

Truth That Never Changes 2 Timothy 3:14-15

1 Timothy 3:14) I write these things to you, hoping to come to you soon.

15) But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to act in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

The Church – the pillar and foundation of the truth. What is Truth?

Before defining what truth is, let's determine what truth is not.

- Truth is *not* simply whatever works – a pragmatistic philosophy of an “ends vs. means.”
- Truth is *not* simply what is believable or understandable. A conspiracy theory, agreed upon by a group of people who tell the same false story, does not make their presentation true.
- Truth is *not* what the majority says is true. Fifty-one percent of a group can reach a wrong conclusion.
- Truth is *not* defined by what is intended. Good intentions can still be wrong.
- Truth is *not* how we know; truth is what we know.
- Truth is *not* simply what is believed. A lie believed is still a lie.

The Greek word for “truth” is *aletheia* = to “un-hide” or “hiding nothing.” Truth is always there, always open and available for all to see, with nothing being hidden or obscured. Truth is simply telling it like it is; it is the way things really are, and any other viewpoint is wrong. Pillar and foundation connect two Greek words: *Stulos* = support and *hedraion* = ground. So, the church, the ecclesia, the “called out ones” – we are the support and ground of truth. We are not the source or authority of truth – as the church, we bear the responsibility of holding up the truth and standing firm on the truth.

I stand here to remind us today of three Truths that never change. These immovable and unchangeable truths we must hold up stand firm upon.

Truth #1: GOD Never Changes. The prophet Malachi recorded these words: “*I the LORD have not changed.*” (Malachi 3:6) The second article of our Baptist Faith and Message God who created this world, God who spoke this world into existence, is the same God today as He was from the beginning. The first four words of the Bible – “*In the beginning God*” has never changed. God is still in control of everything. God is still forgiving our sin. God is still answering our prayers. God is still rewarding our faith. God is still working miracles. God is still meeting all of our needs. God is still holding the whole world in His hands. Thomas Chisholm wrote these words we often sing, as a testament to God's faithfulness through his very ordinary life. “*Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father, there is no shadow of turning with Thee. Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not. As thou hast been, thou forever will be.*” The second article of our Baptist Faith and Message, states emphatically, “**There is one and only one living and true God.**”

I did not sense God's call to vocational ministry until the summer before my senior year in college. With my life direction now ministry instead of dentistry, in my senior year of college, I decided to enroll in a freshman level speech course, thinking that learning how to write and deliver speeches could definitely help me as a minister. I was the only senior in a class of mostly freshmen and a few sophomores. Our instructor was Dr. Casey, the head of the Speech Department. Most of the freshmen were afraid of him and his brash style of teaching. He had a reputation of striking fear into the hearts of his students. But I was a senior with nothing to lose. One of our assignments was to give a speech on an abstract concept, like courage, enthusiasm, pride, or fear. I chose faith as my topic and I prepared what I thought was a fine speech. One the day I was to deliver my speech, I was second in the line-up. I couldn't believe it. The student just ahead of me stood up and announced that her speech was on faith. I sat there stunned for a moment and then uneasiness crept into my heart. I realized that were I to follow her speech with another speech on faith, Dr. Casey might suspect that I was a lazy senior and was playing off the previous speaker. And not only that, some of her thoughts on faith in her speech were different from mine, so I certainly did not want it to appear that I was presenting contradictions to such an important topic. I don't have any idea why I did what I did. But I stepped up to the podium and said, *Dr. Casey, I know it is hard to believe, but the speech we have just heard was on the same topic I chose. Neither she nor I had any idea that we had chosen the same topic. Her speech on the topic was delivered with such excellence that I don't want to bore you and the class with another speech on the same subject, so with your permission I will instead take a few moments to answer the question "What is a Christian and Why I am one."* And so I winged it. At the end of each speech it was Dr. Casey's procedure to give a brief critique of the speech. In front of the whole class, he addressed me, *"Mr. Ogea, I think you need to understand that we all have our own gods. Some of us call our god Buddha, some call him Mohammed, and some call him a Higher Power. Some call him just God, as you have.* His critique was not really a critique but a disagreement. (By the way, though he obviously disagreed with most of what I had to say, he gave me an "A" on the speech.) I considered his critical words after class, and I remember thinking, *"I want to know God in such a personal way that there will be no doubt in my heart what I believe about God, regardless of what everyone else believes about God."* Therefore, I stand here before you this morning to remind us that as the church, we bear the responsibility and accountability to hold up and stand firm on the pillar and foundation of the truth that GOD NEVER CHANGES.

Truth #2: JESUS Never Changes. Hebrews 13:8 confirms that ***"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."*** (Hebrews 13:8)

Jesus Christ is still head over His church. Jesus Christ is still the author and the finisher of our faith. Jesus Christ is still our mediator between God and man. Jesus Christ is still the name above all names and salvation is found in no other name. Jesus Christ is still holding on to our salvation. Jesus Christ is still the way, the truth and the life. Jesus Christ is still King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Jesus Christ is still preparing heaven for us. Jesus Christ is still coming back to rapture His people. Again, to quote the Baptist Faith and Message, ***"Christ is the eternal Son of God."*** Eternal, meaning everlasting, forever, never changing.

U.S. Treasury agents are trained to detect counterfeit money. Though the training is long and rigorous, it only involves one component. They don't study counterfeit bills. They don't learn about color-shifting inks, watermarks, ultraviolet glows, or fiber quality. Their training consists of one thing and one thing only: endless hours of touching, ogling, and sniffing real money. For if an agent knows what real money looks like then they'll always spot a counterfeit.

Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of Billy Graham, asks the question, "So who is Jesus? What is there about Him that makes Him so compelling that..."

...a Yugoslavian nun named Mother Theresa would give her life to comfort the dying in Calcutta, India for his sake?

...some of the world's most beautiful art was created to honor Him?

...some of the world's most glorious music was written to praise Him?

...167 years after Rome crucified Him, He was acknowledged as the only God in the Roman Empire?

...Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, rotting in a Siberian work camp, said the very thought of Jesus was enough to keep his sanity?

...in a outburst of physical pain, frustration, anger, or just disagreement with the referees at a ball game, His Name – not Buddha's or Muhammad's -- is used in profanity?

...two thousand years after He has been physically removed from the world, people from all walks of life say He has saved them from drugs, illness, suicide, depression, and hopelessness?

...in Him name, people forsake personal gain to feed the hungry, house the homeless, clothe the naked, heal the sick? (*Just Give Me Jesus*, page 3)

We hold up and stand firm on the pillar and foundation of the truth the JESUS NEVER CHANGES.

Truth #3: GOD'S WORD Never Changes. Years after Simon Peter walked with Jesus, denied knowing Jesus, experienced restoration as a true disciple of Jesus, preached the first Christian sermon affirming Jesus as the cornerstone, he confirmed in 1 Peter 1:25 that "***the grass withers, and the flower drops off, but the word of the Lord endures forever.***" (1 Peter 1:25)

We believe that Bible is God's Word. The Bible is still the power of God unto salvation. The Bible is still the inspired, infallible, reliable, authentic, authoritative, inerrant Word of God. The Bible is still profitable and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. The Bible is still the Holy Book of all Books. The Bible is still the only Book that needs nothing added to it. The Bible is still the only Book with the words of Life. The Bible is still the best seller of all time. Back to the Baptist Faith and Message: "**The Bible is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.** . I learned it in VBS – maybe you did too: *The B-I-B-L-E – yes, that's the book for me. I stand alone on the word of God, the B-I-B-L-E.*

In his autobiography *Just As I Am*, Billy Graham shared the turning point in his evangelism ministry. It was just before the Los Angeles Crusade in 1950, the Crusade that made Billy Graham a national evangelist. He was speaking at a Retreat Center and was struggling concerning what He believed about the Bible. Listen to his testimony in his own words: *As the*

night wore on, my heart became heavily burdened. Could I trust the Bible? With the Los Angeles Campaign galloping toward me, I had to have an answer. If I could not trust the Bible, I could not go on. I would have to leave pulpit evangelism. I was only thirty years of age. It was not too late to become a dairy farmer...I got up and took a walk...Dropping to my knees there in the woods, I opened the Bible at random on a tree stump in front of me....The exact wording of my prayer is beyond recall, but it must have echoed my thought: O God! There are many things in this book I do not understand. There are many problems with it for which I have no solution. There are many seeming contradictions. There are some areas in it that do not seem to correlate with modern science. I can't answer some of the philosophical and psychological questions...others are raising...Father, I am going to accept this as Thy Word — by faith. I'm going to allow faith to go beyond my intellectual questions and doubts, and I will believe this to be Your inspired Word.” (pp. 138-139) That night Billy Graham settled the issue that God's Word never changes, and I'm convinced it was the secret ingredient to the success of a lifelong ministry of the greatest evangelist in our lifetime. Every time Billy Graham preached, over and over again he would shout the words -- “The Bible says...The Bible says...The Bible says.”

We hold up and stand firm on the pillar and foundation of the truth that GOD'S WORD NEVER CHANGES.

Truth Matters. A boat got caught in a storm and sank. All were drowned, except a young boy on board. Holding on to a piece of floating debris, he made it to the shoreline. In the darkness, he managed to pull himself up onto a large rock. For the rest of the night until his rescue, he held unto that rock, while the waves and the surf pounded the shore. When he was rescued, they asked him, “*Were you cold? Were you afraid? What made you think you could survive?*” He responded, “Yes I was cold. Yes I was afraid. Yes I wondered if I would make it. But after a while, I realized that the rock never moved. No matter how hard the wind blew and how high the waves pounded, as I held on to the rock, it never moved. *So I just held on to the rock.*”

We are the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. Truth Matters. And here's the truth that we must hold up and stand firm on: God never changes, Jesus Christ never changes, and God's Word never changes.