

The Body We Cherish: The Ecclesio-Centrism of Baptist Fundamentalism

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I Timothy 3:14-16

Introduction

It is undeniably true that God loves His church, for “He purchased it with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). This can only mean that the church belongs exclusively to God Himself by right of redemption, and “the purchase price was nothing less than the life-blood of His beloved Son” (F.F. Bruce). No stronger affirmation of God’s love for His church could be imagined. If God loves and provides for His church, Christians should too! What is it that people find in Christ’s church that makes it such a celebrated and cherished entity?

1 Timothy 3:15, a classic text at the very heart of Paul’s epistle on local church doctrine and decorum, supplies the answer. When Paul thinks of the church, he thinks in terms of three graphic pictures, each of which gives us a reason to celebrate and cherish it:

I. The Church is the Family of God.

“The house(hold) of God” (v. 15) is critical in a world of fractured families!

II. The Church is the Community of Life.

“The church of the living God” (v. 15) is critical in a world suffused with death!

III. The Church is the Sanctuary of Truth.

The pillar and ground of the truth” (vv. 15-16) is critical in a world gripped by falsehood!