

**Intro**

~ In Saving Private Ryan Tom Hanks told private Ryan to earn this referring to the fact that many men risked and lost their lives to pull private Ryan out of combat as his brothers had been killed in combat. A standard was set for Private Ryan. It was to live a life that proved worthy of those who died.

~ In 1 Timothy 3 Paul is setting a standard for the church to live up to. That standard is Christ and godliness

~ So the life and ministry of Christ becomes the standard for the church. Not only the elders, deacons but all the believers (1 Pet 1:15,16).

~ On our own we can never perfectly live up to the life of Christ and godliness but Christ's life, ministry and atonement make it possible with the help of the HS

~ Christ is perfect and God calls us to live a life of godliness with holiness as the target

~ It's as if Paul is saying live worthy of this – the life of Christ

~ Paul sets that standard primarily to the elders and deacons

~ Paul's concerned about the church's conduct in Christ (elders & deacons) and confession of Christ (v14-16)

~ V16 has to do with the church's conduct and the church's confession

~ Christ then becomes the standard and message of the church (v14-16)

~ Thoughts on verse 16

- This verse gives us a panorama of the life and ministry of Christ. It's a summary statement of the gospels
- The truth is all about Jesus. It moves us from His incarnation (the first line) to His ascension (sixth line).
- Paul is presenting the person and work of Christ as the key to godly conduct. Jesus makes godliness possible. He does so by quoting six lines from a creedal hymn about the person of Christ, which he introduces by saying, "Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great" (1 Tim. 3:16).
- The mystery of godliness is summed up in the life and ministry of Christ

~ Paul uses an early Christian hymn to set the standard of Christ and godliness for the church

**Text**

~ How do each of these relate to godliness?

1 God was manifest in the flesh - Incarnation

- This is a reference to the incarnation, the virgin birth
- The HS produced the pregnancy in Mary (Lk 1:35)
- This therefore emphasizes his humanity
- Barclay, "Look at Jesus, and you will see the mind and the heart and the action of God, in a form that men can understand."
- In order to be our substitute he had to take on human form
- The 2 qualifications for a substitute for man as redeemer was 1) a human being 2) a sinless human being
- Because He's sinless He's qualified to be our sinless substitute
- The ultimate goal of the incarnation was the crucifixion of the perfect Son of God
- This relates to godliness as he was born sinless of a virgin

2 Justified in the spirit - Resurrection

- This is a reference to the resurrection
- Both Christ and HS played a role in His resurrection
  - Jn 2:19 Jesus said destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days
  - Acts 2:32; Rom 1:3,4; 8:1; 1 Pet 3:18 refer to the HS's role in raising Christ from the dead
  - *Rom 1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*
  - *Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*
- This relates to godliness as his resurrection was the vindication of his accomplishment on the cross
- Men crucified Jesus as a convicted criminal but the HS proved man wrong and Jesus right
- It's as if the Father and HS said, "well done thou good and faithful servant."

### 3 Seen of angels - Watching

- Angels were involved in the life of Christ throughout it
- Angels announced his birth to the shepherds (Lk 2:10-14)
- Angels ministered to Christ after his temptation, "the devil left him, and angels came and attended him" ([Matt 4:11](#))
- Angels ministered to him in the Garden of Gethsamane to strengthen Him (Lk 22:43)
- Angels were present at the ascension (Acts 1:10,11)
- Angels were present at the empty tomb (Lk 24:4; Jn 2:12)
- Angels will return with Christ our King and deliverer (1 Thess 4:16)
- "If the angels sang in wonder at the birth of Christ when he came down to earth, how they must have sung when he returned to Heaven! What a shout must have gone up when the everlasting gates lifted for the King of glory!" *Kent Hughes*
- This relates to godliness as angels were witnesses to godliness (Peter also said they were eyewitnesses of his majesty in 2 Pet 1:16)

### 4 Preached unto the gentiles - Preaching

- The message of the resurrected Christ was the message in the book of Acts
- Jesus gave to the disciples a commission to take the message of Christ to the whole world before he ascended (Acts 1:8)
- Preaching becomes the means in the church to share the message of Christ's salvation and in the church it becomes the means of feeding the church
- The apostles and the early church first took this message to their Jewish brethren but when that message was rejected they took it to the gentiles. Peter goes to Cornelius (Acts 10) & Paul goes to the gentiles (Acts 18:6)
- *1 Cor 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*
- This relates to godliness as the message of the gospel is the message of a righteous man Jesus atoning for the sins of sinful man
- The message we share & preach is a message of godliness only possible through Christ (spotless lamb)

### 5 Believed on in the world - Believing

- We read in Acts 1:15 the early church consisted of 120 believers. By the end of Acts the gospel has spread to the world and the church has grown from preaching the gospel and believing the gospel
- Believing on Christ brings us into a relationship with Christ and is the means to godliness.
- We're saved by grace through faith and we continue to grow by faith
- Faith is the means by which we enter into a relationship with Christ whereby godliness is possible for us
- This relates to godliness as faith in Christ's work is the doorway into a life of godliness

### 6 Received up into glory - Ascending

- The ascension of Christ
- This relates to godliness because Christ is seated at the Father's right hand interceding for the church
- *Heb 7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*
- Christ is praying for us and his power will see his work of godliness through in our lives to completion

### Conclusion

~ This sums up what we believe about the Christ and what we believe becomes the standard for godliness in the church

~ The main truth to which a church should bear witness is the person and work of Jesus Christ

~ Summary: This early Christian hymn sums up what we believe about Christ and that Christ is the standard for godliness

~ The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. Much as a pillar supports a roof, the local church is to hold up the truth. Without the church, there would be nothing on earth to hold up God's truth.

~ A biblically sound church is a beacon of light in the community in which it exists