

**The Pillar and Support of The Truth**  
**Titles of The Church (3)**  
**Sermon by Pastor Sylvia Chan**

Today we study another title of the church:

<sup>NAU</sup> **1 Timothy 3:15** <sup>15</sup> but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

Apostle Paul says the church is the pillar and support of the truth.

First we will study the meaning of truth, then what is the pillar and support of the truth.

**Biblical Meaning Of Truth**

What is truth? I am not talking about the definition of truth in the dictionary, which we can look it up quite easily; but I am talking about the biblical meaning of truth. Usually we only think of truth is the opposite of falsehood, yet the meaning of truth in the Bible is vast and deep.

**1. Our God is God of truth**

<sup>NAU</sup> **Isaiah 65:16** <sup>16</sup> "Because he who is blessed in the earth will be blessed by the God of truth; And he who swears in the earth will swear by the God of truth; Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from my sight!

**2. The word of God is truth**

<sup>NAU</sup> **John 17:17** <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

Other references: 2 Samuel 7:28; 1 Kings 17:24; Psalm 119:43; Psalm 119:142; Psalm 119:151; Psalm 119:160; Jeremiah 23:28.

**3. The Lord Jesus is the embodiment of truth, and only through him we can come to God**

<sup>NAU</sup> **John 14:6** <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.

**4. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth**

<sup>NAU</sup> **John 14:17**<sup>17</sup> that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

When we repent of our sin and get baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, we will receive the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

<sup>NAU</sup> **Acts 2:38**<sup>38</sup> Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth according to the above verse John 14:17, therefore when we are led by the Holy Spirit, He will guide us into all the truth.

Other references: John 15:26, John 16:13, 1 John 5:6.

## 5. Truth and righteousness are linked together

<sup>NAU</sup> **Ephesians 4:24**<sup>24</sup> and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Other references: Ephesians 5:9; Ephesians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 6:7; 1 Kings 3:6; Psalm 15:2; Psalm 45:4; Psalm 85:10; Psalm 85:11; Psalm 89:14; Psalm 119:142; Proverbs 12:17; Jeremiah 4:2; Jeremiah 4:2; Zechariah 8:8.

## 6. Truth is the opposite of unrighteousness

<sup>NAU</sup> **1 Corinthians 13:6**<sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

## 7. Lying is against the truth

<sup>NAU</sup> **1 John 1:5 – 6**<sup>5</sup> And this is the message we have heard from him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

Other references: 1 John 1:8; 1 John 2:4; 1 John 2:21.

After we know the biblical definition of truth, now we are going to study the meaning of pillar and support of the truth.

## **Pillar And support Of The Truth**

### **1. Biblical meaning of pillar and support**

A pillar is an upright column to support the building, yet pillar has a special meaning in the Bible:

<sup>NAU</sup> **Galatians 2:9**<sup>9</sup> and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we *might go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

This verse says James, Cephas (Peter) and John were reputed to be pillars. The word “pillars” here doesn’t mean a physical column, but a spiritual leadership. These three apostles James, Cephas and John were reputed to be spiritual leaders of the church.

Support also has a special meaning in the Bible, it is the basis or foundation for something.

### **2. The church is weak**

In a physical building, the pillar and the support are to uphold the building. If the pillar or support are strong, the building stands firm. If the pillar or support are weak or broken, the building collapses.

The church is the pillar and support of the truth. If the church is strong, the truth stands firm. When the church is weak or broken, the truth collapses. Unfortunately, that is exactly what happens today.

The reason why the church becomes weak is that she (the church is the bride of Christ) doesn’t live according to the truth. When the church doesn’t live according to the truth, she only talks about truth on a superficial level, and she doesn’t teach the biblical truth. As a consequence of that, even many Christians know very little about the biblical truth and they don’t live according to it.

When the church doesn’t live according to the teaching of truth, she has no moral authority to point out the sins in the world, therefore people in the world don’t know what is right, what is wrong, they even see the right things as wrong, and the wrong things as right. As a consequence of that, sin, lawlessness, injustice are rampant.

### **The Church Has To Live According To The Truth**

What can the church do? We should not simply condemn the people of the world for their sins, because they know neither God nor the teaching of God; plus when the church doesn’t live according to the truth of God, the world has no example to look at. We need to act, not talk.

## 1. Repentance leads to the knowledge of the truth

<sup>NAU</sup> **2 Timothy 2:25** <sup>25</sup> with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

When we repent of our life of sin, we will have the knowledge of the truth, that means we will know the truth. The Greek word for knowledge is “ἐπίγνωσις” (epignosis), this is not intellectual knowledge, this kind of knowledge is experiential, it is derived from experience. We have this kind of knowledge when we have experienced the truth, and the truth changes our being.

## 2. To live in the word of the Lord Jesus

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 8:31 – 32** <sup>31</sup> So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, <sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Please notice the word “abide”, the Lord Jesus says we need to live in his word, we don’t just study it. If you truly live in the Lord’s word, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free from the powerful of sin, that means sin can no longer control you, you can overcome sin.

## 3. To obey the truth

<sup>NAU</sup> **1 Peter 1:22** <sup>22</sup> Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

The word of God is truth, the Lord Jesus is the embodiment of truth, therefore to obey the truth means to obey the word of God, especially the very word spoken by the Lord Jesus. Obedience to the truth can purify our souls. When our souls are purified, we have a sincere love for the brothers and sisters, we can love one another from the heart.

## 4. To walk in truth

<sup>NAU</sup> **2 John 1:4** <sup>4</sup> I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father.

To walk in truth means to live a life of truth. Other reference: 3 John 1:3 – 4.

## 5. Love in deed and in truth

<sup>NAU</sup> **1 John 3:17 – 19** <sup>17</sup> But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? <sup>18</sup> Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. <sup>19</sup> We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him

When we love in deed (or in action) and in truth, we are of the truth. The Greek word for the word “truth” in v.19 (ἀληθείας) is in genitive, the preposition is “ἐκ” (out of) that means we are from the truth, we are out of the truth. Our whole being and truth become one.

### **The Church Has To Proclaim The Biblical Truth To The World**

When the church lives according to the biblical truth, then she has the moral authority to proclaim it to the world.

#### **1. We don't speak according to the wisdom of the world**

<sup>NAU</sup> **1 Corinthians 1:21** <sup>21</sup> For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

We don't speak truth according to the wisdom of men. People in the world follow the teaching of this philosopher or that scholar, but we speak the biblical truth from the word of God.

#### **2. We speak the truth in love**

<sup>NAU</sup> **Ephesians 4:15** <sup>15</sup> but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into him who is the head, *even* Christ,

We should speak the biblical truth with an attitude of love. In all these years of serving God, I always ask God to help me to love the people, I make sure I speak the truth with love in my heart. If we don't have love for the people, we should not speak.

But on the other hand, we don't try to please men.

<sup>NAU</sup> **Galatians 1:10** <sup>10</sup> For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

#### **3. We will be persecuted**

From the Bible passages quoted above, we see truth and righteousness are linked together, and truth is the opposite of lying and unrighteousness. Therefore when we speak the truth, the world would not like it, people would persecute us.

<sup>NAU</sup> **2 Peter 2:1 – 2** <sup>1</sup> But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be

false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. <sup>2</sup> Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

<sup>NAU</sup> **2 Timothy 3:1 – 5** <sup>1</sup>But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. <sup>2</sup> For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, <sup>4</sup> treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup> holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

<sup>NAU</sup> **2 Timothy 3:12** <sup>12</sup> Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

This situation was prophesied two thousand years ago, all these things are in God's foreknowledge, He is in control.

#### **4. Do all things without grumbling**

Even though we are persecuted, but we continue to speak the biblical truth and to live a life of truth without grumbling or disputing.

<sup>NAU</sup> **Philippians 2:14 – 15** <sup>14</sup> Do all things without grumbling or disputing; <sup>15</sup> so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,