

1Tim 23-09-03b

We are back from our break and ready to resume our look at this idea of how we ought to conduct ourselves in God's house, the assembly of the living God. And we've seen that this is not just the worship gathering, far from it. It is our view of ourselves on an ongoing basis.

When we get up in the morning, as we travel through the day, when we retire for the evening, at any time that we are self-aware, that awareness should include the fact that we are God's children, we are members of his household, and it is an assembly, it is a community. It's so interesting to me that Christianity is not a lone wolf exercise. We're not Elijah by the brook Cherith always.

There are times when we are alone. There are times when we are by ourselves. The Lord Jesus frequently went off by himself to pray.

He would take his disciples to a secluded place, and there would be a very small inner circle that would spend time together, as opposed to the crowds and the 5,000 and the 4,000 and those who gather around him to view the miracles and to be there for any number of reasons. But we have a relationship with God that is individual, but inevitably and inextricably links us to each other. So the singular, how you ought to conduct yourself, is not a community exhortation.

It is to me. It is to you. It is to Timothy, how you ought to conduct yourself in the household and in the assembly.

So there is a household. It's not a one-bedroom apartment with you and a cat. It isn't a lone wolf, I'm living in my shelter half.

This is what I love about the Marine Corps in the old days. I probably got some kind of fancy equipment. But in the old days, you had a piece of equipment that you kept on top of your ALICE pack if you were going to the field, and it was a shelter half.

And it is a somewhat triangular piece of canvas with grommets and a disassembled tent pole, some line, and some stakes. And you can get by with that. I slept under a shelter half on the beach in Alaska, and it was cold, cold, cold.

But it's not a shelter, it's a shelter half. And normally, two Marines assemble together their two shelter halves and make a shelter. Now it is a two-person tent.

You got two poles instead of one. On a shelter half, the front is open, and the pointy end goes down, and you stake it to the ground. So your feet are down there.

It's like kind of being in a glorified sleeping bag. And you put your, I can't even think of the right name for it. I can't tell you the wrong name for it.

But the right name is this foam, little thin foam mat that you put down so that the sharp rocks don't poke you. But with a shelter half, it becomes what people think of as a puck tent. It's bigger.

The body warmth of two individuals is in there. It is just so much better to assemble a shelter than to have a shelter half. And so the idea is there should be, and often will be, at least one other Marine with whom you can take shelter, you can cook chow, you can do security, one of you is awake while the other one's sleeping, and so on.

It is a team. It is a fellowship. It is an assembly.

And you're working together, and the whole exceeds the sum of the parts. It's just better. And that's why it is a house of God.

Multiple people dwell in a house. It is an assembly. So while the definition is connection to God, and it is the pillar and ground of his truth on which it is founded, it is inevitably a fellowship.

And getting the priority right, I have to, first of all, be related properly to God. I have to, first of all, understand his truth. Then I am connected to others who share that enthusiasm, that understanding, that love, that commonality.

And we've talked about the essential nature of unity. Find fellow believers who have a similar understanding of the truth. Don't run around attacking people with a hatchet because they don't believe in a particular point of doctrine.

Find people with whom you've got great commonality. And if you differ in the non-essentials, it's not a big deal. Some people are bigger on public prayer.

Other people think prayer ought to be private. Some people think giving ought to be formalized. Others think it ought to be done out of sight and let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

These are minor and inconsequential. But people ought to be of one heart and one mind. But that heart and mind have to be built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets of whom Christ is the chief cornerstone.

Remember when we were in Ephesians chapter 3? So that is the idea. To know how to conduct yourself. This is the verb in 1st Timothy chapter 3 verse 15, conduct yourself.

This is such an interesting word because it is from the root strepho. And strepho means to turn in its primary application. Application.

Conduct yourself. And this is ana strepho. Ana means again.

Ana strepho. And so to turn again is the literal meaning. And it was used for conversion

in the Old Testament to come back.

In Ezekiel 39 25, the Hebrew when it was translated into Greek. Therefore thus says the Lord God, I will bring back the captives of Jacob and have mercy on the house of Israel and I will be jealous for my holy name. I will bring back the captives.

And when they put this into Greek in the Septuagint, they translated this with *ana strepho*. But the idea is not just the action of retrieving the captives but that the captives are going to come back and live as they formerly did in their own land under the power of God. So there is an emphasis in this word on conduct.

And I could give you other examples in the Old Testament where it is related to turning or converting or coming back or being brought back. But in the New Testament, even in Acts 5 22 when the apostles are supernaturally released from prison, it says the officers, this is 5 22 of Acts, the officers came and did not find them in the prison. They returned and reported.

The officers went to get them and bring them, hail them before the authorities. But when they got there, they weren't there. And so they returned, they *ana strepho*.

But again, the emphasis is on this is what your junior military people do. When you say go, they go. When you say come, they come.

And so they did the military duty of not finding the prisoners and they continued to do what they do under orders. They reported. And so that's the emphasis.

And so turn with me to 2 Corinthians 1 12. Closer to our point here, but with that as background, Paul is, this very same author, is going to use this verb in 2 Corinthians chapter 2, I'm sorry, 2 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 12. And here, Paul says, furthermore, when I came to our boasting, our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God and more abundantly toward you.

Paul has spent four verses in 8 through 11 talking about the difficulties that he has faced. He and his team, they have faced the sentence of death. They have been delivered from death, continue to be delivered and expect to continue to be delivered.

You helping together in prayer for us. That's verse 11. You participating, you as a part of God's household, you as fellow assembled believers.

Notice the distance. Paul is writing to the Corinthians from a distance and yet they are in the same household and they are participating together. How do they do it? In verse 11, you helping together in prayer for us.

This is what we do on a team, in a family. We pull for one another. We're in favor of one

another.

We support one another. We look out for one another. We think about one another and try to figure out ways to be beneficial to each other.

This is what happens in a house and what should happen in the house of God. So even though Paul is having to write a letter to Corinth because he's not there, they are participating. They are supporting.

They are helping together. How? In prayer. So that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.

So our celebration, boasting always sounds kind of bad when you see it in scripture, but that which we celebrate on your behalf. We don't boast about somebody's birthday. We celebrate their birthday, cake, candles, crepe paper, presents, getting together and appreciating someone, using it as an occasion to express our affection or our love.

That's the idea of boasting. Kau Ka'omai has the idea of this is an expression of what is in me about you. So our celebration is this, the testimony of our conscience.

Ooh, very same word, sunaidasis, our conscience. Remember the goal of our commandment here is the purpose of our commandment is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, sunaidasis. Paul says the testimony of our sunaidasis, and by the way, aidasis, that part of it comes from the verb for knowing and sun means with, it comes across in English with a Y. And so you have sympathy, pathos meaning to feel, I feel with, sympathy, a symphony, I make sound with other instruments, synergy, synapses, SYN always has the idea of things that are together, that are assembled, that are in the same place and related to each other, like the house of God and the assembly of the living God.

So sunaidasis is to think with. What is it you think with? In second Corinthians chapter one, verse 12, Paul says, our celebration is this, the testimony of our conscience. And we saw this in first Timothy chapter one, that a good conscience, this is our moral sense, our understanding of what is right and what is wrong.

This is what we think with, sunaidasis. We conducted ourselves, this is our word, anastrefo, in the world, this is in the economy, we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity. What is simplicity? This is a fascinating word, it is haplotes.

You may remember if you've ever studied Greek armies and Greek history, Roman history in the past, that there were soldiers who were called haplites. Ever heard of the haplites? They were the rank and file soldiers, the haplites. Well, haplotes has the idea of doing your duty.

And you're not strategizing, you're not up in the ethereal realms in plans and purposes and so on. It's see the hill, take the hill. And so it comes to be translated simplicity, meaning noble dedication.

It is 110% single-minded, single-hearted dedication. That's what haplotēs is. And Paul says, our conscience testifies that what we did, we did fully, without compromise, without doubt.

We conducted ourselves in single-heartedness and godly sincerity. Godly sincerity. This word for sincerity is eilekrinos, E-I-L-E.

And then you have the word krino is to judge. So eilekrinos. And what it means is the eile part has to do with sunshine.

It's related to the word helios. Helios is the sun. And this heile, H-E-I-L-E, heile is from helios.

So the literal meaning of the word is to judge in the sun. If you want to find out what this is, take it outside and get some sunlight on it. Now, that's miles for my notion of sincerity.

This means to judge in the sunlight. I will figure out the quality of this in the best available light. This is discernment.

This is discretion. This is telling the difference between something that is genuine and something that is false. Take it out into the sun.

Helio krinos, sun judging, S-U-N. So when you take it out into the sun and you come to a positive conclusion, you say, this is the real thing. It is pure.

And this word comes to mean purity. You take it out in the sun. You don't see any spot, any blemish, any wrinkle.

The notion that the church would be without spot, without blemish or any such thing, holy. This is the idea. Judge it in the sun.

It's used in Philippians chapter one, verse 10. I pray that you may come to know the difference, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense until the day of Christ. Helio krinos.

The discernment is translated there as sincere, that you may be without flaw, without spot, without blemish in the strongest possible light. It is also used in second Peter chapter three, verse one. Peter says, beloved, I now write to you this second epistle in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.

It was a movie that came out recently. I think it had Russell Crowe in it. Something about

the spotless mind.

But this is Peter as an apostle writing his second letter to stir up your pure mind by way of remembrance. Your mind is pure, but I want to stir it up. I want to activate it.

Paul in first Corinthians chapter five, verse eight says, therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity, helio krinos, and truth. The unleavened bread, the undefiled, uncorrupted, the pure bread, sincerity and truth. You see the relationship.

What is it that renews our mind? What is it that cleanses us? The washing of water by the word, the word of truth. You can't just aspire to be pure. You can't just hope to be spotless.

There are mechanisms for this. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us. The washing of the word cleanses us.

And there is a means of purity. And it doesn't come just by loving and being loved. Love does not purify.

It does a lot of things, but it does not cleanse. So, and this is godly sincerity. This is in, back to second Corinthians one 12, we conducted ourselves in haplotes, in unwavering and single-minded dedication and godly purity.

We didn't allow any corruption, any defilement. It's like the unleavened bread with which you celebrate the feast. They would spend a whole day scouring the household to be sure there was no leaven and nothing defiling before they would celebrate the feast of unleavened bread.

This same word is going to be used one chapter forward in second Corinthians. Second Corinthians chapter two, verse 17, we are not as so many are peddling the word of God, making merchandise of the word of God, turning it into some sort of a means of, of gain or influence or something that is self-serving. But as of highly creene, sincerity, as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

Look closely at that verse, second Corinthians two 17. We, says Paul, are not like so many are doing, not like the rest, peddling the word of God, turning it into kind of a business, kind of getting into other people's business. We're not peddling it, but, but as of sincerity, our goal is this single-minded dedication to God's judgment, that God will find us pure, that God will find us without spot, without blemish, without corruption, without defilement, without admixture.

As from God, we speak on behalf of God. We are speaking as from God himself. What a responsibility that is.

We speak in the sight of God in Christ. And notice as much care and concern as Paul has for the church, as much love as he has for the brethren, as much self-sacrificial effort and hardship that he has undertaken and undergone and endured. He, in other places, talks about his daily care and concern for the churches, his love for the saints, his constant prayers for them, his appreciation from their partnership and fellowship in the gospel from the past until the present.

He is very invested, very dedicated, loves them deeply. However, when he is exercising his apostolic gift, it is in purity. He makes sure that his motivation and his operation can stand the light of day, however strong, the noonday sun shining on it, speaking in, as from God, in the sight of God.

This is the idea of the household of God and the assembly of the living God. We think, first and foremost, is God going to be pleased? Before I think, is my brother, my sister, my neighbor, my fellow believer, how are they going to take this? How is it going to come across? We certainly need to think about that. We have to consider, is somebody a weaker brother? Am I going to create a stumbling block? Am I going to give offense? Am I going to make a major out of a minor? Am I going to cause someone a problem by my liberty in Christ and somebody's conscience is offended? Paul talks about that.

I have to take those into consideration, but not first. First, foremost, at the beginning, at the start, what is God going to think about this? That will often clean up the horizontal aspect because God is not going to want me to cause a fellow believer to stumble. God is not going to want me to exercise my liberty at the expense of someone else's conscience.

God is not going to want me to speak in a harsh, offensive, insensitive way. God is going to judge my thoughts and intents, and I know how He's going to judge it, because I've got His word, and my word tells me the divine opinion of the thoughts and intents of my heart. So I look to God first.

He is the head of the assembly, my house, my rules, and it is so easy to forget this because the horizontal is visible, and our vertical relationship to God is invisible. Immortal, invisible, and that is directly in our passage. God, immortal, invisible.

So this is our concern, and that is the concern that Paul expresses in 1 Corinthians in terms of conduct. How do I conduct myself? What is my pattern of life? So back to 1 Timothy chapter 3, conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. Pillar and ground of the truth.

The pillar, this is the word from which we get stylus, stulos, it's a vertical column. What does a pillar do? If you go to archaeological sites in Greece or Rome, and a few other places that were in the Roman world, you ever see like these Corinthian columns standing there, and you think, isn't there something missing? I've often thought it would

be cool if they could gather all of the fallen blocks and reassemble these things, so you're not looking at a ruin, but you're looking at a reconstruction. The problem being that subsequent generations cannibalized what had fallen and repurposed it, and you'd have to deconstruct a whole bunch of later buildings and walls and such to get all the original stones back.

And so they now, with the virtual world, they can reconstruct the Temple of Athena and the Acropolis and all of these other things that have fallen down. But what do you often see still there? These pillars are still there. But what does a pillar do? Why do you have a pillar? Something goes on top of it, right? It holds something up.

It holds up the roof. So when you talk about the pillars, this is what holds up, what rests on it. You put in a post, you put in a pillar to hold something up and keep it from collapsing, to give it structure and give it strength.

That's the stulos, the stylos, and the ground. And the ground is hedraios. You don't really need to spell that, but it has the idea of what you sit on.

And so it is that which is permanent, that which is established. So God establishes the mountains so that they stand fast. You have this in Psalm 89 verse 2 in the Septuagint.

God sets up the throne of David. And so it is grounded. This is Psalm 88 verse 37 in the Septuagint.

If your work is going to be established or stand, this is the word that's used in Psalm 89 verse 17. So to be steadfast is the idea. This in its adjective use is used of a heart, a steadfast heart.

And this is a virtue to have a grounded, immovable heart. Your affection does not change, your priority does not change, your goals and values do not change. Those are Septuagint uses.

The Apostle Paul uses it in 1 Corinthians 7, 37. And he says, nevertheless, he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin daughter does well. He is firmly fixed in his view and in his attitude.

This is talking about whether virgins should marry or not. And the father is involved in at that time and in that culture. And if you've got a settled and immovable policy in your heart, you're not under duress.

You don't need to worry about dowries. You're not in some sort of economic hardship where you're going to implicate a marriage in order to attain an advantage or get out from under a disadvantage. You have no necessity.

This father has power over his own will. He is free to make his decision based on his conscience. And he has determined in his heart that he is going to keep his daughter unmarried.

It's in his purview. It is his right. It is his function.

It is his job that unless and until the right guy comes along, he's not going to sign off on an ill-considered marriage, a situation, putting his daughter in a situation from which she may well want to escape at a future point. It's his judgment. It is his settled opinion.

It is founded. It is a foundation. So what is Paul saying here again in 1 Timothy 3? The household of God and the assembly of the living God is the pillar and ground.

It supports what's up high and it is the support on which everything else is built. This is structure and stability. Where does that structure and stability come from? If you've got a house full of kids, is there structure and stability or a classroom full of kids? Is that where you get structure and stability from the kids and their interaction with each other? It's the adults in the room.

It's the father who has a settled policy. It is the parents who establish order. My house, my rules.

To have peace and order and stability in our lives, we have to look to the pillar and ground that God provides in His house and in His assembly. And it is God's truth. The pillar and ground is the truth.

That's what holds the roof of the house up. That's what establishes the foundation of the house. Have you ever had foundation problems and had to put in piers or have somebody crawl under and support your beams and so on? What happens if you've got a bad foundation? Walls crack, doors stick, windows don't open, sheetrock cracks and splits, you've got gaps to the outside, you begin to leak air in the summer and in the winter.

The house is no good if it's not properly founded. The guy who builds his house on the rock is the one who survives in that house when the storms come, whether it is the storms of circumstance or the storm of God's inevitable judgment. The storm is very similar to the fire that consumes wood, hay and stubble and reveals gold and silver and precious stones as permanent.

That storm in Jesus' parable represents both. Whatever may happen in this life, are you stable? Are you composed of permanent stuff? Is your life or your goals and values and priorities that which withstands whatever happens in this life and holds up under the judgment in the next? Well, where do you get the pillars? Where do you get the foundation? It is the truth. It is not love.

Love is a result. What is our quick memory aid for the triad of Christian virtues? Faith is the means. Faith in what? Faith in myself? Faith in each other? Faith in abstractions? Faith in my imaginary ideas of what could happen or should happen? Faith has merit due to its object.

If the object of your faith has substance, if the object of your faith is God's truth, that is a worthy faith. That is a sincere faith. That is a structurally sound faith.

If it is in anything other than God's truth, if it is in human wisdom, if it is in pop culture, pop society, Dr. Phil advice. I read it on the internet. It ought to work.

I got it from a book. It was in a Christian bookstore. It will surely work.

It's a pithy quote. It's a sage aphorism. It is a wonderful thought.

It resonates with me because it sounds so good, but some guy wrote it in a book, put it out in a podcast. The pillar and ground of God's house is truth. That is the house in which we can live and be an assembly with a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.

And there is no other way. If you try to make love the pillar and ground, it is going to fall apart. Love is a wonderful thing, but it's like saying, well, I'm going to put shingles on the ground and then I'm going to build a house and then I'm going to put concrete on the top.

You did it backwards. Shingles are a wonderful thing, but they've got a place and it's not as your foundation. So this is Paul's purpose in writing this letter, that you may know how to conduct yourself, how you ought to conduct yourself in this life, which for believers is the house of God and the assembly of the living God defined by him.

The structure and rules are his, the foundation and the pillars are his, his truth. That's why we resort to the scriptures on a regular basis and try to absorb, understand, remember, and apply by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, this truth. This irons out our horizontal relationships.

This enables us to do the one and others. This gives us a pure heart, a sincere faith, a good conscience. We can't just wish for those things any more than we can wish to lose 15 pounds.

There is a way and a means, and it has to be diligently followed to achieve that goal. This is it. So the goal of having this established life in the house and in the assembly is love.

Love will be the outcome. Love will be the effect and the outworking, and it will be an intelligent love. It will be a knowing love.

It will be a properly aimed and expressed love, not misapplied, misused, misunderstood, and ultimately failing because it isn't built on the rock. It isn't an expression of what is most important. So that's the content of this letter to Timothy.

The outcome, the finished structure, and what is going to result from it is love that is sourced in this pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith. Where does it come from? Recognizing first and foremost that we are the house of God and the assembly of the living God, and the pillar and ground of that house and that assembly is truth. God's truth.

And by God's grace and God's truth, we are thoroughly equipped for every good work. Every good work, faith, hope, and love expressed in this life and in the next. So what a good book to be studying.

What a practical piece of information we have here. And we're going to move on through it now that we understand its purpose and its foundation next week. But we'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the clarity with which you communicate to us and with us, the gift of your Holy Spirit to give us not only understanding, but the ability to put what we hear and what we understand into practice. We pray that as we reflect on what we have seen in your word this morning, that the Holy Spirit will find us amenable and pliable, that we can turn when we need to turn. We can adopt a course of life that reflects this simplicity, this dedication, and exploiting the opportunities to live a supernatural life by supernatural power that reflects your glory both in this life and in the ages to come.

We pray it in Jesus name. Amen.