11.25.18

Family Fundamentals – Home "true" Home
I Timothy 1:1-2

Shall we rise for the reading of God's word? Today's passage is coming from First Timothy Chapter One Verses One and Two:

(I Timothy 1:1) "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, of Christ Jesus, who is our hope,"

(I Timothy 1:2) "To Timothy, my "true" child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

Thank you. You may be seated. I will not tell you that Timothy is one of my favorite books, but it is—as are all the books. It is what is often called a pastoral epistle. That means probably more to me than it does to you. But there are a lot of wonderful principles that refer to the family of God. What is interesting about this letter

is that Paul wrote to Timothy because he was actually leaving him there in Ephesus according to Verse Three, if you look. He was a pastor in Ephesus to the church with the Ephesians. What we understand is that God ordained that Timothy would begin to lead this interesting bunch of people, often influenced by mystics as well as a tremendous influence from Judaism. He was a young man who had to face a lot of difficulty. Paul wrote to him to not only shore him up but also to make sure that he stayed on target.

There was a second letter that was written called Second Timothy, which was probably the last letter Paul wrote. Paul wrote towards the end of Second Timothy saying,

(II Timothy 4:6) <u>“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.”</u>

Paul began to share the fact that he was getting ready to lay his neck on the line. Nero was about to chop off

his head, so he began to reveal to Timothy the desires of his heart. He encouraged Timothy to:

(II Timothy 4:2) "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."

He said that things would proceed from bad to worse, but Timothy needed to continue to remain faithful. This was a young man who was loved very much by Paul. He was not just writing the letter to another pastor; he was writing the letter to someone he thought of as his son. He referred to that as we come to this passage. What the letter is largely about is declared to us in Chapter Three where he summarized why he wrote the book. Please turn with me to:

(I Timothy 3:14) "I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may 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."

Support of what? The truth. Truth. That will be a key word as we begin to see what this letter is about. It is about how we ought to conduct ourselves in the household of God. If you look at the very beginning of this book, the title of the book that I have given it is the proper conduct in "the home." That is because we know that the church itself was declared to be the household of faith or the home.

What we read in Ephesians Chapter Two is one of the greatest passages. In Ephesians Chapter two, it refers to the fact that we are a part of the household of God. It is an interesting emphasis as he began to talk about that, especially as Paul was writing to people who were not only Greeks, but an amalgamation of all kinds of people of faith from various nationalities because Ephesus was a port city on the water and had a huge influx of individuals. It had become an extremely

mystical, magical place in which Paul had to deal with the satanic worship of other gods. What Timothy had to deal with made it a very strange place to minister. What was the main emphasis of the letter? Paul told Timothy to stay on target with the truth. The household of God is to uphold the truth. We are a household of truth. That is a very interesting phrase. As we begin this, we will talk about emphasizing the word “truth.” At the very beginning, Paul referred to Timothy as his “true” child in the faith. He was emphasizing the truth in their relationship. As we talk about the family and how we conduct ourselves, I would say probably the most important thing to begin with is to set that family’s foundation. How does a family of truth begin? Paul began this wonderful Chapter by declaring how it all began. Look with me in First Timothy in Chapter One Verse One.

(I Timothy 1:1) “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope,”

Paul identified himself from the beginning. His name, which we know according to tradition as well as linguistics, was a Latin name. It was not his Hebrew name. It is as if he surrendered the things of the greatest value to him. We read in Philippians Chapter Three Verse Five that he was a Pharisee of the Law. Right? He was Saul. The word or the name itself—Saul—has a connotation of one who is desired. But now he has taken on the name of Paul which is a Latin term, not a Hebrew term, and does not mean anywhere close to being desired. The name refers to being small. Yet, he embraced this name so that he might go to the Gentiles to proclaim this wonderful message of God's grace to them. Paul addressed the letter by giving us his name, and at the same time telling us that he was one sent by the commandment of God. According to

the text, he was anointed by the Savior which is what "Christ" means. Christ means anointed. He referred to Jesus when he referred to our Savior. Paul was sent by somebody who was anointed to be the Savior. To put it another way, He was anointed to save you. Immediately he clarified that the wonderful message that he was bringing is a declaration that God desires to save you. He loves you very much. It is a very sincere letter in that regard. If you have ever been rescued by somebody, you feel close to that person. Emotions are drawn out, and all the facade goes off to the side. You begin to embrace all that is real. That is what our whole faith is about. As we talked about in the book of Hebrews, we are not in the shadows. We are not to show the facades. We are not fake; we are real. God is calling us to be a real family. Many people call themselves by their family name, but it is actually a misnomer. However, we are the real family. Why? Because the One anointed who was sent to rescue us is the One who was sent to draw us together.

Paul wrote this letter--Paul, an apostle of Christ, according to the commandment of God our Savior. I think it is an interesting term that he used. It was by the commandment of God. What is the commandment of God? Here's the commandment of God. You are saved. You can believe in His Son to be saved. Of all the commandments that God could have clearly thrown at us, how wonderful it is that His commandment was to literally send Paul for this purpose. “Go save them. Go rescue them. Go make sure that everything is okay.” When it is talking about a commandment here, it is an injunction. Not only is an injunction or a decree, but it is an injunction or a decree from one having authority with the power to make sure that it is done or that it is fulfilled. When he established this, he was saying that God had sent him to do something that would happen which was to rescue. What a wonderful message that is from Paul the Apostle. “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to a commandment of God, our Savior,” once again emphasizing his authority from the One

anointed to save us. He is our what? Our confident expectation. Absolutely. What a wonderful message in this introduction of what our faith is all about. Can you imagine not having hope? The book of Thessalonians really is a wonderful picture of people who have lost their hope. If you lose hope, you stop working; you stop wanting to do the right thing. You start throwing in the towel and ask, "What is the use?" You throw up your hands. You take away hope, and people do not want to live anymore. But He is our hope. There is a confident expectation that, as Paul said,

(II Corinthians 4:16) "Therefore, we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day."

(II Corinthians 4:17) "For momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond comparison,"

We have a lot to look forward to. He is our hope. The hope is that which unites us. That is one of the things

that Paul wanted to establish with Timothy. He was saying, “Timothy, I am an apostle sent by Christ to send you this message: that you are the one who will proclaim this message amongst these people. Draw the family in with this: Christ alone is our hope. There is no confident expectation for anything without Christ. He is, as Paul wrote in First Corinthians:

(I Corinthians 3:11) “For no man can lay another foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

There is no other hope. There is no other foundation but Christ. He began to establish that wonderful hope that somebody loves you. That is a wonderful picture. Scripture is telling us that there is no one who is more faithful and “true” than Jesus. We read Jesus’ promise in:

(Hebrews 13:5) “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.”

That is a “true” and genuine statement. This is why, when you look in the Gospel of John Chapter Fourteen Verse Six, what does it say about Jesus? Jesus says, “…I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” See the word “truth”? Jesus is the truth. What is he saying by the word “truth?” I am convinced that there is no one more sincere, no one more genuine, no one more real, than Jesus. He epitomizes what is real. If you ever want to know what real looks like, look at Jesus. Many people, as Proverbs says:

(Proverbs 20:6) “Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find a trustworthy man?”

When you look at Christ, there has not been a friend more faithful and “true” than Him. As you go through the Gospel of John, what you feel repeatedly over and over again is that sense of somebody who is real, somebody who is “true”, somebody who is a seer, somebody who really and truly loves you. For instance,

in the Gospel of John in Chapter Four, Jesus is talking to the woman at the well. One thing that He says to her is:

(John 4:23) “But an hour is coming and now is, when the “true” worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.”

Truth. We are looking for somebody genuine like you. All who are genuine begin to unite with the person of Christ. John Chapter Three tells us this in Verse Twenty-one.

(John 3:21) “But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

All who celebrate or desire or crave or will walk in truth will find the Light. If you are looking for something real, something genuine, something sincere, you will be drawn to Christ. It is just natural. It is that truth that draws us together.

(John 14:6) “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’”

The Gospel of John also says:

(John 6:46) “Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.”

(John 1:14) “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Truth. We begin to realize who He is, and we are drawn to Him. The more I read about Christ, the more I go, “Wow, there is not a friend more faithful and “true” than Him. He will not leave me. He is faithful to the end. He died for me.” God says, “Okay, I am showing you who I am.”

(Romans 5:8) “But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

He died for us because of His fullness of grace and truth. There is a great passage in John Chapter Fifteen. It refers to the fact that the Spirit of Christ will be sent to us. Would it surprise you to know that, according to John Chapter Fifteen Verse Twenty-six, He is called the Spirit of truth? You see, the one thing that separates us from the world is that we have something real. That is why our faith can never be fake. The “true” believers are very, very genuine people. They are very transparent about who they are and what they believe. We keep going back to the fundamentals of First John.

(I John 1:8) “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

(I John 1:9) “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

If you will just admit that you sin, then you and God can have a relationship because now you both are dealing with truth. It is that sense of truth that then draws us together. We are a family that would naturally be together. God is orchestrating this wonderful family through His Spirit. I am certainly not going to go through all of the New Testament; but when you look at the book of, for instance, Hebrews, how does the author define truth? He defines truth by being faithful, by being real—more specifically, the "true" believer endures to the end. He is faithful. He endures to the end. How do you know that it is "true"? It never fails. Love never fails; it endures to the end. When you look at the Epistle of James, he talks about being real and says it looks like being practical. It is effectual. It is efficacious. That means it does something.

(James 2:15) <u>"If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,"</u>

(James 2:16) “and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

(James 2:17) “Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.”

If you say you love somebody, you do not walk up to them and say, “Be warm, be filled and clothed.” It is not just about talking, is it? It is, in reality, about doing something. Your real is always going to demonstrate itself in what is genuine faith. When you look at Peter, he says real is going to look like excellent behavior. It is not just that you do something but that you are going to do it in an excellent way. Your behavior is going to be in such a way that you submit to authority willingly. That is what real looks like. First John is going to talk about real looking like you are confident and assured of what you know is “true.” We are just saying, “I know whom I have

believed and am persuaded that He is able." John really gives that sense of confidence.

(I John 5:13) "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

All the way through the epistles, you will find what real means. In Galatians, Paul talks about what real looks like in a relationship with the church. I do not have to impress anybody. Yes, I think that is one of the great themes of the book of Galatians. I do not have to impress you. You do not have to impress me. All we do is to come together and say, "You know what? Jesus saved us. We are a family because of that." It is kind of disarming, isn't it? There is a freedom that comes in knowing Christ. Throughout the epistles, you will find what it means to be "true". This is my point. "True" becomes defined in wonderful, unique ways. We begin to see the reality of that. As the Book of First Timothy opens up, it is clear that Paul is writing to somebody

whom he loves very much, which is telling me something. It is telling me that the church is not an institution. It is a family. It might be defined in a loose definition as an institution, but we do not perceive it that way. We perceive it as a household; we perceive it as a family. Paul, when he addresses this to Timothy, albeit a young man, is turning over the reins of the church at Ephesus. Paul addresses him not as pastor, "*presbyteros*", or any of the other titles or names that you could put in there. But how does he refer to him? Let's read.

(I Timothy 1:2) <u>"To Timothy, my "true" child in the faith;..."</u>

There is that interesting word again. My "true" child in the faith. "true" child. "*Alethinos*" is the word that is often used when defining the word "true", but in this text, that is not the word that is used. The Greek word that is used within this passage when he refers to Timothy being his "true" child is a word that describes a

legitimate child. That is to say, you could have an illegitimate child or a legitimate child. This word is actually interjected. You are my “true” child. You are my legitimate child. We will put it another way. You are my real kid. You are my real kid. Now that is the literal translation. Often the word in the figurative translation just means genuinely and sincerely. The reference is very clear that he perceives Timothy as his child more than anybody else. It is as if the child were born of his own volition. It is as though God has ordained that they become a family.

To me, this is a very strange phenomenon. I am going to tell you why. As we know, Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin. His credentials are very clearly listed in Philippians Chapter Three Verses Four to Six as he describes himself. What we know is that he was a Jew of Jews, a Pharisee of Pharisees, and that he was ultimately one of the Supreme Court Justices of his nation which is what the Sanhedrin was. We know that

he had a reputation for “toeing the line,” for going by the law, and for taking no survivors. He was going to get you or get you out. But either way, he was going to make sure that what the law said was what was done. He would abide by it to the letter. There was no compromise. As you understand and read his past and his beginning, it is very clear that this guy was not a lovable guy. But above and beyond that, he did not like Gentiles. We understand about Pharisees that they would go out of their way—literally out of their way—to dodge a Gentile. In fact, one of the reasons why they were called by the name Pharisee is because it means to “separate themselves” or the “separate ones.” They saw themselves as separate and far more holy than the Gentiles. Therefore, they did not want anything to do with them. What a Pharisee might hate even more than a Gentile would be a half breed. Timothy was a half breed. According to Acts Chapter Sixteen as you begin to read the first few verses, this was a young man who had a mother who was a Jew, but a father who was

Greek. That was a strange phenomenon. How do you get a guy who has spent his whole life dodging people of another race to use the phrase, “You are my legitimate kid?” How could that happen? A transformation clearly had happened in the life of Paul. Let me have you read a couple of passages in Second Corinthians.

(II Corinthians 1:12) “Our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.”

Look at the phrase here. Godly what? Sincerity. Godly sincerity. Now that is another word for “true.” You know people who are sincere, don’t you? You have met them. You know people who are insincere, which would probably be the general populace. Going on a bit further, Paul makes a statement in Chapter Two in Verse Seventeen as he describes himself. He says,

(II Corinthians 2:17) “For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity; but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.”

What does he say? From sincerity. That is quite interesting, isn't it? He was clearly referring to the fact that this whole thing that he was involved in, this life-changing experience, was very real to him. It was real and was demonstrated to everybody with whom he came in contact. He said, “You know how sincere I am. That is my testimony. There is no doubt that I believe this.” In Chapter Five, he makes the interesting contrast between some of those who are at Corinth and himself. He says:

(II Corinthians 5:12) “We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart.”

It is a whole different way of thinking, isn't it? By the time you come to Chapter Six, he commended himself as a servant of God in Verse Four. But look in Verse Six:

(II Corinthians 6:6) “in impurity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,”

In what? In genuine love. Genuine. How unique is that? Everybody likes to talk about love. Everybody likes to define love. I saw recently that a new university had a whole new class on defining what love was all about. It was a secular university, which did not give me great confidence that they were going to get genuine truth. It goes on:

(II Corinthians 6:7) “in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,”

We are not only proclaiming truth; we are living truly. We are living in such a way that our conduct is sincere. I do not have another agenda. Why are you nice to me?

Because I want to be. I do not have another answer. Do you? There should not be another answer. There should not be another reason. You see, Christ Jesus:

(Philippians 2:6) "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men."

(II Corinthians 8:9) "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you, through His poverty might become rich."

Guess what? He had no hidden agenda. He let go of everything that He had for your sake. He did not have to do that. There is no benefit for Him to be nice to you. There would actually be a better benefit to Him to be mean to you. But it is one of the reasons why He is "true" to us. We know that when God says, "I love you," we go, "Okay. I get that." There is no mistake about that. That is the real thing. That is what we preach. When we

come to people and we tell them that we care for their soul, it is because we actually care for their soul. We might stay awake at night thinking about somebody and praying for them, weeping about them, because we truly are thinking about them. They are not just another mark on our prayer list; they are not just somebody else whom we mention. We actually care for that person. Paul says it is from sincerity that we preach this word. There is no other reason for doing this. Do you know how difficult it is to find somebody who is like them? That is what unites us as a family. We are not united for any other reason than that. If you are not genuine, if you are not sincere, then we have no family. The family to whom we are united are “true” children, a “true” brother, “true” faith. That is what our whole faith is about. Paul wanted this guy to come with him. He saw this young man; he saw his heart. He did not see his race. He did not check out his background. The only thing he saw was that this guy was real. He drew Timothy to himself.

(II Timothy 2:2) “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

It is that fidelity. If you will turn with me to Second Timothy, Paul really digs into the past, in order to reveal to us where Timothy got some of his sincerity. It is almost like sincerity is contagious. I hope that is true. The more you are in a church that is genuine and sincere, the more it becomes a part of your life. Look with me in:

(II Timothy 1:5) “For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.”

He was mindful of what? The sincere faith within Timothy which first dwelt where? It was in his grandmother, Lois, and then in his mother, Eunice. What is Paul talking about? There is nothing like having a family member who truly believes in what they

proclaim. There is nothing like it. You see the genuineness of their own heart, and you are drawn to that. If somebody asks you, “Why do you believe that? Just because your parents did?” No. I do not believe it just because my parents did. I believe it because my parents truly believed it. There is a big difference between somebody just saying something and someone who is living it out. When you see the sincerity on their face, and especially in their eyes, you go, “I think this is important to them.” If you look a bit further in Second Timothy Chapter Three Verses Twelve and Thirteen, Paul warns Timothy that things will get really bad. He continues in Verse Fourteen by telling Timothy to stay on target. Now what will keep somebody on target? What will keep you on target? What will keep you from faltering? What will keep you from failing? There is only one thing. Genuine sincerity.

(II Timothy 3:14) “You, however, continue in the things you have learned and have become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them,”

What has convinced you? I hope one of the things that convinces people that what we are talking about is real is that we are convincing and that we are genuinely “true.” It is one thing for somebody to tell you something. You do not respect them; you do not know them; they do not have a track record with you. But if you know somebody who has consistently loved you, cared for you, sought the best for you and they then tell you something, you are almost automatically convinced about it. This is what he is saying within the passage. He continues:

(II Timothy 3:15) “and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Timothy, remember what you were taught by your mother and your grandmother. By the way, his father was not a believer. He was a Greek. But Timothy saw something real. Timothy lived something real. When Paul saw it, he recognized something real. He decided that he wanted that real kid with him. We are family. It is as though we are drawn together. It happens almost immediately. Somebody comes into your life, and you realize that this is family. I recognize family. Paul will write this in Philippians. You are familiar with the passage.

(Philippians 2:19) "But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition."

(Philippians 2:20) "For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare."

There are many people who will do a job. How will Timothy do the job? He will genuinely do these things.

Paul had no one else. He was showing how rare it was. There was no one else who would genuinely be concerned for their welfare.

(Philippians 2:21) “For they all seek after their own interests, not of those of Christ Jesus.”

(Philippians 2:22) “But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.”

(Philippians 2:23) “Therefore, I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me;”

He is the guy. He is my son. He is like me. This is my “true” kid. It is like family. You all of a sudden find your family. You can ask, “Was Cain really a brother to Abel?” Or, you look at Ham and Shem, the sons of Noah. Let's talk about a divided family as with Jacob and Esau. How about Absalom and Solomon? There is no family there. How do you define family? See, this is a wonderful thing to me about this particular book. We are defining family differently. Let me show you

something in Matthew Chapter Ten. Jesus warns His own disciples that they would be sent into a world that would be hostile to them.

(Matthew 10:16) “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.”

(Matthew 10:17) “But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in the synagogues;”

(Matthew 10:18) “and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.”

(Matthew 10:19) “But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given to you in that hour what you are to say.”

(Matthew 10:20) “For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”

Then he writes this:

(Matthew 10:21) “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.”

(Matthew 10:22) “You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.”

He continues in Verse Thirty-four:

(Matthew 10:34) “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

(Matthew 10:35) “For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;”

(Matthew 10:36) “a man's enemies will be the members of his household.”

(Matthew 10:37) “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”

(Matthew 10:38) “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”

This is not Christ being mean. He is saying that people will hate you. What seems strange is that those people doing the hating may be perceived as your family by blood, but it turns out that they are not your true family at all. In fact,

(Matthew 23:46) “While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him.”

(Matthew 23:47) “Someone said to Him, ‘Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.’”

(Matthew 23:48) “But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?’”

(Matthew 23:49) “And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, ‘Behold, My mother and My brothers!’”

(Matthew 23:50) “For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.’”

We can insert the word “true” brother and My “true” sister and My “true” mother. That is a different way of thinking, isn't it? Now that you can even get your DNA checked, you can figure out who your distant past relatives were. Look again at First Timothy because I want to show you something. Paul says:

(I Timothy 1:3) “As I urge you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines,”

(I Timothy 1:4) “nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.”

Do you see the phrase, “endless genealogies?” Man tries to gain his worth by his genealogy. The perception is that the blood makes you who you are. God says, “That is not what makes family. What makes family is “My blood” that has been shed for you.” This is the thing that draws us together as a household of God. What a bizarre phenomenon when you think about it that this young man is pulled into a community that is very different than he is. He is going to be asked to draw them in and make them a family. He is going to be asked to emphasize one wonderful example of truth which is love. This church is going to struggle with this all the way to Revelation where John writes the church at Ephesus:

(Revelation 2:4) “But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”

The church at Ephesus will struggle with this because what is involved is there are going to be people who are Stoics. They thought that you just need to tell people what to do. Paul keeps Timothy focused when he says, “You have to tell them what the truth is. You have to tell them what really brings the family together. It is that genuine, sincere heart that is real. What happens in this setting is, to me, bizarre. We have two men who are inexplicably, inextricably, and indivisibly somehow tied together as family. It is amazing that you have Paul calling Timothy his “true” kid. It is as though he finally found him. That is what our faith is about. I trust that when you walk through the doors, you have this sense, “I am in my family. I am with family. You finally realize that you found the family that you have been looking for because that is what we are about. That is what this

household is about. We are the household of God. Listen to this.

(I Timothy 3:14) “I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may 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.”

We are the household that is the pillar and support of what? The truth. Let me give you the synonyms for “true” in Scripture: Genuine, sincere, real. If you and I are not genuine, sincere, and real about our love for Christ and for one another, there is no family. But this is what unites our hearts. What an interesting transition in that you have a man who hated the Gentiles. In fact, when he wrote to the church at Ephesus, he says in Ephesians Chapter Three Verses One through Three, “You want to know a mystery? Here is a mystery. I am in prison for you. That is a mystery.” He was writing to

Gentiles; he was writing to Greeks; he was writing to people he had once persecuted. He goes, “This is bizarre because I never thought I would love you guys.” We watch him leave as it is recorded in the Book of Acts. As he left Ephesus, women and children were begging him to stay. Who would have ever thought that he would have a family near and dear in this wonderful place. Your “true” home is where you have to begin.

Prayer

Father, we come before You today giving You thanks for this letter that is a real letter. It is a “true” letter of a father to a son, of a household that seemingly did not exist before and yet existed before the foundation of the world. One that is our “true” household, not one of genealogy, but of Your Spirit. Somehow, in some strange way, You have brought us together; and we say we are home. This is Your Spirit Who has united us. There is no other explanation. We are somehow tied

together; we cannot understand it. Father, I pray that, as these days go by, You will show us how to conduct ourselves together. What is a home supposed to look like? How are families supposed to operate? What are the things that are important to us? What are the things that we are pursuing? How do we relate to one another? How do we minister to one another? What is family? Oh, Lord, just give us that wonderful insight as we go through this wonderful epistle. In Jesus' name, Amen.

With your head bowed and your eyes closed, I am asking you to decide to just be real. If you are not, we cannot be family. It is the "true" One whom you have received. That is Jesus Christ. It is His "true" Spirit that flows through you. As you embrace that which is real, you will be drawn to family. This is a time to get real.