The Mystery Of Godliness

1 Timothy 3:16

Objective: Encourage people with the wonderment of God.

Reading: 1 Timothy 3:14-16.

Memory: 1 Timothy 3:16. “Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great…”

Introduction:
1. I hope I never get to a place in life where beautiful sunsets come and go without notice. Where rainbows get to be “old hat”. Where I’m not amazed at the clouds and depth of the sky, or diamonds in the snow. It is sad, but sometimes we get so accustomed to the most amazing things that we hardly notice them. The Gospel itself is one of those things.
2. And because it gets to be so “ordinary”, the church is not always all that it should be. On a lot of different levels. Perhaps in our individual hearts and lives. Perhaps in Christianity as demonstrated in our families. Perhaps in the local congregation, perhaps on larger, regional levels.
3. Part of the problem is that we get too accustomed to something that ought to amaze us. We loose our amazement at what God has done in creating a church. Maybe we loose our amazement of the incredible nature of God Himself. And we shouldn’t! Folks,

We should stand amazed at what God has done. (WHY?)

In Paul’s first letter to Timothy, as Paul is writing to direct Timothy in correcting all kinds of problems and potential problems in the church, Paul shares in 1 Timothy 3:16, a short song about the mystery of Godliness. (“Mystery” here is not something you can’t figure out; it is something amazing that has been revealed) The point is, that if people were appropriately impressed by the nature of what God has done on our behalf in His “godliness”, and to make us “godly”, it would to affect all of our behavior.

So, here are some amazing, awe-inspiring truths that boggle our minds but, nonetheless are true. Six things that ought amaze and inspire us to pure Christian theology and behavior.

Can you imagine…

I. He Appeared In A Body.

A. An Incarnation.
1. John 1:14, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
   a. The very glory of the Creator of the Universe came to live amongst us for a while.
2. Such an honor, such a blessing. Such an astounding concept. Better than a politician coming through town and kissing babies. Better than the president of the United States coming to your house for lunch. Here is the Lord of Lord’s and King or kings the God of all Creation taking the time and the trouble to come and spend some time with us.

B. What a show of God’s love and concern.
1. God spent time in human form to show us how to live right before God. To make an invisible God visible and knowable to us in human terms we can understand. John 1:18, “No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.”
2. Came in the flesh to purchase our release from Satan; Matthew 20:28, “…just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
3. Came in the flesh to seek and save that which was lost.
4. Came in the flesh to make men holy. Colossians 1:21. “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation”.

Better than being visited by Martians! Can you believe God visited us! And can you imagine He…

II. Was Vindicated By The Spirit.

A. Who He is became obvious.
1. By the signs and wonders and miracles He worked.
a. Showed up on the shore and was met by a man possessed by a legion of Demons. Jesus speaks to him and all the demons depart into a herd of pigs and run off the cliff into the Abyss.

b. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised…

c. Romans 1:4: “…who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.”

2. By the signs and wonders and miracles the spirit worked through those who preached Him. Romans 15:18-19, “…I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit.”

3. Not by what the men did, but by what the spirit has done through them!

B. (by the spirit, He was) Seen to be holiness in His very essence.

1. Colossians 2:9, “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,”

2. The very essence of God-ness, the very essence of goodness, love, purity came among us.

3. The spiritually arrogant couldn’t see it for their blindness, but even children could see it in their innocence. No evil was found in Him at all. The ultimate Innocence.

Then the song makes what should be another astounding point: He was…

III. Was Seen By Angels.

A. Angels as heavenly beings and heavenly messengers.

1. A class of created heavenly beings witnessed to Him. At His birth. At His temptation in the wilderness. At His tomb. At His resurrection.

2. They cared for and protected Him.

3. Matthew 26:53, “Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”

4. Mark 1:13, “…and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.”

5. 1 Corinthians 4:9b, the Apostle says, “We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men.”

6. There is a sense in which this action was instructive to heavenly beings as well. Ephesians 3:10, “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

B. “Angels” as human messengers.

1. The word itself means “messenger” or to deliver a message. There, this could refer to the human messengers who saw Him and carried the message.

2. John 1:14b, “…We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

3. 1 John 1:1-2, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.”

4. People saw Him. Worked with Him. Ate with Him. They felt the need to tell others!

Then, as a result, can you imagine, He…

III. Was Preached Among The Nations.

A. The God of all people came to save all people.

1. “Nations” is every ethic group. Every nationality and culture anywhere in Creation! God loves them and wants them and Christ died on their behalf so they can share in the good news.

2. God will abide with them and place His spirit in them no matter what people they come from. He loves them. This includes you personally. Whoever you are!

3. Even includes people you may have been prejudiced towards.
B. (because) It is not about race or nationality, but about kindred spirits.
2. Ephesians 4:4-6, “There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—^5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ^6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”
3. Ephesians 2:14-18, “^4 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ^15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ^16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ^17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ^18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.”
4. The Gospel is for all. Reconciles all. Brings peace to all and between all.

Because, not only was He preaches to all nations, but can you imagine, He…

III. Was Believed On In The World.
A. Everywhere you can go, people have placed their faith in Him.
1. And entrusting themselves to Christ has changed their lives.
2. John 1:12-13, “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—^13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”
3. They are transformed in their minds and spirit. To become like Him in all the essential qualities of humans who have been created in God’s Image.

B. This believing brings different peoples together in one spirit.
1. People from rich, wealthy nations find brotherhood with people from poor third world countries. Brotherhood with nations we used to be a war with.
2. People who live in mud huts and communicate with drums are kindred spirits with people who live in skyscrapers and communicate with satellite cell phones.
3. People of different languages and customs unite in the name of Christ.
4. Everywhere you go, you will find Christians. What an incredible experience to sit in Italy and join in “Amazing Grace” in 4 languages with same tune and spirit!

And, can you imagine, He…

III. Was Taken Up In Glory.
A. Resurrection.
1. Death couldn’t hold Him. He still lives! And always will!
2. Acts 1:9, “After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.”
3. This is the Victory! He has Supremacy in all things. all power and authority. Here is our hope. Here is power and future.
4. Ephesians 1:19b-23, “…That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ^20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ^21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ^22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ^23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”

B. He lives in Glory!
1. Glory is that He is worthy of all honor before all things in heaven and on earth.
2. Glory is perfection; everything great and good and right and as it should be – only infinitely better!
3. Glory is the result of obedience to God – even to death on a cross because it was the Father’s will.
4. Glory is the essence and result of His godliness. And the means to our godliness.
5. “Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great…”

So What?
The Apostle starts this section with verse 14, “Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

To perceive this “mystery of godliness”, is to be enabled to serve as the “pillar and foundation of truth”.

Understanding these amazing concepts is supposed to help us as the church, and each as members of the church, to know how to conduct ourselves in the household of God.

Maybe we should mention one more thought to all these amazing concepts. He brought all of this mystery of godliness into reality because He loves us. Me! You! Doesn’t that alone amaze you? If we can grasp even an inkling of all this mystery, it ought to move and motivate our behavior to holiness and faithfulness to Almighty God in everything we say and do.

Closing Prayer:
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      John 1:14
   B. What a show of God’s love and concern.  
      John 1:18  
      Matthew 20:28  
      Colossians 1:21

II. Was Vindicated By The Spirit.
   A. Who He is became obvious.  
      Romans 1:4  
      Romans 15:18-19
   B. Seen to be holiness in His very essence.  
      Colossians 2:9

III. Was Seen By Angels.
   A. Angels as heavenly beings and heavenly messengers.  
      Matthew 26:53  
      Mark 1:13  
      1 Corinthians 4:9b  
      Ephesians 3:10
   B. “Angels” as human messengers.  
      John 1:14b  
      1 John 1:1-2

IV. Was Preached Among The Nations.
   A. The God of all people came to save all people.
   B. It is not about race or nationality, but about kindred spirits.  
      Ephesians 4:4-6  
      Ephesians 2:14-18

V. Was Believed On In The World.
   A. Everywhere you can go, people have placed their faith in Him.  
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   B. This believing brings different peoples together in one spirit.

VI. Was Taken Up In Glory.
   A. Resurrection.  
      Acts 1:9  
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