

QR SLIDE FIRST THING - CHRIS MARTIN

- Welcome & Connect Table

INTRODUCTION 1 TIMOTHY SLIDE

Hey, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to 1 Timothy chapter 3.

They had hard-backed black bibles as you came in...

- You'll find 1 Timothy 3 on page **992**.

INTRODUCTION

I became a Christian when I was a Junior in High School.

- I had almost no church background...
 - and God just wrecked me...
- but before then I was very much a skeptic.

XTREME TEEN MINISTRIES

So, a friend of mine invited me to his youth group...

- and let me just lay my cards on the table...
- I thought it was ridiculous.
 - We go to this Wednesday night youth group called...
 - Xtreme Teen Ministries...with an X
 - everything in the 90s was extreme.
 - and every letter 't' in that title...
 - was replaced with a cross in Papyrus font...

So, get every cool youth group image out of your head...

- because it was not cool at all.

LAME WORSHIP

And they had a guy with an acoustic guitar!

- But they were singing songs that spelled words...
 - I am a C...I am a CH...I am a CHRISTIAN.
 - kinda a weird Christian version of the YMCA.

And I'm in the back of the room going, "what the...is going on here?"

BURNING CDS

One week we were instructed to bring our secular CDs.

- And I had to ask my buddy what secular meant...
- and it meant any music that wasn't Christian...
 - WHICH WAS ALL I HAD!

But the youth leaders had a poster with comparisons of Christian bands.

And you could trade the secular CD for a Christian one!

But then...we took the secular CDs out to the parking lot,

- threw them all in a metal trash can,
- and they burnt them.

By the way,

- that's where I got my very first copy of...
- Guns & Roses' 'Appetite for Destruction'...
 - Cause I was like, "*What you got there, bro?*"
 - And he pulled it out,
 - so I grabbed it, and was like,
 - "See, it's got a cross on it..."
 - and I think Sweet Child of Mine is about Jesus...
 - that's a Christmas song."
 - So, I just pocketed that.

GOD GOT ME

And I thought, *“This whole church thing is ridiculous.”*

But here's what didn't sink in...

- that I chuckle at now,
- knowing theologically what was going on.
 - I JUST KEPT COMING BACK!

I thought it was corny and dumb...

- And I would hear the things that were being preached...
- and I would think they were ridiculous...
 - and I would tell my friends in the youth group...
 - that they were ridiculous...

And then they'd be like, *“See you next week?”*

- And I was like, “Yeah, you think they'll play I am a C again?”

I didn't know that was happening to me!

But over the course of the next two years...

- that youth group...
 - the leaders in that group...
 - the people of God...
 - the church...
- became some of the closest relationships in my life.

And I remember that by the end of High School...

- and I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life...
- I remember this deep sense that I loved God's people.
 - I loved these people.
 - And I loved the church.
 - And I decided I would always be a part of a church.

Like, when I was with them...it felt like **SLIDE HOME**

TRANSITION: CONTEXT

Today we find the theme verses of this whole letter.

Remember, the Apostle Paul is writing to the younger pastor, Timothy...
and it's all about the church!

- And I think these verses are ones...
- we quickly read over and think nothing of...
 - but they actually gel this whole thing together.

So, let's get into this. 1 Timothy chapter 3 starting in verse 14.

Just three verses today, my friends!

1 TIMOTHY 3:14-15a

[14] I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you
so that, [15] if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the
household of God,

EXPLAIN: HEART

So, Paul has been on a teaching hot-streak for two whole chapters.

- The roles of men and women in the church...
- The qualifications for elders and then for deacons.

And now he seems to take a deep breath...

- and moves from teacher-mode...
- to pastor-mode...
 - and shares his heart.

Paul longed to be with this church!

- He hoped to come to Timothy...
- and the church at Ephesus soon.

And with persecution of Christians on the rise...

- there was a very real possibility...
 - that the believers in Ephesus...
 - would have feared...
 - that they would never see Paul again.

But Paul wants them to know...

- that he has every intention...
- of joining Timothy at Ephesus in the near future.

APPLICATION: WEIGHT

And this is an important part of the church as HOME.

The church seems to carry an incredible amount of weight for Paul!

- He longs to fellowship with God's people!
- He earnestly desires to be with his church family!
 - And just note,
 - it's not just to GET from them.
 - He's not just in it to GET...
 - but to GIVE.

And in our modern culture today...

- sometimes even our Christian subculture...
- church just doesn't seem to carry that same weight.

So, we often talk about CONSUMER CHRISTIANITY...what can I GET?

- And here is where our Western...
- individualistic society has led us astray.

Many American church-goers are just consumers.

- **Always looking for what a church can do for them...**
- **not what they can do for the church.**

ILLUSTRATION: FAT COWS

So, in the prophetic book of Amos,

- the prophet calls the women of Israel...
- the “fat cows of Bashan.”
 - Amos was undoubtedly very popular with the ladies!

But Amos is calling them out for being well fed and lazy.

- He basically says, “*You do nothing.*”
 - *Here you’ve been given gifts by God...*
 - *and yet you do nothing.*
 - *You care nothing for others.*
 - *You just keep it all to yourself.*
 - *And in doing so, you are spiritually fat cows.”*

APPLICATION: CONSUMERS

And I have to wonder, at some level...

- if many Evangelicals aren’t the spiritual equivalent...
 - of fat cows...
- who go everywhere but belong nowhere.

I think one of the things that has really stunted many Christians’ faiths...

- is that many don’t belong to a church,
- and aren’t committed like we’re a part of a HOME.
 - We like the preaching here...
 - or we like the music there...
 - we listen to this podcast...
 - or watch that guy on YouTube.
 - And that’s how we do it.

And I think you’ve got a mass of believers who aren’t plugged in anywhere.

- So, the things required for spiritual growth...
- are not present in their lives!
 - No one can speak into their lives...
 - there's no authority that they'll submit to...
 - no one can rebuke them...
 - because they won't let themselves be known.

They simply come, listen to a sermon and get out.

- And this is not how the church is designed to work.

TRANSITION

So, let me get off that soap-box...

- because that's not who Paul was.
 - He can't WAIT to be with the church.
 - Why?
 - Because it's HOME.

POINT 1: FAMILY

Now, Paul says two things about the church that I think are really helpful.

And the first one was in verse 15:

- if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave...
- in the household of God.

It's my first point:

the church is HOME because it's a place of **SLIDE FAMILY**.

- Paul uses familial language.
- It's **the household of God**.

By this phrase we know Paul is not talking about a building...
or some sacred space that demands a certain solemn decorum.

- This was what they were used to...
- in the Jewish Temple and synagogues.

But Paul is referring to the community of people who constitute the church.

- They are God's household...
- they are God's family.

And I just want to say three things about church FAMILY.

SUB POINT 1: RELATIONSHIPS

First, families are about **SLIDE RELATIONSHIPS**.

You may have heard the adage:

- you can choose your friends...
- but you are stuck with your family.

That's true for the church family as well.

- The question is not, *"Do we all like one another all the time?"*
 - Cause that will NEVER happen!
- But rather, *"Will we continue to love one another?"*

C.S. Lewis says this in Chapter 2 of The Screwtape Letters,

- which is a fictional account...
- of a senior demon...
- giving advice to a junior demon...
- on how to tempt a Christian.

SLIDE *I note with grave displeasure that your patient has become a Christian. There is no need to despair; hundreds of these adult converts have been reclaimed...One of our great allies at present is the Church itself. When he gets to his pew and looks round him he sees just that selection of his neighbours whom he has hitherto avoided. You want to lean pretty heavily on those neighbours. Provided that any of those*

SLIDE *neighbours sing out of tune, or have boots that squeak, or double chins, or odd clothes, the patient will quite easily believe that their religion must therefore be somehow ridiculous. Never let it come to the surface; never let him ask what he expected them to look like. Work hard, then, on the disappointment or anticlimax which is certainly coming to the patient during his first few weeks as a churchman.*

You hear that?

- How ordinary...
- how unexceptional...

The church family is about RELATIONSHIPS.

SUB POINT 2: DIVERSITY

Second, church family is about **SLIDE DIVERSITY**.

The church is to reflect diversity as much as possible.

Think about it: a family has young and old...

- it has children...
- grandparents..
- aunts and uncles...
- of all ages!
 - All of whom contribute to...
 - the makeup of that extended family.

But this can also be extended to mean...

- socio-economic diversity...
- racial diversity...
- educational diversity....
- even a diversity of worldviews...

ILLUSTRATION: DISCIPLES

I mean, think about the 12 disciples.

- You have Matthew the Tax Collector,
- and Simon the Zealot.

Tax Collectors were traitors to their native Hebrew people.

- They became rich by taking taxes from their countrymen...
- giving them to the Romans...
- and taxing the people more to pay themselves.
 - Tax Collectors were hated by the Jews!

And then you have the zealots.

- Zealots were nationalists and insurrectionists...
- who fought against the Romans.
 - They were violent...
 - and often assassinated Romans...
 - to try to overthrow their oppressors.
- They were more extreme than most Jews at their time.

And Jesus puts a tax collector and a zealot on the same team!

These guys come from completely different worlds!

- In any other capacity Simon would have tried to kill Matthew...
 - and I'm not exaggerating.

APPLICATION

You ever meet a brother at church, and it's just clear...

- nah, we ain't gonna be tight!
 - Now, you probs aren't wanting to kill them...
- But it's a struggle with that dude!

Listen, the Bible is just really honest and clear:

- in this new FAMILY that is the church,
- there's gonna be some DIVERSITY!

You and I are colliding in this place...

- with different backgrounds...
- and different experiences...
 - and this is God's big plan!
 - To take all this diversity...
 - and to create something new and beautiful.

SUB POINT 3: PURPOSE

So, church family is about RELATIONSHIPS, DIVERSITY, and third:

SLIDE PURPOSE.

- If the church is God's household...
 - God's family...
- then the success of a family...
 - isn't measured the same way...
 - some churches measure success.

The purpose of a church family isn't just to get as big as it possibly can.

The PURPOSE of the church...is making disciples.

- More people is NOT NECESSARILY...
- the measurement of purpose for a church.
 - Now, that doesn't mean church growth is a BAD THING...
 - it's just not the MAIN THING.

That's why the vision here at Fathom isn't to GROW BIG!

- No, it's depth...and it's reach.
- It's GO DEEP and REACH WIDE.

APPLICATION: EFFICIENCY

The purpose of a church isn't just to run as professionally as it can.

So, I'm type A...anyone else type A in here?

- This is a safe place to admit this! Ok?
 - So, I like things tight...
 - and efficient...
 - and well done. Ok?

But even though it pains me to say it...

- EFFICIENCY is not the church's highest value.

You're not valued in the church by how much you can contribute...

but by how much you are loved by our heavenly Father.

An underachieving child isn't kicked out of the family.

- In fact, sometimes a troubled or unhealthy child...
 - the child who "produces" very little...
- is the one who receives the most love and attention.

That's why a healthy church often attracts a lot of...

- unhealthy people...
- odd people...
- socially awkward people...
- needy people.

Because the church is one of the few places in this world...

- where those people will be taken in...
 - and find the acceptance...
 - and the love that reflects God's love in the gospel.

It's not about numbers...

it's not about slick programs...

It's about people becoming disciples. That's the PURPOSE.

TRANSITION: HOMELESS

So, that's the church.

It's **SLIDE** HOME...it's FAMILY.

And to the people who say,

- *"I can be a Christian without being a part of a church."*

Listen, you're missing the whole point!

- You might as well say,
 - *"I can be born without being a part of a family."*
- That may be true, but who would want to?
 - *"I can be married and still live alone."*
- It just doesn't compute!

Being a part of a local church is part of what it means to be a Christian.

- The church is family...
 - it's God's household.
- And there are to be no homeless Christians.

Ok, look at the second half of verse 15:

1 TIMOTHY 3:15b

which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

POINT 2: TRUTH

So, there's the second trait of the church as HOME we see.

- It's a place of FAMILY...
- and second, it's a place of **SLIDE** TRUTH.

And Paul now uses architecture...

- a building...
- a literal HOME.

The image is of a pillar and a buttress.

- Pillars would hold up the roof of a structure.
- And buttresses were protective supports...
 - of stone or brick...
 - built against walls...
 - as defensive measures.

So, ancient castles and temples and cathedrals...

relied on these things for structural integrity and protection.

And Paul is saying:

- that the church is **the pillar and buttress OF THE TRUTH.**
 - And, at first sight, it seems odd...
 - for Paul to say that the church...
 - is what holds up and protects the truth.

Isn't that what seminaries or denominations or creeds are for?

But here's what Paul says in Ephesians 2:

SLIDE EPHESIANS 2:19-20

[19] So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone

EXPLAIN

So, the foundation of this building... this HOME...

- is the apostles and prophets...
 - so, that's code for God's Word.
 - God's Word is the foundation!

- And Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of that foundation...
 - a cornerstone is like the foundation of the foundation.
 - It's the stone by which the whole foundation...
 - would be built off of.
- So, with Jesus as the cornerstone...
- and the truth of God's word the foundation...
- then the church is what holds up and protects that very truth.
 - It's the pillar and buttress.
 - The church is a place of **SLIDE TRUTH**.

And what is this truth? Well, verse 16 spells it out:

1 TIMOTHY 3:16

[16] 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.

So, the truth the church is to protect, **is the mystery of godliness**.

And Paul goes on to almost sing...

- that this **mystery of godliness**...is the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - That's what that little tabbed over section is...
 - It's like a song, recounting the story of Jesus.
- Some scholars think this might be a hymn of the early church...
 - that tells a succinct gospel message.

TRANSITION

So, the church is a **SLIDE HOME**.

- It's a place of FAMILY...a household.
- But it's also a place of the TRUTH of the Gospel.

And that's what Paul has given his entire life for.

And, oh by the way, it's what I think we should be giving our lives for.

APPLICATION: COME HOME

Have you experienced the church that way?

- Like I told you at the very beginning of this sermon...
 - becoming a Christian...
 - even in a lame and flawed church...
 - felt like a homecoming for me.
- The thing I had always been searching for...
- was found with God's people.

Now, it's not perfect, just like no HOME is perfect.

- I've been hurt...
- I've been betrayed...
- I've been sinned against...
 - AND I've done all those things, to others, as well...

But it's still HOME.

And so, the take away I'd like us to have today is this:

SLIDE COME HOME.

APPLICATION: WANDER

I think maybe, for some of you, you're like me in high school...

- and you might be experiencing Jesus...
- and the church for the first time,
 - and I'm telling you,
 - if it feels like home...
 - that's cause it is!
- COME HOME for the first time.
 - Believe the gospel...
 - believe on Jesus Christ for salvation and COME HOME.

But for others of you, man, you've been a Christian for a minute...

- but at some point you just kinda drifted...
- or maybe even walked away.
 - That's why the old hymn says,
 - *"Prone to wander...Lord I feel it..."*
 - *Prone to leave the God I love."*

You see, after you have started following God...

- if you wander from him for some time...
- there is a tendency...
- to feel extremely unworthy...
- to return to him.

You know how I know that?

- Because I feel it all the time.
 - I often wander from where I should be.
 - I often run head on into sin and disobedience...
- and my great temptation is to feel like...
- I've somehow out-sinned God's grace and patience.

But I'm telling you...he knew you'd wander!

- He knew all of your failings...
- He knew all of your shortcomings...
- He knew all of those things BEFORE he saved you.

AND HE STILL SAVED YOU!

Listen. Look right at me.

- If you think you disgust God, let me talk to you:
 - All the disgust God has for your sin...
 - was poured out in the brutal death...
 - of Jesus Christ on the cross.

All of his disgust toward you, Christian, is gone.

- You feel janky and unstable?
- You feel like you're constantly tossed about?
 - Look to the cross.
- He absorbed it all.
 - The debt has been paid in full.

And so, if you've wandered...the message to you today is the same:

COME HOME.

CONCLUSION: PRODIGAL

It makes me think of the Parable of the Prodigal Son from Luke 15.

You likely know this one...but hear it again:

There's a son who comes from an incredibly wealthy family!

- They've got land...
- they've got cattle...
- they've got wealth.

And what's more, it's a good home!

- He's got an older brother...
- and a loving father.

It's a picture of a family that we would all love to have!

- But the son has some discontent...
- and so he goes to the father and goes,
 - *"I want out.*
 - *Give me my inheritance.*
 - *This isn't working for me.*
 - *I'm not happy here.*
 - *I want to live my life."*

And so, imagine how heartbroken the father must be.

- To have his son essentially say,
 - *"This HOME you've built for me...*
 - *I despise it!"*

Well, the father gives his son the inheritance.

- And the story goes that the son spends all his inheritance,
- on the party scene and prostitutes.
 - *"I need THIS to be happy...*
 - *I can't be happy at HOME...*
 - *I need SOMETHING ELSE!"*

And don't miss this:

HE GETS EVERYTHING HE COULD EVER DREAM OF!

- Don't miss that!
 - This is what he needs to be happy.
 - This is what he needs to be true to himself.
 - This is what he needs to make life worth living.

- It's distance from the father...
- and it's distance from his family...
- it's distance from HOME.

But when everything plays out...

- he ends up in a pigsty...
- in the mud and excrement...
- starving to death.

CONCLUSION: GOING HOME

And then there's the great little sentence...

- **But when he came to himself...**
 - when that happens...
- he says, "I'm going **SLIDE W/PADS HOME.**"

But as he's walking, in disgrace, back home...you can just see his wrestle.

- He's saying to himself,
 - *"My father will never welcome me home.*
 - *Not with what I've done.*
 - *Not with how I've treated him.*
 - *He would never have me as son...*
 - *but maybe he'll take me on as a servant.*
 - *I've broken his heart...*
 - *but maybe he'll just give me a job."*

But the parable says...

- that as the son crests the hill and HOME comes into view...
 - the father has been waiting for him...
 - scanning the horizon.

And when he sees his son...

- who betrayed him...
- who betrayed the family...
- who betrayed his HOME...

And now he's covered in filth and excrement...

- the Bible says when the Father sees him...HE RUNS.
 - He runs to his boy!

And the son tries to deflect,

- *"Dad, I'm sorry."*
 - *I've dishonored you.*
 - *I've dishonored our home.*
- *I'm no longer worthy to be called you son."*

But the Father won't even listen to that nonsense.

- He just grabs his boy...
- and covers the filth with his own robe...
- and slides the signet ring on his finger...
- and he throws him a party...
 - he kills the fattened calf.

All of this represents FULL ACCEPTANCE of his son, why?

- Because he CAME HOME.
 - He was lost, but now he's found.

APPLICATION

So, some of you need to COME HOME...

- because you've wandered...
- and you've squandered...
- and you've dishonored the HOME God made for you.

But the message is always, COME HOME...

- COME HOME to the household of God...
- which is the church of the living God.

CONCLUSION: OLDER BROTHER

But then there's another son in the story...the older brother.

- And when he hears the music and dancing,
- he asks his servant, who tells him,
 - *"Your brother has come home...*
 - *and your father has received him back!"*

And to that, the older brother pitches a fit.

- And the father comes out to his first born...
 - to entreat him to come to the party...
- but the older brother never comes to the party.

APPLICATION

And I just want some of you to hear that, too.

- You can be IN church...
- and not be AT HOME.
 - This is the going everywhere but belonging nowhere...
 - thing I mentioned earlier.
 - This is CONSUMER CHRISTIANITY.

And I thought about that one day this week as I was on a run.

- The father GOES TO the prodigal.
- AND the father GOES TO the older brother.

He pursues them both!

It's the Father who pursues each one of us to COME HOME.

And man, I've been on both sides of the equation here.

- I've been the PRODIGAL...
- and I've been the PROUD older brother.

ENDING

So, where are you at today?

Do you have a CHURCH HOME...

- Maybe it's here...
- maybe it's somewhere else...

If the answer is no, I want you to prayerfully consider COMING HOME...

You need a place of FAMILY...

You need a place of TRUTH...

- You're welcome in the HOUSEHOLD OF GOD...
- No matter how you've come...

COME HOME.

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

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