

# The Gospel Made Visible

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Date: 23 September 2018

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[ 0 : 00 ] 1 Timothy 3, verses 14-15.

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress, of truth. Okay, so the main idea for tonight's message is this. Gospel-centered churches are the living proof that the good news is true, that Jesus is not a theory but a reality.

So these messages are talking about the gospel, about what it means to be a gospel-centered church, doctrine on paper and doctrine on practice, and so the gospel-centered churches are living proof that the good news is true, that Jesus is not a theory but a reality. Again, it's doctrine and culture, words and deeds.

Such a church makes visible the restored humanity that only Christ is able to give. In his essay, Two Contents and Two Realities, Francis Schaeffer proposes four things that should mark a gospel-centered church.

Number one, sound doctrine. Number two, honest answers to honest questions. Three, true spirituality. And four, the beauty of human relationships.

[ 1 : 37 ] And it's the last one that I want us to focus on tonight. Number four, the beauty of human relationships. This is typically the first thing that outsiders are likely to notice when they enter a church for the very first time.

True beauty makes people stop and it makes people stare, doesn't it? If you see something beautiful, a sunset, something in scenery, a painting, whatever, you typically will stop and stare at it and look at it.

But if we don't reflect the beauty of the gospel in our relationships with one another in the church, then the eyes of the world, even the eyes of our own children who we raise in the church, we are going to destroy the truth that we proclaim by our inability to live by this truth that we believe.

A common objection to the gospel is this from unbelievers. A common objection that you'll hear as a Christian basically boils down to this. Just look at your churches. You know?

I'm not going to believe that because look at you all. Look at the way that you behave. Look at the way that you treat one another. And so unfortunately, the church often does not reflect the beauty of the gospel that it should.

[ 2 : 56 ] The church is the place where the gospel is field tested. If people want to know what the gospel creates, it is, is it unfair, I should say, is it unfair for them to look at the church?

I don't think so. What does the gospel create? Well, they ought to be able to look at the church and see. Consider a parallel. If I wanted to examine Marxism, then I can read all the works of Karl Marx. Or I could look at the countries that have put Marxism into practice in real life. For example, the former Soviet Union, which collapsed in 1991.

Why did it collapse? Well, did the Soviets fail to live to Marxism? No. It was their faithfulness to Marxism that undid them.

Marxism cannot work because it does not build on the truth about God and man. It builds on a fantasy of human self-idealization. So just as we're talking about this, I wrote a paper in seminary on Marxism in my Christian ethics class.

[ 4 : 02 ] And Marxism, Karl Marx, an atheist, obviously, not just an atheist, he hated God. But he thought that we could create heaven on earth by sharing with one another all of our resources, right?

And he believed that it was achievable, but he failed to take one major aspect of humanity into account. What was that? Sin.

Sin. People are sinful. People will not be able to create heaven on earth. They can't because of our sinful nature. Sin.

The gospel should be displayed most clearly in our churches. Sin. Therefore, how we behave in the household of God matters to everyone around us. The gospel should be displayed most clearly in our churches.

Therefore, how we behave in the household of God matters to everyone around us, as Paul was telling to Timothy. Again, this is the point that he's making to Timothy in this passage that we just read.

[ 5 : 04 ] Paul wanted to visit Timothy, but his travel plans were uncertain. So he mailed him his thoughts, inspired by the Holy Spirit. He mailed those thoughts on ahead.

He sent him this letter. He says a lot of great things in this letter. What the gospel is. What a leader is in the church. What money is for. And so on. But right in the middle, Paul observes that he wrote the letter to Timothy, so that Timothy may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

And so as we went through our counterculture series by David Platt a while ago, that's what we need. We need to, as a church, counter the culture that we live in with another culture.

A church should then offer the world such a counterculture, a living embodiment of what the gospel does and what the gospel is all about. The world we live in has bought into many lies, and they've bought into many of them about who God is.

Many churches even have bought into another gospel, with many people having termed this as therapeutic, moralistic deism. Therapeutic, moralistic deism.

[ 6 : 21 ] And it goes like this. Basic understandings of who God is, another gospel that many churches put into practice today is this. Number one, God exists and watches over human life on earth.

We agree. Number two, God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other. Don't have any problems there, really. Three, the central goal of life is to be happy and feel good about oneself. There we have some issues. Number four, God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life, except when he is needed to resolve a problem. So, we definitely aren't there.

Number five, good people go to heaven when they die. And that's not what the Bible says, right?

We are justified by faith alone and Christ alone. It's the only thing that can do it.

So, what kind of culture does therapeutic, moralistic deism create? Well, one in which we all do whatever makes us feel good and whatever makes us feel better about ourselves.

[ 7 : 17 ] All right. Now, I might say something. Here, that you may not like. Or you may like it too much. I don't know. But Joel Osteen preached a sermon called The Power of I Am.

And this is the number one sermon on YouTube. Number one. Most watched sermon on YouTube is this sermon, The Power of I Am. And there's a reason why.

This actually has over 3 million views on YouTube. And this is a sermon that Oprah Winfrey shared on her YouTube channel after saying that this changed her life and she sees her life in a different way.

And so, I wanted to read you a couple of things that Joel says in that sermon. First of all. But how many people, when they wake up in the morning, look in the mirror, the first thing they say, I am so old.

I am so wrinkled. I am so worn out. You are inviting oldness. You're inviting fatigue. Do us all a favor. Stop inviting that. When you get up in the morning, look in the mirror. Instead of complaining, you should be saying, I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

[ 8 : 26 ] I am attractive. I am getting younger. You talk like that and God will renew your youth.

Jesus. Joel Osteen says that our foundational problem isn't sin, which the Bible says it is, correct, but that it's a low self-esteem, which the Bible does not say.

I want to read another excerpt from that sermon. He said, Here's the principle. What follows the I am will always come looking for you. When you say I am so clumsy, clumsiness comes looking for you.

I'm so old, then wrinkles come looking for you. I'm so overweight. Calories come looking for you. It's just like you're inviting them. Whatever you follow, the I am with, you're handing it an invitation, opening the door, giving it permission to be your life.

Okay, this is not what the Bible says. This kind of teaching is not in line with what the Bible says, because it doesn't require what the Bible says is necessary for salvation, repentance, that displays God's power, and this thing offers no real hope, only judgment that looms ahead.

Joel Osteen, like Karl Marx, is attempting to create heaven on earth as well, but through the power of positive thinking and high self-esteem. God calls our churches to stand out as the pillar and buttress of truth that makes and exposes, I should say, these false gospels and reveals their fraudulence.

[10:02] There is nothing else like the church in the world today. There is no other entity like the church in the world today, a place where the gospel can be viewed.

Elton Trueblood was a 20th century Quaker, and he was an author and a theologian, and I wanted to read his comments to you about Luke 12, verse 49, where Jesus says, I came to cast fire on the earth.

This is what he says. It was the incendiary character of the early Christian fellowship, which was amazing to the contemporary Romans, and it was amazing precisely because there was nothing in their experiences that was remotely similar to it.

Religion they had in vast quantities, but it was nothing like this. Much of the uniqueness of Christianity and its original emergence consisted of the fact that simple people could be amazingly powerful when they were members of one another.

As everyone knows, it is almost impossible to create a fire with one log, even if it is a sound one, while several poor logs may make an excellent fire if they stay together as they burn.

[11:12] The miracle of the early church was that of poor sticks making a grand conflagration. Conflagration. Conflagration.

And I almost stumbled on it again. In God's grace, I wasn't looking for this quote, but, you know, I stumbled upon it. Last week, I messed up on conflagration, so I got a second chance.

Amen. Conflagration. Churches don't make the gospel true. Churches don't make the gospel true. It's true even when the household of God behaves badly.

However, we must display the gospel as we defend, which is apologetics, and confirm it with our lives. Paul's concern in this letter, as we have seen, again, is how one ought to behave in the household of God.

The word household refers there in the Greek, it can mean a family. That's what the church is like. That's what the church is supposed to be, a family. God refers to himself as our father, and we as his children.

[12:19] Ephesians 2, 18 through 19, For through him we both have access in one spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and members of the household of God.

Again, we see from Scripture that God has adopted us as his children through Christ. Romans 8, 15 says that, For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption.

Adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba, Father. So justification clears us legally of guilt before our judge.

In adoption, God declares that we are his children. We have the ability now to come to God, not as some kind of a distant stranger, not as somebody who we've got to work our way into his good graces, even as somebody who's just an acquaintance, but we are to see God as the Father who he is, who truly loves us as he loves, as a good father, and a loving father loves his children.

So you might think of it as being something like the difference between babysitting someone else's kids and watching your own kids. Okay?

[13:36] You sincerely care about other kids when you babysit them. At least you should. And if you don't, then you shouldn't be babysitting. And if you're a volunteer in our nursery, we need to know that so we can kick you out.

But you don't understand what I'm saying. Okay, we need all the help we can get. We'll put up with them. Even if they, just as long as they don't hurt them. Yeah. But you understand what I'm saying. So, I don't mean to be graphic, but I think it makes the point. So when you're babysitting or watching somebody else's kids and they get sick, and they get sick on you, that's so gross, right?

Now, when it's your own kid, it's still gross, but it's not, it's a little bit different, isn't it? I think it is, because it's your own kid. It's still, it's still gross.

But it's your own kid. And so I think you're more willing to clean up that mess, because it's your child. They do. I think that's the case in our household as well.

[14:37] But all this to say, how, this, how, so all this to ask, how should we behave in the household of God, our father? So some families are chaotic.

Some families are dysfunctional. Maybe the kids mouth off at their parents and are really disrespectful and disobedient. Some families are like that. Some churches are like that too. But God's household should never be like that. Such behavior denies our father. He wants us to behave in ways that reveal who he is.

And we learn how to behave in the household of God by imitating him. Ephesians 5, 1, therefore be imitators of God as beloved children. He is the example whom we follow.

We see the father most clearly in the son, Jesus Christ. The likeness is so close that Jesus said in John 14, 9, whoever has seen me has seen the father. How then can the broken world see the inexpressible beauty of the father and the son in our churches today?

[15:40] Well, few biblical passages say it better than the Beatitudes. I want to read those to you. We can read them together. Matthew 5, 3 through 10. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And so, the point of the Beatitudes is to tell us how we ought to behave as Christians, as God's children, in the household of God.

They set the tone of Jesus' new kingdom. It is striking that Jesus began his first extended sermon by emphasizing a gospel culture.

[16:47] This is what it should look like. The family of God is where people behave in a new way. We need each other. God uses his household, the church, to help his people become more like his son.

John Calvin said this, Not only does the Lord, through forgiveness of sins, receive and adopt us once for all time into the church, but through the same means he preserves and protects us there. For what would be the point of providing a pardon for us that was designed to be of no use? So, carrying as we do the traces of sin around us throughout life, unless we are sustained by the Lord's constant grace in forgiving our sins, we shall scarcely abide one moment in the church, but the Lord has called his children to eternal salvation.

Therefore, they ought to ponder that there is pardon ever, ever ready for their sins. We must firmly believe that by God's generosity, mediated by Christ's merit, through the sanctification of the Spirit, sins have been in our daily pardon to us who have been received and grafted into the body, the church.

And so, my question is, is that how sinners experience our church? As a safe place where the Lord preserves and protects us?

[18:15] Or do they experience the church as a place where they will feel shame and anxiety? Church discipline is biblical, and from time to time it's necessary that we do that, but of course it's necessary, but it should occur when someone's behavior in the household of God desecrates the name of the Father and jeopardizes the safety of the other members in the family.

That's the purpose of it. I heard it said before that when a sinner is repentant, the elders should protect the sinner from the church. When a sinner is defiant, the elders should protect the church from that sinner.

I think that's a really wise quote, though I don't know who said it. Willard, did you say that? When you're like five years old, maybe? The goal is not to make the church safe for sin.

It's to make it safe for confession and repentance. It's not a place where it's safe to sin, it's safe to come and to confess and repent of your sin. When the gospel of Christ's grace defines both the doctrine and the culture of a church, its members can safely confess and forsake their sins.

Paul says that the saints are, in 1 Timothy 3.15, the church of the living God. The gathered people of God are a powerful force for gospel-driven change.

[ 19 : 48 ] change within in the body and I think change also in the community. The gathered people of God are a powerful force for gospel-driven change from within and without.

Finally, then, Paul observes in this passage that the church is a pillar and a buttress of truth. So what does that mean if you're not a builder, if you don't understand maybe what a pillar or a buttress does, well, what does a pillar do?

Yeah, it holds things up, right? That's why we have pillars is because sometimes they can look pretty, like, you know, and they're just, they're, like, I remember my sister's wedding, she had these fake pillars put up, you know, because they didn't hold anything up, they just looked nice.

But a pillar, its job is to support or to hold something up, okay? So what does a buttress do? You guys know what a buttress is? Yeah, it's like, you see them especially in older buildings, are these what we call these right here?

Yeah, pretty close, kind of doing the same thing. But, you know, it kind of starts at the foundation and moves up and kind of at an angle maybe or like a triangle on some buildings. And it, what it does is it firms something up, right?

[ 21 : 05 ] So if the pillar goes haywire, at least there's something else there to keep it firm.

Mainstay, that works too. a faithful church then holds the gospel up for everyone to see and firms the gospel up as credible and solid.

We hold it up for everybody to see and we firm the gospel up as credible and solid. We are to lift high the truth of the gospel, the one truth that will outlast the universe, the one truth that will outlast the universe, the one that can help sinners and sufferers right now and it deserves to be clearly put on display, especially by God's people.

A church is not to be like a community bulletin board at the grocery store covered over with business cards, ads for apartments, for rent, notices about lost pets and other agendas that compete for people's attention.

A church exists to be a pillar that holds up the truth of Jesus Christ so obviously that everyone can see it.

Also, a pillar and a buttress are things that serve a purpose but they aren't the main attraction, are they? It's not the main attraction when you go to a building, especially some of those old buildings, cathedrals or whatnot, museums.

[ 22 : 33 ] The main attraction isn't the support structure, is it? Though it's sometimes beautiful, you know, the old pillars of the Parthenon or what have you, but that's not the main attraction.

The main attraction is what they see inside, right? So as a church, we act as the pillar and the buttress but we are not to be the main attraction. We're not to be the ones who are high and lifted up and we can get sidetracked though in thinking and fooled that we should be exalted for whatever good we do in Jesus' name.

However, that's not what our churches are here to do. We are to lift high the name of Jesus Christ. He is the one whom we exalt. He is the one who gets all the glory, not us, but we get to be used by him to do that and that is an awesome responsibility.

Okay, so now let's move on to our questions. We have four questions. I think plenty of time to answer them. Question number one, we have a microphone up here, make sure that we get you on the microphone.

Do you believe that the gospel should be displayed most clearly in the church? If so, how can we best display that? Do you believe that the gospel should be displayed most clearly in the church?

[ 23 : 48 ] If so, how can we best display that? All right, Cameron. I think I've talked about it before but one of the things that I went to at the men's retreat was a guy, he was talking about youth group and he was talking about the red dot kids and it was a story of his where he had just started at a church as a youth pastor and the pastor brought him into the office and set him down with a list of like the youth and the pastor kind of started with the first kid and the pastor had pulled out a green, a yellow, and a red marker and he got to the first kid and he said, okay, this kid is, he's a deacon's son, his dad and mom teach Sunday school, they're very good givers, we're going to put a green dot next to this kid, you need to spend a lot of time with him, make sure he's happy and make sure he's well taken care of.

Second kid, kind of the same story. Her parents, you know, give her their time, they're great volunteers, you want to spend a lot of time with her, make sure she's happy. The next kid was, well, they're kind of hit and miss but they're here fairly regularly so we're going to put a yellow dot, you

don't need to worry about spending too much time with them but you still want to spend time with them and then got down to about the fourth or fifth one and said, well, this kid, he's really only here on the nights when food is available, his parents are divorced and we don't hardly see them so he's a red dot kid, just don't spend time with him, don't worry about getting to know him, he'll just be here when he's here, you don't need to worry about that and the guy sat back and was just like, how are you a pastor?

That's just a terrible way of thinking and so I think as a church, everybody that comes through these doors should feel the same, it should feel welcoming, it should be as a family, it should be open to anybody and everybody and so I think that's one of the most clear ways that we can show the gospel to people is not treat anybody differently because of background or circumstances or situations, treat everybody the same with love and acceptance and just bring them in and show them love and point them to Christ.

Good, that's a good point because you know, we're talking about a household, right? And sometimes in our household, one person is, and we're talking about children, not behaving properly, maybe there's some punishment with that but you don't like, you know what, we're just gonna, we're gonna kick you out of the family because we've just had enough of you, unfortunately maybe there are people who do that but that shouldn't be the case, you know what I'm saying?

That, what is the saying? You can choose your friends but you can't choose your family, you know, and so it's the case with our church family sometimes as well but, you know, like Cameron points out, we shouldn't, we shouldn't treat people with favoritism here and especially it's those ones who are struggling that maybe we need to give more attention to, not less so that, you know, whatever they're struggling with, whatever's causing that bad behavior can be corrected so then they can function properly in the body of Christ and the family of God.

[ 26 : 57 ] Good. Any others? Do you believe that the gospel should be displayed most clearly in the church? If so, how can we best display that? Tom, I'm the proud owner of hearing aids but I still can't hear very well so Cameron may have answered this.

I have to see the person to understand what they're saying. First thing, we need to define what the church is and the church is not brick and mortar. It's people.

When we leave here at noon on Sunday, when we leave tonight at 7.30, the church leaves. We go out of this building and go into the world. So, we are the church.

The called out ones, the ecclesia. How can we best display that? We really need to know what the gospel is. And I've seen this done before in a crowd this size or larger where, and I'm not suggesting this, where they hand out a piece of paper and a pencil and say, write down what the gospel is.

And in all candor, it's all over the board. So, we really need, we can best display it by knowing precisely what the good news is that we're supposed to share with a dark and dying world.

[ 28 : 15 ] Yeah. Good. Good. Any other comments? Do you believe that the gospel should be displayed most clearly in the church?

If so, how can we best display that? I think we've answered it pretty well. To not treat people differently, but to love those who come in and to, the better we know the gospel, the better we will display it.

I think what it boils down to is being imitators of Jesus Christ. I think the obvious answer to that is yes, that the, that, that, that the gospel should be displayed most clearly in the church.

how best we do that? Imitating Jesus Christ, which fits in bothly with, with the answers that, that were mentioned. Let's move on to question number two. What makes therapeutic moralistic deism so attractive to people?

Wes. Wes. So I just heard of that one time, but basically it sounds like kind of the itching ears thing.

[ 29 : 25 ] People hear what they want to hear and they don't have to hear the part about their sin and you've got a problem with that. So it sounds like basically that's what it is. It's the kind of things I want to hear and I want to be part of that club because I'm not responsible when I sin or anything else like that.

I just, it's about me as opposed to Christ and what he did for us. Yeah. Because it's a message that's based upon you and who doesn't like to be the focus of attention, you know, or we're just so self-centered that that feeds right into people's desires to have everything be about themselves. What makes therapeutic moralistic deism so attractive to people? Mike. Mike. I love being on this end of it.

When I think of a church, I think there is still the concept even in America where there is a good thing about being a part of a church.

But like Tom says, we have to be careful what we call church. A Joel Osteen has built a humongous following calling it his church.

[ 30 : 44 ] and they allow each individual to be basically their own God. They decide, I am fill in the blank. And they can do that, look themselves in the mirror, be quite proud, I'm doing the godly church thing.

And how far away from the Lord does that lead people? But I think people flock to that, to the therapeutic moralistic deism. I can't say that very well.

I know, yeah, it's a mouthful. because it puts them in charge. Yeah. And we all want to be in control. Yeah. Yeah.

Good. We want to feel like, and part of that is based on works too. I can put God in a situation where he has to do what I want him to do.

And it just doesn't work that way. You know, if you read, if you read the Bible, if you're a student of scripture, you see that God is sovereign, he's got a plan in everything. Predestined, predetermined that Jesus Christ would be crucified on the cross.

[ 31 : 50 ] allows people to not understand, want to know, think about suffering with Christ, persecution, and the joy, and that we are, and that we will, and that we do, and that we should count it as, you know, that we've done, you know, easy to love the lovely.

If all we have to do is think it and go on, God's going to reward me, and there's, there's never any glorifying God in that. It's only themselves. Yeah. Yeah, you look at Jesus' words.

He who would come after me must deny himself and pick up his cross and follow me. The cross was an instrument of death. death. So we are to be crucifying our old flesh daily because we do want to make this about us.

And who wouldn't like to think that they had the ability to put God in a corner to get what they wanted? But it doesn't work that way. You think about Joseph. Joseph certainly has presented the option, you know, hey, God's, hey, I got this idea for how I'm going to bring my people one day into the promised land, right?

I've got this big plan but it involves you, your dad who you love is going to think that you're dead for a long time, you're going to be thrown in a hole and you're going to be sold as a slave, you're going to do a good job and you're going to go into prison but don't worry about it, it's okay.

[ 33 : 33 ] You know, what I'm trying to say is that God had a plan in all of it and Joseph, when he sees his brothers, right, after all of this and now he's ascended to the right hand man of Pharaoh, he says, you know, you meant it for evil but God meant it for good and so we've got to understand that, you know, when we go through hard times and trials as Christians, that God isn't absent when we go through those and that we're not going through them for no reason.

It's often those times where God draws us closest to himself and so it's attractive as we said because we want things to be about us, you know, like Burger King, that famous slogan, you can have it your way.

Yeah, they might have a different one now, I don't know. My story about that is in college our weights coach, this old gruff man in his late 80s when he was coaching, that was a long time ago, I think he's still alive and I wouldn't be surprised because this man's probably going to be like Methuselah, he's probably going to live to, but on the sign in the weight room was this isn't Burger King and that's all it said but you knew people, you know, freshmen would come and what does that mean?

You can't have it your way here, it's Coach Cross's way and so it's the same thing with God, God will have his way, God is sovereign and as we see in Romans 1, the worst thing that can happen to a person is God gives them what they want, God gives them over to their desires.

You know, another thing that comes to mind is I think a lot of times when those churches like Church on the Move and those kind of things, they bring the people in but they just tickle their ears, they don't step on their toes, they don't rock the boat, they don't make them be accountable for their sin natures, they just want them to come on in and let's do all the lights and make it a big show and not even really make it centered around God.

[ 35 : 39 ] Yeah. So that's what I think of when I think of accountability as really vitally important. For sure. You know. And that leads into the next question. Go ahead. I was just going to say almost like that and you mentioned it this morning in your sermon, you said sometimes the Bible makes us

uncomfortable.

Yeah. and especially my generation and younger does not like uncomfortable. Yeah. Everything is about whatever I like, whatever makes me happy, you can't be judgmental or condemning of it because it makes me happy and that is totally most of the way my generation feels is it's just about what makes me happy and condemn it otherwise.

Yeah. I want to, even though my team finished in last place, I still won a trophy. Yeah. Yeah. We're not going to keep score when we play games.

That stuff drives me crazy. That's right because, you know, what we see a lot of times, especially in these big churches now, just because you're a big church doesn't mean that you're a bad church. But we see that for some of those churches that are as large as they are, they are that big because they give people what they want, not what they need. And the church is supposed to be a family.

[ 36 : 59 ] And I think in a family, you're supposed to know who your family members are. But what people want is kind of like, they want that entertainment aspect, but they want to kind of go in anonymously and leave anonymously.

And so, we had a big church like this in Kansas City. And doctrinally, they were pretty sound, but, you know, people there didn't even know that they went to church with one another.

You know, they'd find out, like in passing, hey, I go there too. Kind of a deal. And so, I know that the church can be, when they get that big, it can be hard to keep that family dynamic, but we should be striving for that.

But again, it's going into what people want. You know, people will turn the lights down so you can't see anybody. You're anonymous in here. It's okay. You're safe. We're going to tell you good things about who you are, and you're going to leave with a higher self-esteem.

But I don't think that Jesus Christ died for that. I think that Jesus was after a much greater purpose, a much greater need that we have to not be the center of our own life. Okay, the next question then.

[ 38 : 07 ] How is the church like a family? What causes dysfunction in the family? What causes it to function correctly? A loaded question. Yeah.

How is the church like a family? What causes dysfunction in the family? What causes it to function correctly? Wes?

Guess somebody had it started. As far as how a church is like a family, it is something where, like we were just talking about the big, big churches, and we've been to some of those, and you hardly know anybody come in and people just leave.

But where people really truly care about each other like a family would, when something happens, it's not just, how are you? They're really asking, how are you? You think about some of the stuff we've heard just in the last week or so about people in our church, and we pray about it back in choir practice, and we care about what's happening to each other.

That's how the church is like a family, should be like that. As far as the dysfunction, I think it's just when that doesn't happen. People come to get served. There's an analogy of going to a restaurant, and you go in and you pay your fee, like people say, just tithing, and then they walk out the door.

[ 39 : 24 ] In a family, after dinner, everybody helps pick up the dishes, we're going to take them into the kitchen, and you boys clear the table and take out the garbage and all that kind of stuff. So we're supposed to be helping each other out.

It's kind of like Paul's thing talking about your body. The church is like a body. Each part has its thing that it needs to do. You think about all the things that happen in this church or any church, and I wouldn't necessarily be good down in the nursery, but I've got my spot in Awanas, and other people might be good teachers for a Sunday school class, and you've got John who does a great job of what he's doing.

So everybody's got their part they've got to do, and I think what causes it to function correctly is when everybody looks at it that way. What's my part? Not just come to the service and leave, but think about your opportunities to volunteer or do anything.

Put chairs away at the end of a fellowship, or I see trash on the floor, pick it up and stick it in the garbage, but just ways that you can pitch in and help out because we're all in this thing together.

Good. Thank you, Wes. Willard. Brother Willard. Actually, the church is a family.

[ 40 : 36 ] Yeah. It's not like a family. It is a family. The thing that causes dysfunction in the family is selfishness. Hmm. And so what causes it to function correctly?

Paul says, submit one to another. So it's a mission one to another that causes it to function correctly. Amen. Yeah. Pat? Everybody knows my family and my extended family here, and I was in nursery today, but I was told by my daughter who was in choir today that a small child got up from his chair and went over to find my mom and asked her to please come in and sit with him today because she came in and didn't know where to go and didn't see anybody she knew.

That's a family. Very good. Mike? If we have to guess at how important the family is in relation to the church, all we have to see is what Satan is attacking.

Yeah. He's attacking the family like never before. Yeah. And as God showed that the church is to be a family, if Satan can destroy the family, there's a lot of kids, and I say that unfortunately more and more it seems like, that when you mention being a family, it scares them because their family is full of abuse, full of whatever else that we cannot even imagine.

Yeah. And so Satan's attacking it, so that tells me, yes, that's God's plan. Yeah. We need to be there. We need to be on top of things and know what's going on.

[ 42 : 17 ] Good. Thank you, Mike. Paul? I think when you look at a family that functions correctly, when you try to compare the church to a family, then you need to find a functioning correctly family to compare it to.

And it's when those family members know each other intimately. They know each other's even weaknesses and strengths, and they deal with those, and they give them a little bit of help.

They help them along the way. But it's because they know each other, they have developed a trust with one another, and they give each other some slack a little bit.

And I think sometimes as church members, we need to remember, first of all, how much Christ forgave us so that we can be willing to offer that forgiveness to others as well.

We're too quick sometimes to say, well, I wouldn't have done that. They're kind of silly. They're causing problems. Yeah. Well, let's still be close with one another, intimate with one another, learn to get to know one another.

[ 43 : 27 ] so that we can kind of support one another. Good. All good answers. Jeremy? So I don't know if everyone's family's like this, but, you know, some families have, we'll just call her Aunt Hoopendiddle, okay?

And Aunt Hoopendiddle, it was real quick to say, well, do you know what happened over there?

Well, yeah, well, they're having problems because this is going on. Well, they're having problems with that's going on.

And she's always making sure everybody's aware of the family gossip and what's going on. Well, now we are taught that we are supposed to confess our sins to one another as Christians.

But at the same time, we have to be careful of the individual that we're confessing our sins to, that it doesn't turn into gossip, that you're confiding, that you're confessing your sins to the correct person or persons.

And so it's not for gossip things. But the thing that, as a family, should do is that when someone hears Aunt Hoopendiddle start in, well, did you know to shut it down?

[ 44 : 38 ] Yeah. Don't allow it to grow. That's just a, that's a cancer that can be fed and allowed to grow. So that's one of the things that we have, we can look out for each other is just shut it down. Good.

Thank you, Jeremy. Good points made by all. I think we know this. We know this. You know, we know how that a church is a family. We know what causes dysfunction.

It's resisting those things when it happens, not sharing that gossip, not spreading that gossip. And understanding one another, forgiving one another, loving and truly caring about each other.

We're not just acquaintances here, but that you actually really care about that person. You know, and you think of that person as a part of your family, an important part of your life.

And so it's whenever we're self-centered. It's whenever we're thinking about our own needs over and above those around us.

[ 45 : 35 ] Our opinions are better than others. That's what causes the dysfunction. When we're not behaving the way we ought to, when we're not imitating Christ, it makes the church a very dysfunctional place.

We answered that question really good. Let's move on to question four. We've got five minutes left as well. How can a church best function as a pillar and buttress of the truth? A lot of questions about functioning tonight.

How can a church best function as a pillar and buttress of the truth? We're supposed to hold it up and firm it up. Cameron? I think I'm going to piggyback off of what Tom said with the first question is we have to know what the truth is.

Yeah. We have to be in the truth and we know we have the truth in the Bible and if we are not presenting the Bible strongly, boldly, then we will easily not be a pillar of the truth.

So I think to piggyback off what Tom said, we have to know what the truth is and be in the truth ourselves. Good. Wes? Live the truth.

[ 46 : 47 ] Know the truth. Live the truth. Any other comments? I hear. Dave? Speak the truth.

Know the truth. Live the truth. Speak the truth. When I was, before I was retired, I had a friend and I was talking to him, always trying to pass on to him what it takes to live a godly life.

And he told me and I'm, you know, saying, you have to get to know the people in your church. And he said, now, listen, we all, I know the church, I'm a Christian, and I don't need to go to a church because I know myself I'm a Christian.

And I was pretty perplexed about that, but even more perplexed by the statement he then made is that churches are like a season that you go to one church and then when you need to move on, you go to another season.

And I really didn't know how to answer him and I still don't know. Yeah. I knew that that wasn't the right answer, but he wouldn't get off that.

[ 48 : 06 ] Yeah. And I knew that it was wrong, but I just, I didn't know how to, how to tell him. Yeah. I did know that it wasn't a season, but, you know. It breaks your heart when you have a lot of people here in the church that it breaks your heart, but I've had brothers and sisters in this church that whenever I try to talk to them about, they aren't here now, they've moved, but being a part and being committed and, of course, I came with a servant's heart naturally by it, and so I was taught that you're a servant, that you're saved to serve, but, you know, they just said, well, I, we have our family and we have our homeschool group and we don't need another group.

And that's whenever they, I said, you know, your kids want to be involved in church and youth group and all, we don't need another group. We don't have, need another village. We have our own group, you know, and they just, and church is not just another group.

group. Yeah, that's the truth. Yeah, you know, people like to be where they think the action's at and so you'll have a crowd of people who will just go from one church to the next because for them, that's where they perceive the action is at and I think that's anti-biblical.

I think, you know, we clearly see from scripture the importance of church membership and staying where God has called you to be a church member at that when the going gets rough you stick it out because the church needs you.

You know, the church needs that. Pastors come and go. Pastors come and go but people in a church, you know, will be there for the long haul. Those are the people who are really important to a church.

[ 50 : 10 ] You know what I'm saying? So it's unfortunate when people do that and I don't plan on going anytime soon just so in case you were wondering. But you know what I'm saying?

You know, we got people here who have been here for a long time and that's really, you know, I just think from personal experience, I think I've shared this before, my parents have been at their same church now for, they started going before I was born so yeah, about 20 years, something like that. So over about close to 40 years maybe. I'm not close to 40 yet though I turned 36 and now I'm slipping down to the just start yeah falling down and anyhow our church went through those times went through those ups and downs and there were times where I remember as a kid you know a sanctuary like ours that was full and just over time seeing it dwindle and you know got to a point where you know for me this is a personal story I'm sharing for me and my sister you know my parents started going to that church they lived closer to it when they first started going and then they moved farther away so I was even talking to this about the youth group on Wednesday it would be like so my parents where they lived in locations of their church would be like living in Bartlesville and going to church in Owasso it was a distance but it was so important to them because that's where you know those people knew them it was their family and they couldn't leave their family there was a time for me and my sister like but we have friends that we know would go to this church and we go to school with them and stuff and this would be good and it's just right down the street we don't have to drive all the way to church and wake up extra early in the morning and my parents would listen to us but it never was a question you know no matter what the problems were that was

the church that's where they're at that's where they're going to be at  
I think even shared that when I when I became a pastor and was in Leavenworth about the same distance to where my parents lived from their church and people thought they were going to come and they're not going to come here you know because this isn't their church and that's where that's really where they needed to be with what they were going through they needed that stability that people like my parents people like those gathered here provide for a church during those difficult times Diane and so people are just church hoppers unfortunately and I think as much as we try to do something about that there's just always going to be that type of person but when we get to heaven there's not going to be anywhere else for them to go so okay Diane I think that the best way as church members that that a church can be a pillar is to realize that pillars don't move around hey great comment comment when a pillar is placed somewhere it stays there yeah and if somebody walks by that the pillar doesn't like or you know they don't like the color of the carpet that they put around the pillar or whatever you know pillars stay there yeah they don't move around just because there's something going on they like that they don't like and so when God puts us in a church they we should stay there unless God moves us away yeah and you know  
I've seen this you know not only here at Highland Park but other places where somebody gets mad and they don't know what to do about it or don't want to attempt to make amends with someone and so they just up and leave and consequently we have a whole generation of kids young people these days who don't have church homes uh huh you know because their parents never stuck it out anywhere yeah and so they go off and raise their own families families and if they they may go back to their hometown but they don't really have a home church that they that means something to them yeah and um so I think we just need to remember that pillars are designed to stay where they're put um and that then becomes an example for the children down the line amen thank you Diane that was great and most people don't most churches don't most churches do not be a member of the church because they join because they want to be there yeah what their opinion is instead of saying that that this is where this is where god has planted me because it's his design for me to be here because he wants to use me here and whatever means he wants to use me yeah get that perspective and it changes everything yeah yeah yeah not how not how this church can serve me as much as how can I serve this church different perspective okay David's back there Doyleen go ahead Doyleen since you have the microphone well I've I've had this conversation I think with Paul off and on we've been here for a long time except for when we had to go to Borger for a couple years but through like you said full fuller pews smaller attendance now but I feel like I see this in the bible and I see it reflected in our church god has always preserved a remnant here to stay firm in the truth and sometimes that the wind blows through and the chaff gets blown away but he's always preserved a remnant here to keep doing his work and unless I see that that remnant has gone off and the pillar has collapsed and there's been conversations there's been I can get pretty emotional and pretty beat up about something and I know I can't make a decision for the next two or three days till I get myself work through it but god has never given us permission to look elsewhere even though maybe my emotions at the time wanted you know I'm done but he hasn't and I remind myself as long as I you know god always preserves a remnant and I think that foundation is still here I think god is keeping us accountable to his truth and so why should I go yeah yeah hey David I know we're running a little over one thing you know about the tape or the film that we saw on welcoming yeah and the people that were coming to visit and the gentleman that was kind of guiding him around I'm sure that he had the best interest at heart but how many times after that are you going to see those people come back yeah that's a good point we're going to have this study and you know hopefully that will change some things for us too what does a  
[ 58 : 02 ] pillar do it supports it lifts up and one thing I want to brag about this church when there's a hurt and we know about it this church pulls together rallies around and uplifts that person and gives them support and I think that is a tremendous testament for this church amen we are there to give support to be that pillar to lift up yeah as we demonstrated that last week around Diane yeah who support her yeah and that's true in anyone in this church that we know of yeah people who you can count on good last thing I'll say on this question thanks for the responses we've had a good time tonight we're talking about being a pillar and a buttress of truth as we've talked about pillars don't move you know and as a church so this is god's word and it will always be god's word no matter how unpopular it might be we're going towards times where people want to categorize god's word as hate speech and we're not going to be silent just because they don't like it you know so this is going to be a place where the sermons the songs we sing the classes in Sunday school and Juana

and youth group it's god's word that's what we're going to be about