

INTRODUCTION

I am very happy to be here today speaking to you about “the mystery of godliness,” a great thing to be talking about. Often I find myself discussing with someone “the price of gasoline.” Other times I find myself in conversation about “the inflation of the currency.” Yesterday morning I was talking to my family about “trimming the bushes” and “mowing the lawn.” These things are part of life in this world, and some talk about them is necessary.

But today I have on my lips a much more delightful subject: “the mystery of godliness.”

As you know by now, the whole letter 1 Timothy is about how we ought to conduct ourselves in the church. These past three weeks, we have taken in what the apostle wrote to help us grasp the importance of that; he described the church in three ways:

- the house of God
- the congregation of the living God
- the pillar and ground of the truth

Today we continue, as the apostle expounds that concept of “the truth,” declaring to us and remind us of the greatness of the mystery of godliness.

TEXT

1 Timothy 3:14-16

BODY

I. The Mystery of Godliness

A. The two words

1. mystery

- a) hidden, secret, not known
- b) once known, something not previously known, still called mystery
- c) Col 1:26

2. godliness

- a) we studied this word 1 Timothy 2:2, about a year and a half ago
- b) two words, this is the second, rendered “godliness”
- c) matters pertaining to the worship of God, to piety, to devotion; the whole matter of God dealing with man, and man dealing with God
- d) the issue of man’s duty to love God, and what God provides in His grace by which men can be righteous before Him

B. Other phrases here in 1 Timothy 3 used to mean the same thing

1. what has just been said, 1 Tim 3:15 “the truth”
2. what was said about deacons, 1 Tim 3:9

C. Another place in Paul’s writings that defines this: Romans 16:25-26a

1. what “mystery means”

- a) something previously kept secret
- b) now made manifest, disclosed, opened

2. the message of this mystery

- a) my gospel
- b) the preaching of Jesus Christ

D. The confession just after this phrase, 1 Tim 3:16

E. Summary

1. the truth about Jesus Christ; the gospel or good news of Jesus Christ; what we believe the Bible to tell us about Jesus Christ

II. Great Is the Mystery of Godliness

A. G3173 *megas* [here *mega*]

B. Of all mysteries, this is the great one

1. not that there are several or many great mysteries, and this is the greatest
2. but there are many mysteries, and this is the great one

C. The mysteriousness is great, in how long it was hidden before being revealed

1. from creation
2. from all eternity

D. The mystery itself is great

1. in that it is not from men, but from God, of His will
2. in that it is for our glory, but not mere temporary, earthly glory; but everlasting glory
3. in that it pertains to us poor sinners having access to the unsearchable riches of Christ
4. as to how rich a treasure it is of wisdom and knowledge Col 2:2-3
5. as to its uniqueness, being the only true way for human beings to be saved from the wrath of God to come

- III. Without Controversy, Great Is the Mystery of Godliness
- A. How this has been said
 - 1. Tyndale “without naye”
 - 2. BB “without doubt”
 - 3. GEN, KJV “without controversy”
 - 4. RSV, ESV “we confess”
 - B. Whatever else might be controversial among Christians, here is something that we should confess without any controversy:
 - 1. that the mystery of godliness is great;
 - 2. that the gospel of Jesus Christ is profound;
 - 3. that the truth about Jesus Christ of great importance
 - C. Whenever an individual Christian, a church, a group of churches, shows that it is not a settled thing among them that the mystery of godliness is great, understand that person or group to be fundamentally mistaken, to be in fundamental error
 - 1. that upholding biblical doctrine is not important to them
 - 2. that what doctrine is upheld is not the most important thing to them
 - 3. “I don’t know what they teach, but I like their music.”

CONCLUSION

Let the church, and let every individual Christian, make all judgments based on the mystery of godliness being great.

-yes, that is important, but the mystery of godliness is great

Let us reckon that what our Lord Jesus wrote us, by His apostles, is how we are to live in light of the greatness of the mystery of godliness.

Beware the mistake of imagining things to do for the sake of the greatness of the mystery of godliness, that the Bible does not tell us to do, that are commonly paths to forget the greatness of the mystery of godliness.

Let any of you who is still in his sins be moved by the truth that the mystery of godliness is great. It is great, while all of the alternatives are not great in comparison.

This organization that we call “the church” is the primary institution in the world for the preservation and propagation of the mystery of godliness, which is a great thing, and the great thing. Let each of us have his relationship with the church reflect that.

Allison - Prelude

Allison - Trinity 218 (First Tune) “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name”

Journey - Trinity 109 “This Is My Father’s World”

Rita - Trinity 461 “From Depths of Woe”

Roel - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer Philippians 2:5-11

Stephen - Scripture Reading - Daniel 2:1-47

Dillon - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - 1 Corinthians 15:51-58

1 Timothy 3:16

GEN And without controuersie, great is the mysterie of godlinesse, which is, God is manifested in the flesh, iustified in the Spirit, seene of Angels, preached vnto the Gentiles, beleued on in the world, and receiued vp in glorie.

KJV And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

NKJV And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

ESV Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

mystery G3466

godliness G2150