

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 3.5.2023

THE GOSPEL IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH - PART 5 - PRAYER AND SALVATION

I. INTRODUCTION

1 Timothy 2:1-7

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.

II. AN EXHORTATION TO PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE

OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE

- First means primacy of importance. This is of the highest priority to the church.
- We would do well to take note of Paul's concern for what is of paramount importance.
- It is important to the right ordering of the public worship of the church.
- Worship in the church should be orderly (1 Cor. 14:10).
- All things should be done for the building up, the edification of the church (1 Cor. 14:26).

- *"Then, I urge..."* This is a strong exhortation. Paul urges and exhorts Timothy to give priority to what is essential to public worship.
- Guarding sound doctrine is linked to prayer.
- A church's prayer is a reflection of its doctrine.
- Though we will only get through v4 today, the main thought of this passage goes through v7.
- I want you to pay attention to the repeated words in this passage because they help us rightly interpret what it means.
- You will find the word "all" used four times to stress the global or universal concern of the church in public worship.
- God's plan and our duty has wide-ranging implications.
- First, prayers are to be made for all people (1).
- Second, God our Savior, desires all people to be saved (3-4).
- Third, Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all (6).
- Fourth, even though the word 'all' is not used in 7, Paul stresses how he is a preacher, apostle, and teacher to the Gentiles to demonstrate that this gospel is to go to all people everywhere (7).
- These four truths are in the forefront of Paul's message to Timothy.
- The church's concern is for everyone. The church is not to be exclusive but inclusive.

ALL KINDS OF PRAYERS

- *"...supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made..."*
- This is the church's responsibility, to offer up supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings.
- It's really not important to try to define what Paul means by these terms.
- The point is to insist on the centrality of prayer, it is of paramount importance.
- All types of prayers are to be made.

- What is prayer?
- Baptist Catechism, Q. 105
- What is Prayer? Prayer is an offering up our desires to God, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, for things agreeable to His will, in the name

of Christ, believing with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of His mercies.

- Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 116
- Why is prayer necessary for Christians? Because it is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us: and also, because God will give his grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desires continually ask them of him, and are thankful for them.

• **Prayer is the expression of our thankfulness and dependance on God through requests.**

- It's asking God for things—what we need or desire to have.
- There is no greater need we have than more of God, to know him more, love him more, obey him more.
- When we pray we are declaring our dependence on God to bring things about that we cannot of our own.
- Prayer teaches us to trust him and place our faith in Him.

- Prayer is not trying to convince God to go along with our plan.
- Prayer is not attempting to twist God's arm and conform his will to mine.
- Prayer is for us. Prayer changes us. It does not change God.
- Prayer is a means God has ordained to bring about what He has purposed.
- And our confidence is that God answers prayers.
- Phil. 4:6 instructs us that "...in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."
- We are to pray for anything and everything!
- There is no limit to the things we can pray for.

- We see this pattern of the primacy of prayer in the early church.
- Acts 2:42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.
- Acts 4 they pray for boldness in the face of persecution Acts 4:23-31).
- Acts 6 the apostles have deacons appointed so they can devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4).

- It's no wonder our enemy works hard to keep Christians in a prayerless state.
- Samuel Chadwick, 19th century Methodist minister wrote, "*The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless works, and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray.*"

- So, pray, all kinds of prayers.
- Prayer should characterize our life as the people of God and followers of Christ.

ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE

- Paul instructs that all kinds of prayers are to be made "for all people."
- What does he mean by "all people?" We have to define "all."
- Many scholars believe that Paul is addressing an exclusivist spirit that had crept into the Ephesian church.
- False teachers were limiting salvation to a small group of religious elites.
- Paul is aiming to break this exclusivist spirit by exhorting that prayers should be made for everyone without distinction.
- This narrow-minded thinking is an offense to the gospel of Christ that is extended to all without distinction.
- Jews and Gentiles must pray for each other.
- The scope of the church's prayer is universal and global.
- "All" doesn't mean praying for each and every person in the world, but rather no one is excluded from the scope of the church's prayers.

PRAY FOR ALL WHO ARE IN HIGH POSITIONS

- 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.
- We are to especially pray for all leaders in high positions.
- Christians are to pray for even those kings and rulers who cause the suffering of God's people.
- We don't just pray for those in authority who are sympathetic to Christianity but especially for those who are not.

III. GOD'S DESIRE FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL PEOPLE

PEACEFUL AND QUIET LIVES

- There are two reasons we should be praying for all people, especially those who are in rulership.
- First, is that we can expect to lead peaceful and quiet lives, godly and dignified in every way (2).
- This is how the church can have the greatest influence:
- As we pray for all the lost people around us.
- As we pray for all those in high positions.

- No one falls outside of our requests for prayers, all fall under the sphere of a church's prayer covering.
 - We pray for them so that peace and righteousness can be the outcome and for the church to flourish.
 - Rom. 13, the role of the state is clearly defined as preserving law and order, to punish evildoers, and to promote the general welfare of its citizens.
 - When the state exercises its God-ordained role, in a stable society, the church is free to worship God, obey his laws and spread the gospel.
 - The church is to pray for the state, that is our responsibility.
- Pray for those who hate Christianity, pray for those you hate and are your enemies.
 - It becomes harder to hate someone when you are praying for them.
 - We want to be able to live peaceful and quiet lives, freely able to live out the moral implications of the gospel.
 - The witness of the church is much more powerful when we can openly, in freedom, live out the implications of the gospel among the people around us.
 - This is good and pleasing to God.
 - It facilitates the propagation of the gospel.

GOD'S BENEVOLENT DISPOSITION

- The second reason we should pray for all people, especially those who are in high positions is a theological reason.
 - 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.
 - We should pray for all people because this is God's disposition, this is his desire, for all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
 - This text establishes definitively God's desire for all people to be saved, thus we are commanded to pray for all people in all nations for their salvation.
 - 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.
- What does this mean? Does it mean that everyone will be saved? Does this lead us to universalism?
 - No, it cannot mean that as the rest of Scripture testifies.
 - Doesn't Scripture teach the doctrine of divine election, in which God sovereignly chooses whom he will save out of the mass of condemned humanity? Does this verse contradict that?
 - No, where there is a seeming contradiction within Scripture, the contradiction is not with Scripture but with our understanding, we must let Scripture interpret Scripture.
 - Hermeneutical principle: the Analogy of Scripture. Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture.
 - Scripture teaches election both in the OT and NT.
 - **Deut 7:6-8** "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.
 - **Ephesians 1:3-6** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.
 - Romans 9 presents the teaching of election in no uncertain terms.
- We unapologetically believe and hold to the doctrine of divine election.
 - We can do that while simultaneously holding to the complementary truth that it is God's desire for all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.
 - Scripture affirms both.
 - The offer of the gospel is universal in its scope.
 - We are not to withhold the preaching of the gospel to anyone.
 - God does desire for everyone to know him and come to him in repentance and faith.
 - We affirm that.
- This does not mean that all will be saved!
 - Again, we have to define "all."
 - He cannot mean every single person for that would mean no one perishes in their sins and faces eternal judgment for their rejection of Christ.
 - He is using 'all' like he did previously to mean not every single person but all kinds of people, not without exception but without distinction.
- What we see in this verse is God's true disposition and nature.
 - This is his benevolent disposition towards all men.

- Ezekiel 33:11 Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?
- That should be our disposition as well. This is why we should pray for all men.
- Romans 10:1 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.
- Do you desire the salvation of those who are lost?

- God's desire is not God's decree.
- Whatever God decrees and wills to do that will always be accomplished and succeed.
- Isaiah 46:8-11 "Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, 9 remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,' 11 calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.

- God has not decreed that all men will be saved, though it is his desire.
- God does not want all men to perish but they will perish by their own fault because of their rebellion and sin. That is what all of mankind deserves.
- Man is totally depraved and unwilling and incapable of reaching out to God for salvation.
- **John 3:16-19** "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.
- All of humanity is under condemnation.
- We hate the light. We love the darkness.
- If God were to leave us in our natural state, doing what we want to do of our own will, we will always reject him.
- Condemnation reveals his justice, he is a holy God, wickedness must be punished.
- He could let all of humanity perish in their sin. He would be perfectly right and justified to do that.
- What does God do? He chooses to reveal his grace and mercy by choosing a people out of the mass of condemned humanity as a gift to his Son thus ensuring the success of His Son's work.
- John 6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.
- Without God's electing grace, there would be none that are saved and would come to the knowledge of the truth.
- John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.
- No one can come because they do not want to come.
- Those whom the Father draws, effectually calls, will come to Christ.
- We are to pray for everyone and proclaim the gospel to everyone.
- God will save everyone he has appointed unto eternal life.

- How can Paul make this inclusivist claim that God desires all people to be saved while simultaneously teaching the exclusivist doctrine of divine election?
- The answer is in v5-6
- There is One God and One Mediator.
- The oneness of God is the foundation for the universality of the gospel.
- There is only one God and there is no salvation apart from this One God and the One Mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all.

CONCLUSION

- Paul is through this passage, encouraging the church to be mindful of the mission of the Church, which is Christ's mission—He came to seek and save the lost.
- We are to pray for all people, every kind of people, without distinction.
- We should be motivated by a desire to see the lost come to the knowledge of the truth.
- When we come together, we are to pray all kinds of prayers for all kinds of people so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives, and for the advancement of the gospel.
- Pray knowing that God desires their salvation so that they may come to know God, who deserves the worship of all people.

- Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a

loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

- May that vision provoke you to pray bold and audacious prayers for the salvation of all nations.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?