

A Plea To Pray

1 Timothy 2:1-8

June 5, 2022

Pastor Francis Bezzam

1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. 7 For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

⁸ I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

If someone asked you, “What is your church about, what is your church like, what are some things that stand out about your church?”

Would someone say that our church is a praying church? I surely hope so.

In the past few weeks, we had covered the first chapter of Paul’s letter to Timothy. And in the last part of the chapter one, Paul tells Timothy to fight the good fight of faith. And we saw the last two weeks that fighting the good fight requires spiritual tools.

Last week, we saw that we must take a stand against the *schemes* of the devil. And I want to share a couple of thoughts about the devil or Satan. Satan is a scheming, crafty deceiver.

You know one of the main *schemes* of the devil? His scheme is to distort and twist the word of God so that you lose their balance and become shipwrecked. We saw this word *schemes* in Ephesians 6:11 –“*Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil*”. And Paul uses this word *schemes* in another passage. In Ephesians 4:14. “*And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes”*

One of the ways that the devil can deceive you is through false teachers and their teaching. By craftiness in deceitful schemes. *So how do we stand against the devil’s schemes?*

Put on the whole armor of God. And one of those indispensable pieces of armor is *prayer*.

So, here in chapter two of 1 Timothy, Paul urges Timothy to pray.

Look at verse one again, Paul says, “*First of all, then, I urge*”. Paul is pleading and imploring with Timothy that this is the first thing he needs to do. First of all. Timothy has heard enough from Paul about the task he has on hand. He needs to instruct false teachers to stop. That is a challenging task. To go and stand before people can be daunting.

So Paul tells Timothy that before he stands to proclaim the true Gospel, he needs to kneel before God. Why? Because prayer opens up the channel to God. Prayer allows God’s favor. Prayer opens up divine resources.

Someone said, “Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint on their knees”.

And Paul answers Timothy the following questions in this passage.

Who are we to pray for and in what way?

Why are we to pray?

What does God desire through your prayer?

How should we pray?

Who are we to pray for and in what way?

Look at verse 1 “*1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions*”.

Pray for all people, for kings, for people in high positions.

Supplications or petitions are urgent requests to meet a need, exclusively addressed to God.

For example, when Paul writes to the church at Philippi, Paul is in prison. The conditions in the prison are very terrible by any standards. So he asks for prayer that he will be delivered from prison. That is the word used here.

Prayers: This word is used in a devotional sense. You need to occupy yourself with prayer. You need pay attention to the solemn duty of prayer.

Intercessions: This word is found only twice in the New Testament. Here and 1 Timothy 4. This is making requests concerning others and on their behalf. Also Paul uses this word for prayer before eating a meal.

Thanksgivings: Giving thanks in all circumstances. Not for all circumstances but in circumstances.

Why are we to pray?

Verse 2 “*that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way*”.

Another translation reads this way “*In order that we may live our life in peace and tranquility in all godliness and dignity*”.

What is Paul talking about here? He does not mean Christians will never have trials. People who have civil government authority and those high officials have a task to promote and tranquility in society. So our prayer ought to be directed towards God for government leaders to promote peace.

Also, Paul is saying our life as a Christian is to live in a godly and dignified way. In every area. Now Paul uses an interesting word to communicate how to live our lives. The word is pronounced “*diago*” in the original. It means to spend your time, to live life.

And Paul the same word to contrast with the way we we once used to live our lives.

In Titus chapter verse 3 through 7. *“For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. ⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life”*.

We were once living ungodly and undignified lives but since the time you experienced God’s goodness and lovingkindness, you became an heir to eternal life. You were forgiven of your sin. You were washed in the righteousness of Jesus. So now, the rest of your life must not be backwards but forward. Forward in godliness, holiness and dignity and decency. There ought to be a marked difference between the people of the world and the people of God. And one mark is godliness and dignity. This is really about our Christian witness in this world. Paul talks about how to live properly in a variety of contexts in letters. Romans 13:13 *“Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy”*.

1 Thessalonians 4:10-12 *“But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, ¹¹ and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, ¹² so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one”*.

So Paul instructs Timothy and the church to pray for all people including leaders in the government. Now you might say, why should I pray for so and so. They have done this that and the other. I don’t agree with their policy or position. Well, you could do something about it. You could pray!

Look at verse 3.

3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior.

When Paul says “this”, he means the praying for all people for those in high positions is *good* and *pleasing* to God.

And why is this good and pleasing to God. Because, God desires that through your prayer he may save them. He may change them.

What does God desire through your prayer?

3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. 7 For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Wow! Is this wonderful news or what? Did you notice whom God desires to save? All people. This is good news! God has no pleasure in the death of anyone (Ezekiel 18). God invites all people to know and truth. Now this statement of Paul can sound very abstract. So we must understand how God sees people. Paul wrote in the previous chapter 1 Timothy 1:15 “Christ into the world to save sinners”. If all people are sinners in the sight of God, you could say that God desires all sinners to be saved. And what are sinners saved from?

Recently, a few of us were in Louisville for a Gospel conference. And one of the days we were there, we took a cab to the conference from the hotel. The cab driver asked why we were there. And we told him why. And then he said he was saved four times that day. He was probably referring to people who had presented him the Gospel on the cab ride. And so I asked the man, “Do you know what you are saved from?”. Almost immediately he replied and said, “I don’t want to know”. Now I don’t know what was presented to this man in the Gospel but sinners need saving from God’s judgment.

That is why Paul says *God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*. True knowledge about salvation is this: God is the Judge of sinners. Sinners will perish and die if they continue sinning. But the good news is that God desires all people to be saved. And who is the Savior of sinners? God is. That is saving news. And Paul dials in to the specifics of this saving news:

1. Verse 5 and 6 – *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.*
 - a. One God. One Mediator. One Savior. Jesus Christ is both God and man. The bridge between sinful people and a Holy God. And what did Jesus do? He gave himself as a ransom for all sinners. So when sinners confess, repent and accept the enormous price that was paid on the cross for their sin, they are fully forgiven of their sin. They are no longer condemned but saved. Now the phrase “*which is the testimony given at the proper time*” probably means God is sovereign over the timing of saving people. But it doesn’t happen without the proclamation of the Gospel.

- b. In verse 7, Paul says “*For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.*” Meaning he was hand picked by God to preach this good and saving news for all people especially to the Gentiles – meaning the non-Jewish people.

Who are we to pray for and in what way?

Why are we to pray?

What does God desire through your prayer?

How are we to pray?

Verse 8:

⁸ I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

Paul now gives the practical instructions how are we to pray. Here Paul specifically refers to how men should pray. By lifting up holy hands.

Lifting up holy hands is a figurative expression. People had practiced praying by raising their hands and this became a common expression of faith. Paul is pointing out that more than the physical aspect of raising hands, men should be united in prayer. It's the attitude of prayer that counts more than the raising of hands. Without anger and disputing. Men who are given to anger and quarrelling will not have their prayers received by God. The heart condition must be approved before God before they pray. Paul says in every place. Most likely this is to say where ever a Gospel meeting is held, men should pray. Does Paul women say should not pray here? He doesn't say that. He simply says how men should pray.

In writing to the Thessalonians, Paul addresses the whole church there both men and women. There he says in chapter 5 verse 17. Pray without ceasing. Pray constantly. Pray regularly. Pray for all people. Jesus said “Pray for those who persecute you”. Pray for your leaders. God desires to save them.

“The deepest need of the church today is not any material or external thing, but the deepest need is spiritual. Prayerless work will never bring in the kingdom. We neglect to pray in the prescribed way. We seldom enter the closet and shut the door for a season of prayer. Kingdom interests are pressing on us thick and fast and we must pray” A. J Gordon

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: A Plea To Pray. 1 Timothy 2:1-8

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. Why does Paul plead with Timothy and the church to pray?

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. Do you believe your prayers can be an instrument in God's hand for the building up and the salvation of others? How?
3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. For personal reflection: Is there anything keeping from praying as the Bible instructs?