

Outline One

Being Constituted with the Truth for the Church to be the Pillar and Base of the Truth with All the Saints Being Responsible to Uphold the Truth

- I. **The four great pillars in the Lord's recovery are truth, life, the church, and the gospel; the truth brings us life, life produces the church, and the church is responsible for the preaching of the gospel; the first great pillar in the Lord's recovery is the truth—Eph. 1:13; 4:18; 5:23-25, 29, 32; 6:15; John 18:37:¹**
 - A. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the divine truths as revealed in the Word of God—2 Tim. 3:16.
 - B. The Lord's word, His truth, is in the Bible, but the Bible needs the proper interpretation—2:15.
 - C. The truth is absolute in itself, and we must be absolute for the truth—2 John 1-2, 4; 3 John 3-4, 7-8.
 - D. The standard of the Lord's recovery depends upon the standard of the truth we put out; the truths will be the measure and the standard—John 18:37.
 - E. We need to have the truth wrought into us and constituted into our being— 1 John 1:8; 2:4; 2 John 1-2; 3 John 3-4:
 1. To be constituted with the truth is to have the intrinsic element of the divine revelation wrought into us to become our constituent, our intrinsic being, our organic constitution—John 17:17.
 2. The solid truth that is constituted into us becomes in us a constant and long-term nourishment—1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Thes. 2:13.
 - F. If the truth is wrought into us and constituted into our being, we will be able to protect the interests of the riches of God's divinity and the attainments of His consummation—Rev. 21:12a, 17.
- II. **The church is the supporting pillar and holding base of the truth—1 Tim. 3:15:**
 - A. The Lord wants His church to know Him as the truth in order to testify concerning Him as the truth—John 14:6; 18:37; 1 John 1:6; 5:20.
 - B. *Truth* in 1 Timothy 3:15 refers to the real things revealed in God's Word, which are mainly Christ as the embodiment of God and the church as the Body of Christ—2:4; Col. 2:9, 19.
 - C. The truth is the Triune God, having Christ as the embodiment, center, and expression, to produce the church as the Body of Christ, the house of God, and the kingdom of God—v. 9; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; 1 Tim. 3:15; John 3:3, 5.
 - D. The church bears Christ as the reality; the church testifies to the whole universe that Christ, and Christ alone, is the reality—1:14, 17; 14:6.
 - E. As the pillar which bears the truth and the base which upholds the pillar, the church testifies the reality, the truth, of Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4.
 - F. The kind of church that we build up depends on the kind of truth that we teach; thus, there is the desperate need of the living truth to produce the church, to help the church to exist, and to build up the church—1 Tim. 3:15.
 - G. In the church life we all need to come to the full knowledge of the truth—2:4; 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1:
 1. Every believer should have a full knowledge, a complete realization, of the real things revealed in God's Word—1 John 2:21.

¹ The Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery (2011 Fall ITERO, Message 1); Being Absolute For The Truth And Being Constituted With The Truth (2008 International Chinese-Speaking Conference, Message 3).

2. The full knowledge of the truth is a thorough apprehension of the truth, a full acknowledgment and appreciation of the reality of all the spiritual and divine things that we have received through faith—1 Tim. 2:4; 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:25.
 3. To cut straight the word of the truth is to unfold without bias or distortion the reality of God's economy revealed in the New Testament—v. 15.
- H. In the Lord's recovery today, we need Ezras, priestly teachers who are saturated with God and skillful in the Word of God, to educate the saints with the divine truths—Neh. 8:1-8, 13; 2 Tim. 2:2, 15.
- I. The greatest need that we must meet is to bring the saints into the truth; all the saints should be trained in the divine revelation—1 Tim. 2:4:
1. We all need to be helped through the Recovery Version with the footnotes and the Life-studies to see the intrinsic significance of the word of the Bible—Neh. 8:8, 13.
 2. The Life-study messages are openers; they open the Bible and bring us into the Bible.
 3. "I consider our writings as the opener to open the holy Word. I believe that those of you who have read the Life-study messages can testify honestly that these messages with the notes of the Recovery Version have opened up a certain chapter or a certain book of the Bible to you. This is not to replace the Bible but to bring people into the Bible" (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, "Elders' Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry Out the Vision," p. 321*).
- III. **All the saints are responsible to uphold the truth—1 Tim. 3:15; 2 Tim. 2:15:**²
- A. The supporting pillar and holding base of the truth are the entire church, including all the saints; every member of the church is part of the pillar and base that uphold the truth—1 Tim. 3:15.
- B. The church being the pillar and base of the truth implies that every member of the church should know the truth; thus, we should make a decision to learn the truth—2:4:
1. Most of the saints probably do not have a deep sense that they are responsible to bear the truth; the church, including every believer, must uphold the truth.
 2. The saints in the churches need to respect the leading ones, but if the leading ones do something contrary to the truth, the saints should be responsible to uphold the truth:
 - a. No matter who is speaking, the saints must discern whether or not what is spoken is according to the truth—1 Thes. 5:21.
 - b. We should not care for the person but for the truth and always be ready to uphold the truth—1 John 1:6.
 3. In order for the church to be strong, every brother and sister must uphold the truth by learning the truth, experiencing the truth, and being able to speak the truth—1 Tim. 2:4.
- C. To understand what it means to uphold the truth, we may consider the example of Paul in Galatians 2:11-16:
1. Paul saw that Peter did something contrary to the truth in shrinking back from eating with the Gentiles—vv. 11-13.
 2. Paul rebuked Peter because he was doing something contrary to the truth; thus, Paul was upholding the truth—vv. 14-16.
 3. In this situation Paul was a pillar and base of the truth—vv. 5, 14.
- D. If we learn the truth and practice the truth in the daily church life, we all will be able to bear some responsibility in upholding the truth—2 John 4:
1. We must always learn, guard, and uphold the truth—3 John 3-4, 8.
 2. We should enter into all the truths of Bible through the Life-study messages.³

² CWWL, 1978, vol. 2, "Crucial Principles for the Christian Life and the Church Life," ch. 7, pp. 618-621.

³ CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—The Four Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 1, p. 363.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE LORD'S RECOVERY BEING THE RECOVERY OF THE TRUTH

Today the whole earth needs the truth of the Lord that is in His Word. Regrettably, however, the Bible, the divine Word, has not been fully opened to the world. Thus, it has not been possible for people to fully know the truth of the Lord. At the most, Christians are able to boast that the holy Word of God has been published into many languages and propagated over the whole earth. Yet they are not able to say that after reading the Bible, regardless of which language, they have been able to truly understand the deep mysteries within it. They have been able to understand the superficial meanings of the things revealed in the Bible according to their own culture, philosophy, tradition, customs, ethics, living, and morality but have had no way of comprehending the mysteries of the truths in it. The mysteries of the truths in the Bible are very deep and profound. We need the enlightening of the Spirit of God to understand them, and we also need to spend time to dig them out (cf. 1 Cor. 2:10-14).

The truths in the holy Word of the Lord were completed approximately two thousand years ago, but over a period of a little more than one thousand years, they seemed to slowly vanish. Only in the last few centuries have the truths again been released little by little through the zealous and careful study of many lovers of the Lord. This is what we refer to as the Lord's recovery. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of all the truths in the Bible that were lost. Thus, the recovery of the truth is one of the great pillars in the Lord's recovery. The Lord's recovery depends upon the recovery of the knowledge of the truth.

HAVING THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH FOR THE SPREAD OF THE LORD'S RECOVERY

The New Testament says repeatedly that we should know the truth. Moreover, when referring to this matter, Paul repeatedly says that we should come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1). This means that we must know not just a small part or one aspect of the truth but rather the truth in its entirety and in all its aspects. Paul also says that the church is the pillar and base of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). This implies that the truth in the Bible is like a large building that is not one-sided but complete on all sides with a foundation and a roof. If we are going to spread the Lord's recovery today, we must know the truth and be able to expound the truth. For this reason we must know every side of the truth without any biases or particular leanings.

The truth not only has many sides but also includes many crucial items. For example, the Bible speaks about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the believers, the church, the kingdom, and the New Jerusalem. The Bible begins with God, then continues with God's creation, man's fall, God's redemption, and God's entering into man to be man's life for man to be regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed to His own image, and ultimately brought fully into glory. In the midst of all these matters, the Bible also shows us the believers and the corporate church. This corporate church brings in the kingdom, consummating in the ultimate expression, which is the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth. All these aspects are included in the truths of the Bible.

Considering the deeper and more detailed truths, the Bible speaks about the two aspects of God's complete salvation: redemption and salvation. The aspect of redemption includes forgiveness, cleansing, justification, reconciliation, and acceptance; the aspect of salvation includes His coming to regenerate, sanctify, renew, and transform us so as to conform us to His image and ultimately to bring us into His glory. This is God's complete salvation. We must diligently learn all these things, obtain the knowledge of them, and be able to speak them clearly to others. (*CWWL, 1984*, vol. 5, "The Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 4, pp. 393-394)

BEARING THE TRUTH

The Church Being the Pillar and Base of the Truth

First Timothy 3:15 says that the church is the pillar and base of the truth. The pillar and base of the truth is the entire church, including all the saints, not only the elders and leading ones. In ancient times buildings were supported by pillars or columns, each of which rested on a base. Paul referred to this architectural feature to illustrate that the church is the pillar and base to bear the truth. Most of the saints probably do not have a deep sensation that they are responsible to bear the truth. I hope that the Lord's speaking in this chapter will impress us that all the believers together are the pillar and base to bear the truth.

Paul Being an Example of Bearing the Truth

To understand what it means to bear the truth, we may consider the example of Paul in Galatians 2:11-14. Peter's shrinking back from eating with the Gentiles was contrary to the truth of the gospel, and Paul saw this. We need to remember that when Peter was the leading apostle, Paul was a young persecutor of the church. Compared to Peter, Paul was a young apostle. However, Paul saw that Peter did something contrary to the truth. Perhaps if we had been in Paul's place, we would not have rebuked Peter. We might have instead said to ourselves, "I know that Peter is wrong, but he is older, more experienced, and more qualified than me. I dare not do or say anything." Paul, however, wrote, "When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned" (v. 11). Paul rebuked Peter, for although Peter was older and more experienced, at that instant Peter was doing something that was not according to the truth. Paul was thus bearing the truth; he was a pillar and base of the truth.

Every Member Being Responsible to Bear the Truth

Paul was an apostle, but the Bible does not say that the apostles are the pillar and base of the truth. Rather, the Bible reveals that the church, which includes every believer, must bear the truth. If every saint does not bear the truth, the church will not be strong but will merely be a group of people who do not know and practice the truth but leave everything to the elders. This is a poor church. The United States is a strong nation because all the citizens bear the responsibility of upholding the Constitution. Even the president cannot violate the Constitution. If he does, he will be removed from office. In many other countries no one can touch the leader. The churches in the Lord's recovery need to be like the United States in that all the saints need to bear the responsibility of upholding the truth. The people of the United States should respect the presidency and the president, but if the president violates the Constitution, the people need to exercise their right to uphold the Constitution. Likewise, the saints in the churches need to respect the eldership and the leading ones, but if the leading ones do something contrary to the truth, the saints should be responsible to uphold the truth.

The Church Meetings

Being for the Saints' Instruction and Edification

The church, which is the pillar and base of the truth, includes all the brothers and sisters. The sisters should not excuse themselves from knowing the truth simply because they are sisters...[I]n order for the church to be strong, every brother and sister must know the truth. I hope that if I were to say something contrary to the truth, even the young sisters would be prepared to stand up and exhort me in a proper way to stop.

Learning and Practicing the Truth

In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul refers to "the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth." We are each a living member of the church with the living God in us. The church being the pillar and base of the truth implies that every member of the church should know the truth. We need to make a

decision to learn the truth. If the young saints do not make such a decision, the church has no future. For the sake of the spreading of the church to new localities, there is a need of leading ones, some who can bear responsibility. We are short of such ones because in the daily church life we do not learn or practice the truth. If we learn the truth and practice the truth in the daily church life, every member will be able to bear some responsibility. Then wherever we spread, there will be no problems; every local church will be strong.

In summary, in order to know how to conduct ourselves in the church life as the house of God, we need to be careful to always do two things: never insult the headship of Christ and always learn, guard, and bear the truth. The headship of Christ and the truth are two basic factors that direct, control, and safeguard the church life. We need to honor, respect, and not insult the headship of Christ, not overstepping in any matter related to Christ's headship. We also need to learn and practice the truth. If we do these two things, we will be clear regarding how to conduct ourselves in the house of God. (*CWWL, 1978*, vol. 2, "Crucial Principles for the Christian Life and the Church Life," ch. 7, pp. 618-621)

References and Further Reading:

1. *The Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery* (2011 Fall ITERO, Message 1).
2. *Being Absolute for the Truth and Being Constituted with The Truth* (2008 International Chinese-Speaking Conference, msg. 3).
3. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984*, vol. 5, "The Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," chs. 1, 4.
4. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1978*, vol. 2, "Crucial Principles for the Christian Life and the Church Life," ch. 7.