather. Isn't that amazing? You know, no matter what man plans, he's not in control of anything. Only our God is in control. So all of the plans of mice and men fall into the sovereignty of our God, if any of you saw the news about that last night.

So we're going to read from a book that never gets old. It is timeless. It will actually move into email—it's called "Eternity" and exists for all eternity. We're going to read it in time this morning, and the principles are still the same. Just one verse, a continuation from last week: 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 15. Paul says to Timothy:

[1 Timothy 3:15 NKJV]

but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

We suggested a few things last week, but the theme of my talk again this week and of last week is how should believers conduct themselves or behave in the house of God. A quick

reminder: the house of God could probably better be translated the household of God or the family of God. The church of the living God talks to us about who owns it, whose it is, purchased with His own blood:

[Acts 20:28 NKJV]

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

And the pillar and ground of the truth. A pillar is a wonderful thing. It holds up stuff. It's structural. But if the ground underneath the pillar is sand, then the whole thing will come down in times of disaster. But this will never come down: the pillar and the ground of the truth.

Now, I was reminded that, of course, these are not the only names in Scripture that are given to the church or these designations—the house of God, the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. There's buildings and brides and all kind of other things that are described as ways that we can understand the truth, the body of Christ, etc. But our thought is: how—what do we do in it? Where is it? How do we conduct ourselves? How do we behave ourselves?

I hope that last week we simplified the truth to the point you realize that just because you happen to be sitting in a building on 16th Avenue called 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel, you know that that's not the church. The church happens to be you people, individuals. There was a time when there was a tabernacle. That was great. And there was a time when there was a temple. That was even greater. And now the time is your body has become the temple of the Holy Spirit of God, where God lives by the power of His Spirit.

So how do you conduct yourselves when you come together like you've done this morning? Whether it's in a field or a barn or in a lovely building like you're sitting in today. We suggested last week, if we're going to know how to conduct ourselves, what we should do, we have to realize who we belong to. We realize that when we come together, there are standards, and they're God's standards. They're not our standards.

I remember on one occasion many years ago, I talked to a pastor of a—let's say, I don't want to expose anything here, so I'm going to say he was a pastor of a church. And he told me on that Friday night that they were going to be having a communion service. And he said, "We're going to be having a communion service with pizza and Pepsi because the young

people were coming together." Well, in my humble opinion, that's not how you behave yourself in the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. I think they kind of made that up. They made their own application. Probably their intent perhaps was good. I feel sure it probably was good intent. But they didn't go by the Word of God. They went by their own tradition, their own imagination, their own way of doing things. And my response to that was, "Uh-huh." So I didn't know how to respond to that. But we're going to try to respond scripturally. What do we do? How do we know what to do? And you probably already are thinking about a hundred things.

And there are more, of course, than 100 things of how we are to do and what we are to do. You've got to realize who we are, who we belong to, how we got in. Are you listening? The body. Remember, we talked about the baptism of the Holy Spirit placing us into. That's the only church you've got to be really sure you're a member of, you know. You get in that one, you're going to be okay. The baptism of the Holy Spirit placing us into the body of Christ.

And then we talked a little bit about the Spirit of God gives you gifts. You got at least one gift, maybe more. And it's so interesting. You read this in Romans chapter 12 or about—sorry, 1 Corinthians chapter 12, where it talks about the gifts of the Spirit. And a little phrase in there says:

[1 Corinthians 12:18 NKJV]

But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

I like that, you know. I'll tell you why I like that: the Spirit of God gives us a gift. And God knows just exactly where to put us in the body so we can exercise that gift. The Lord wouldn't—and it's all, talks about a body, a physical body, of course, representing a spiritual body, the church, Christ the head, we are the members. It would be rather ridiculous if the Holy Spirit gave you the gift of a right elbow and God pushed you in the body as a left kneecap. Now that just—they'd say, "Oh, how does that work?" Well, it doesn't work. And God wouldn't do that. So if you get the gift of a right elbow, guess where God puts you in the body? He puts you in as a right elbow. And there you can function and exercise your gift for the benefit of the whole. It's just a little thought, but the triune Godhead never contradicts, of course, one another.

Total Dependence on the Holy Spirit

So let's move on then a little bit this week. And I want to give you some other thoughts about how to conduct yourself, not just who you are, not just how you got into the body, not just that you have a spiritual gift and you need to exercise it. Oh, by the way, all spiritual gifts are not exercised Sunday morning. Did you know that? Or Saturday morning or Tuesday night. Spiritual gifts are for the benefit of the body. When you come together, it's great if you have a spiritual gift that you can benefit the body when you come together. But maybe you're not all together and you have the gift of mercy or the gift of administration or some gift that is not necessarily exercised on Sunday or Tuesday or Thursday. Or it's something that benefits the whole body. You are together and you are to bring unity and you are to exercise your gift for the benefit of the body. But it doesn't all happen at the same time. Just another thought.

Now, to continue on, let me give you another thought about how to behave yourself in the body, in the church of the living God. I want us to go to Acts chapter 1, please. Book of Acts and chapter 1. And just a couple of thoughts on how to conduct ourselves. Now, for you Bible students, I realize I'm reading from a portion just before the church begins. I know that, Acts chapter 1. But the principle is there. If you've studied the doctrine of the church, you'll know that the doctrine of the church was formed in Acts chapter 2 with the coming of the Holy Spirit. But I just want to share a couple of verses with you and suggest how you ought to conduct yourself in that coming together in that church of the living God, reading in verse 4 of Acts chapter 1:

[Acts 1:4-8 NKJV]

⁴ And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Emphasis just for our study this morning on how to conduct yourself, behave yourself in the house of God: you need to be—are you with me now? Listen—you need to be **totally**

dependent on the Holy Spirit. When you read the book of Acts and you see everything that is about to happen in the book of Acts, you will continually read about the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit. Matter of fact, some commentators have actually suggested the name the Acts, or some have said, or maybe your Bible's got it, the Acts of the Apostles. Well, that's great, and that's certainly what it is. You can also call it the Acts of the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is inseparable in that.

Now, let's go to John chapter 14, and see what the Lord Jesus says about the Holy Spirit. John's Gospel, chapter 14. Jesus told his disciples in Acts, "You wait till the Holy Spirit comes, and things are going to be different." The Holy Spirit did come, and things were different. This is what Jesus said back in the Gospel of John, chapter 14, verse 15. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments," and emphasis:

[John 14:15 NKJV]

¹⁵ "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

And:

[John 14:16 NKJV]

¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--

Jesus was their helper when He was on earth. He said, "I'm going to ask the Father. He's going to give you another helper." Notice: "that He might abide with you forever." Look at verse 17, the Spirit of truth. Now, we got two names so far. We got verse 16, Helper. We got verse 17, Spirit of truth. You'll notice:

[John 14:17 NKJV]

¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

But you know Him. Now, this is the Helper, the Spirit of truth, for He dwells with you. Okay, and will be in you. That is the Helper. The Spirit of truth will be in you. Look at verse 20:

[John 14:20-21 NKJV]

²⁰ At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

Look at verse 23, Jesus said:

[John 14:23 NKJV]

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

Verse 26, but the Helper—we already read about Him—the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name:

[John 14:26 NKJV]

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

What's my point? A helper. A teacher. A comforter. A convictor. A Spirit of truth. Who lives in you. Look at chapter 16 and verse 7. Jesus still speaking, chapter 16 of John, verse 7:

[John 16:7-13 NKJV]

⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹ of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

¹² "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth;

for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Why am I taking time to read all this? Several reasons. We're under a thought of how to conduct myself in the house of God, the family of God, the church of the living God. When you come together, what do I do? How do I do it? One thing that you must not ever forget is that everything that you do in the family of God needs to be Spirit, Holy Spirit oriented.

I think we don't really talk enough about the Holy Spirit. And I think one of the reasons we don't is because we don't want to be "numbered with the transgressors." Some of you will get that. There are groups who exalt the Holy Spirit, who worship the Holy Spirit. Everything is spirit, spirit, spirit, spirit, spirit. And we just read He won't speak of Himself. He's not come to glorify Himself. The Lord Jesus is the Head. And it is possible, I believe, to rob some of the glory from the Lord Jesus and give it to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit doesn't want it. That's not why He has come. He's not come to speak of Himself. He's come to glorify the Lord. He's come to bring honor to God. He's come to pass on to us, convict us, teach us, illuminate us, instruct us, empower us, and on and on and on.

We need to know how dependent we are. You read that book of Acts again and you start marking down every time it talks about the Holy Spirit, you're going to find out you got a lot of marks in your Bible. How am I to conduct myself in the house of God? I am to be—are you listening?—**spirit-controlled**, not flesh-controlled, not worldly-controlled. Now you might say, "Well, how do you know I do?" Well, you—you know because you consciously commit yourself in obedience to the Holy Spirit, and you're not going to be able to do that apart from the Holy Spirit, the will of God.

I tell you, something's going to happen to some of you younger people. And a few of us in the congregation this morning are not called younger people anymore. We're called senior citizens, older people. Okay. I tell you, you younger people one day are going to realize how dependent you are on the Holy Spirit to help you. The Word of God to guide you. You're going to say to yourself, and you're going to say to your friends, "I can't do anything anymore. I don't know what to do. I don't know how to do it. I need help." Well, Jesus is already—He's already sent the Helper. Thank God. Why does it take us so long to be dependent on Him?

And so when you come together, imagine this: if everybody in a local gathering is filled with the Holy Spirit and completely dependent on the Lord, one thing that will be so obvious is that there will be a unity and a love and a oneness and a harmony that you cannot imagine. Because He—that is the Holy Spirit of God—will do that. He will bring that to come to pass.

Listen, some things you don't even have to pray about. Listen to this: where there is contention and strife and envy and jealousy and everything that goes with that—one thing, you don't even have to pray about that. You know what you can say about that? Fleshly, not Spirit-led. Spirit of God doesn't do that. Spirit of God doesn't do that. Thank you. He doesn't bring that kind of atmosphere into a meeting.

Filled and Controlled by the Spirit

But when the Spirit of God is directing, when the Holy Spirit is there, and when we are filled with the Spirit—by the way, which we are admonished, yea, commanded to be. Let's go to Ephesians now, please. Book of Ephesians and chapter 5. And verse 18. Verse 18. Thinking about how do we conduct ourselves when we come together? How do we conduct ourselves in the family of God? How do I even exercise my spiritual gift? How do I pray? How do I fellowship? How do I teach? How do I whatever my responsibility is in the meeting—how do I do that? Look at chapter 5 of Ephesians, in verse 18. Verse 18:

[Ephesians 5:18 NKJV]

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

I—we—I don't think we need a verse for that, but we got one, yes, yeah. Anybody would know that when you're drunk, you're not in control, right? When you're drunk, you're out of control. You're under the control of wine—could I dare put it that way?—under the control of alcohol. And, uh, that is—no, that's, that's not how we are to operate at all. Drunkenness is condemned in the Scripture. All right.

So do not be drunk with wine, which is dissipation. But in contrast to that—you don't get—don't judge me too quick here. Let me translate this like this: don't be drunk with wine, which is dissipation, but be drunk with the Spirit. Oh, you didn't say that, did you? Actually, I did say that, yeah. Be intoxicated. Be—listen to me—under the control. The first part of that verse says, don't be under the control of alcohol. That's bad. That's—that's not good. You're out of control when you're under control of alcohol. Well, but be under the control—that's the thought. Be moved by, be empowered by, be under the control of the Holy Spirit of God.

Do you know when you are filled, under the control of the Spirit of God, guess what? You're going to do everything according to God's will. Because the Holy Spirit wouldn't conduct you any other way. You're going to have the right words. You're going to have the right attitude. You're going to have the right facial expressions. You're going to have the right fellowship

with your believers. And you're going to be moved along by the Holy Spirit of God in the gathering of the church in a way that's so acceptable.

So you might ask—ask yourself the question: how do you get filled with the Holy Spirit? That's what I'd like to do. Like, how would you like to—how do you do that? Oh, well, there's some booklets that tell you how to do that, and they go on and on and on about how to do it. Let me give you the shortcut: turn yourself over in complete, absolute surrender. Any known sin—are you listening?—any known sin in your life must be confessed. Grieve not the Holy Spirit. If you're grieving the Spirit, you can't be filled with the Spirit. Quench not the Spirit. Oh, don't strangle Him. Don't hold Him down. Don't go against Him. Don't grieve Him. Don't quench Him. But listen: give over, yield to Him.

We don't have to read a 900-page theological book on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to know He's already twisted our heart and convicted us in our mind when we're not right. Confess it. Forsake it. Deal with it. Grieve not. Quench not. Walk by. Walk in. Give over, hand in hand, in obedience to the Holy Spirit. And then guess what? You're filled. You're controlled. He's leading you. He's directing you. He's filling your mouth. He's filling your mind. He's giving you thoughts, godly things, and how to accomplish these godly things.

How do you behave yourself in a house of God? **Total dependence on the Holy Spirit.** And that—there are hundreds of things. I'm not suggesting that I got the three or four or five things here. There's all kind of things, but we're learning how we ought to behave ourselves. So the next time you're gathered like this, and including right now with me, even though I'm a few thousand kilometers away from you, let's all try, by the grace of God, to remember how we ought to behave ourselves when we come together. And one of the things is this: totally surrendering yourself, confessing your sin, thanking God for His forgiveness, walking in the light, giving over to obedience. I want to talk more about that next week, about what does it mean to obey.

So that's my thoughts today about how we ought to conduct ourselves in the house of God.

Father, you have given us everything we need. It's all provided for us. You tell us to take the armor, take the outfit, take the clothing, take the things that we need. Not to make them—you've already made them, Father. You just tell us to appropriate it, just to put it on, just to walk in the Spirit and to yield ourselves to the moving of the Holy Spirit, being empowered, being filled, directed by the Holy Spirit. Lord, help us to do that today for Christ's sake, Amen.