

Message #7**I Timothy 2:1-8**

The Apostle Paul was a man who knew the importance of prayer. Paul's letters are filled with many prayers and he challenges the church to be a place of prayer.

I Timothy is a book that is designed to make the church a pillar and support of the truth of God and one of the keys to making the church become this is prayer.

THE CHURCH OF GOD IS TO BE A PILLAR AND SUPPORT OF THE TRUTH OF GOD BY BEING A PLACE THAT PRAYS FOR ALL TYPES OF PEOPLE.

Prayer is critical to the life of the church and to the life of the individual, and it is the first subject Paul addresses when he begins his discussion on church worship and organization.

HEADING #1 – The priority of prayer in the church. **2:1**

You will notice **verse 1** begins with the words “first of all.” Prayer is of first importance for church life. Duane Litfin said, “What too often comes last in a church's priority should actually come first.”

- 1) The word “entreaty” means that God wants His people praying for specific needs.
(G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 99).
- 2) The word “prayers” means that God wants His people praying generally for a variety of things
(*Ibid.*, p. 348).
- 3) The word “petitions” means that God wants His people meeting with Him to converse with Him and to petition Him (*Ibid.*, p. 156)
- 4) The word “thanksgiving” means that God wants us always to express gratitude in our prayers.

Collectively, these words are designed to get the church to become a powerful place of prayer.

HEADING #2 – The objects of prayers made in the church. **2:1b-2a**

Group #1 - Prayers are to be prayed in behalf of all men. **2:1b**

The particular Greek structure indicates that prayers are to be made in the church for all types of people.

Group #2 - Prayers are to be prayed in behalf of political leaders. **2:2a**

Let us remember that when Paul wrote these words, he had a specific king in mind, Nero. Nero was growing more and more intolerant toward Christianity.

Many Christians hated Nero. What were they to do as believers? Were they to criticize him, condemn him or question him? No, they were to pray for him!

The earliest known letter we have available today that was a church document outside of the New Testament was a letter written by Clement of Rome to the Corinthians near the end of the first century. In this letter we get a remarkable glimpse as to how the early church was functioning. The letter was written during an intense time of persecution of Christianity.

“Give harmony and peace to us and to all who dwell on the earth, just as you did to our fathers when they reverently ‘called upon you in faith and truth,’ ...while we render obedience to your almighty and most excellent name, and to our rulers and governors on earth. You, Master, have given them the power of sovereignty through your majestic and inexpressible might, so that we, acknowledging the glory and honor which you have given them, may be subject to them, resisting your will in nothing. Grant to them, Lord, health, peace, harmony and stability, that they may blamelessly administer the government which you have given them. For you, heavenly Master, King of the ages, give to the sons of men glory and honor and authority over those upon the earth. Lord, direct their plans according to what is good and pleasing in your sight, so that by devoutly administering in peace and gentleness the authority which you have given them they may experience your mercy. You, who alone are able to do these and even greater good things for us, we praise through the high priest and guardian of our souls, Jesus Christ, through whom be the glory and the majesty to you both now and for all generations and for ever and ever. Amen” (J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 62-63).

Group #3 - Prayers are to be prayed in behalf of all in authority. **2:2b**

It is an interesting thing—those who do the most complaining about the leadership do the least praying for the leadership. God wants all in authority prayed for.

HEADING #3 – The reasons for prayers made in the church. **2:2c-4**

Reason #1 - The peaceful reason. **2:2c**

The word “tranquil” and “quiet” are interesting and different. “Tranquil” is a word that refers to having peace from without and “quiet” has to do with having peace from within (G. Abbott-Smith, pp. 200-201).

In other words, a key to living life in a way that is externally and internally free from trouble and turmoil is prayer for others. The key to calm in the midst of chaos is prayer. People who pray will have a peace that passes all human understanding no matter what they are facing.

The word “godliness” refers to a reverence for God that is demonstrated by a piety in life. The term “dignity” refers to a life that is serious and grave (*Ibid.*, p. 189-404). The truth is we will not be at peace in ourselves until we are living a godly life that is very serious about God, His Word and will.

Reason #2 - The acceptable reason. **2:3**

The church must place a high priority on prayer because this is what is good and acceptable in the sight of God.

Reason #3 - The evangelistic reason. **2:4a**

God is our Savior and His wish is that all kinds of sinful people be saved. God has a desire, a wish and a will that is for men of all classes and all walks of life to be saved. All men are lost, all men have fallen short of the glory of God, and God has a desire for all to be saved.

Now the major theological debate that exists concerns the meaning of this text, what is meant by the statement God desires “all men” to be saved. If the answer to the question is God wants everybody saved, then we must admit what God desires or wishes or wills is not coming to pass because God’s Word makes it clear all men will not be saved. The issue is further complicated by the theological reality that no one can even be saved unless God causes it (i.e. John 6:44-45, 63, 65; Rom. 9:14-18).

Grammatically, Paul’s point is that God wishes the character and quality of all kinds of men to be saved. It is not just men specifically, but men, women and children, all classes of people. All kinds of men from the lowest class to the highest class; from kings to slaves; from those with authority to those without authority; from sinners who are blatant heathens to sinners who are highly religious.

Furthermore, as we shall see, there is clearly a contextual point that God desires “all men,” both Jews and Gentiles, to be saved. Now the point is this: prayer for all men is critical to salvation. All kinds of people have access to the Gospel through the prayers offered in the church.

Reason #4 - The developmental reason. **2:4b**

I view the conjunction “and” as giving another coordinate reason why prayer should be emphasized in the church because God desires that all kinds of people who are saved come to the knowledge of the truth. The word “knowledge” is the word for knowledge-upon-knowledge, or deep knowledge. In other words, God does not just desire that all kinds of people be saved; He also wants them to develop into a deep understanding and relationship with Him. That comes, in part, through prayer.

Deep development demands prayer. Proverbs 2:3 says, “For if you cry for discernment and lift your voice for understanding...then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God.”

HEADING #4 – The Gospel that prayer opens in the church. **2:5-7**

The conjunction “for,” which begins **verse 5**, gives a further explanation of the Gospel that people need to understand to be saved. In order for all types of people, in order for anyone to be saved, they must understand that there is only one way to have access to God, and that is through Jesus Christ.

John Calvin said of these verses, if this language does not express the vicarious work of Jesus Christ in behalf of men, there is no language possible that could ever express it (Calvin, p. 60).

Christ is the one and only mediator who is able to work out an eternal peace settlement between Holy God and sinful man. Christ is the one who paid the complete price to save all types of sinners.

In fact, it is interesting that the word “ransom” contains the preposition “anti” and the word “for” is the preposition “huper.” Combined, these prepositions teach that Christ’s sacrifice was not only in our place, in our stead, but His sacrifice was far above and beyond any other sacrifice that could ever be offered.

There are misguided individuals who suggest that because Christ gave Himself as a ransom for all that automatically means all who are saved (universalism). However, if we examine passages like Matt. 20:28 and Mark 10:45, we see that it is stated that Christ gave Himself “a ransom for many,” not “all.” How are we to interpret this variation?

The answer is found in **verses 6-7**. Both Matthew and Mark are stressing Christ died for the nation Israel, whereas Paul, who is the apostle to the Gentiles, is emphasizing Christ died for all people, both Jew and Gentile. At the proper time, at the proper dispensational moment, it was revealed that Christ’s ransom was for all kinds of men, not just Jews.

Paul took preaching and teaching very seriously. Here he equates it with being an apostle.

HEADING #5 – The prerequisite for prayer that is powerful in the church. **2:8**

Fact #1 - Prayer is specifically to be offered to God by men. **2:8a**

The original has a real emphasis on the fact that men are to pray and be prayer warriors in the church. They are to pray publically and privately. They are to lead the church in prayer.

Fact #2 - Prayer is to be offered by men in every place. **2:8b**

Men are to pray in the church and in the home, and are to offer prayers in private.

Fact #3 - Prayer is to be offered by men out of a holy life. **2:8c**

The image of lifting up holy hands is one that connects to having a holy heart and life (i.e. James 4:8).

Fact #4 - Prayer is to be offered by men without wrath. **2:8d**

Now the word for wrath is one that speaks of an impulsive anger–outbursts of temper.

Fact #5 - Prayer is to be offered by men without dissension. **2:8e**

If one is in continual disputes with others, his or her prayers won't accomplish much of anything.

Broken relationships do affect one's prayer life (Matt. 5:22-24; 6:12; I Pet. 3:7).

Is prayer a vital part of our life? If not, we are missing the power of God!