

Text: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Title: Praying for All Men

Truth: Believers are to pray for the salvation of the Lost because such prayers are pleasing to God.

Date/Location: Sunday February 26, at FBC

Introduction

From his concerns about false teachers Paul turned to issues relating to the worship of the church. Paul begins with instructions concerning prayer (2:1–7) and then moves to matters regarding the roles of men and women (2:8–15) in the context of corporate worship.

I already taught on 1 Timothy 2:1-7 back in December (2022) during our personal evangelism series, which means for some of you this will be review. At the time, I broke this section into two messages, but this morning we look at verses 1-7 as one unit. I hope to offer additional application from the text that we did not deal with before. We'll see next time in verses 8-15 that prayer is a key element of how Christians men and women are to live.

The exhortation that we find in 2:1 stands first in a series of exhortations in the letter. By stating it first, Paul may also be indicating that this practice is of utmost importance in the church. I encourage us all to examine when and where we practice this discipline in the life of the church, if at all.

I. Prayer for All Men (vv.1-2a)

Paul references four types of prayer that are to be offered for all men. Though most of us do not actively think about the kind of prayer we are praying, we ought to give careful attention that we are not praying only for personal requests. Some of these types of prayer are very similar, but we can discern slight nuances between them. Paul uses four different words for prayer for added on emphasis on the importance of praying for the salvation of all men.

- A) **Supplications** (Gr. δεήσεις): that which is asked with urgency based on a need. We offer prayers of this kind often, whether it be someone with a financial or health need. We may admit that most of our supplications are focused on material or physical needs, not spiritual. But in 1 Timothy 2:1, the need is spiritual in nature. Because Paul's concern (v.2b) is for believers to live quiet and peaceable lives, we are to pray for all men.
- B) **Prayers** (Gr. προσευχάς): refers to prayers of all kinds without distinction. This is the most general word used for prayer (1 Peter 3:7; cf 1 Tim 5:5).
- C) **Intercessions** (Gr. ἐντεύξεις): to speak on behalf of someone else to one in authority (Acts 25:24; Rom 8:34, 11:2 Heb 7:25; 1 Tim 4:5). The person who offers this kind of prayer is acting as an intercessor, standing as it were between the person who has a need and God asking God to meet that need. As it relates to praying for the salvation of unsaved people, this kind of prayer is essential. Who will intercede on behalf of the unsaved if you do not? You have access into the throne room of grace, and you must present their need to God. Who else will? Certainly, the rest of the world has no care for the eternal destiny about their soul. Therefore, the responsibility of praying for the salvation of unbelievers falls on the shoulders of Christians. Intercessory prayer as taught in this passage teaches us that prayer is not just about ourselves or only the needs of believers.
- D) **Giving of Thanks** (Gr. εὐχαριστία): to express gratitude for benefits or blessings (1 Tim 4:3, 4; Acts 24:3; 1 Cor 14:16). Last in this series, Paul urges us to offer prayers of thanksgiving. This word draws attention to the fact that all our requests and petitions should be accompanied by expressions of thankfulness and gratitude to God. As it relates to the salvation of the lost, we should offer prayers of thanksgiving when God grants salvation to an unsaved person, or when we have had an opportunity to share

the Gospel with the person, or when the person has read the Bible or asks questions about our faith in Christ.

- E) For whom are we to pray? Paul states that such prayers should be made on behalf of all men. Prayer for the salvation should extend to all people without exception, including kings (or presidents) and who are in a position of authority over us. Paul draws attention to the fact that those in leadership positions exercise authority in high places should be special objects of a prayer because the way they exercise their authority effects our lives as Christians. The breadth of prayers should not be limited to those who we agree with politically or who operate by a moral standard similar to our own. This may be difficult for some who are experiencing intense persecution from their government officials.

Your reasoning is contrary to God's Word if you think that there are some who are undeserving of God's redeeming work. We do not want to find ourselves in the company of a person like the prophet Jonah, who did not want God to be merciful to the Ninevites because he thought them undeserving of grace.

- F) Praying for the salvation of for our leaders, like our president or governor has spiritual implications. Our civil and military leaders first and foremost need salvation just like all other people. Furthermore, in positions of high power, people have the natural sinful tendency to use this power for personal gain and to endorse evil practices in society and even in government policies. We must be vigilantly praying that God would grant them wisdom and discernment in their positions of authority. We ought to pray for their humility and recognition that it is God who has ultimately placed them there (Rom 13:1).

II. The Purpose of Praying for All Men (v.2b)

- A) The "that" (or "in order that" in some translations) indicates the purpose of our prayer for the salvation of our authorities. We are

to pray for our authorities and officials because it offers certain advantages to Christians in this life. In this sense, our prayers have more than one end in mind. We are praying for their salvation, which in turn affects our ability as Christians to live out our lives in God-honoring way.

- B) Paul states that the purpose of prayers is so that as a result we have a more positive setting to live quiet and peaceable lives as Christians (1 Tim 2:2b). If we have Christians in places of high authority who operate on biblical principles, or non-Christians whom God is restraining in answer to our prayers, it has a societal impact that is positive on Christians seeking to live out God’s Word. It also produces a kind of calmness in society, rather than views that promote behaviors that cause unrest, unruliness, and make it difficult for Christians to obey God’s Word without causing a disturbance in society.
- C) Let’s be clear on the meaning of a quiet and peaceable life. This clause is limited by what follows at the end of verse two—godliness and reverence. We don’t interpret “quiet and peaceable” to mean a peaceful life void of physical hardship or spiritual warfare. If you are imaging in your minds’ eye that a “quiet and peaceable” is a life of ease sitting on your back porch all day that is not Paul’s concern. Paul’s concern is a societal setting in which Christians can live a godly life, operate with unthreatened freedom to speak truth without being silenced, share the Gospel freely anywhere to anyone, be free from persecution or political agendas that might hinder Gospel impact, freedom, speak and conduct their life in a manner that that conforms to Scripture and is a witness to the unsaved.
- D) **A quiet and peaceable life is to be prayed for as a setting in which we can strive live in godliness and reverence.** Paul is not implying that we are dependent on the salvation of our leaders to live godly and reverent lives. We ought to be striving to do that no

matter the spiritual condition of our authorities. However, their approval or disapproval of our faith and conduct does influence our ability to freely express our beliefs without consequence. It is not wrong to pray for an environment in which we can accomplish this goal. Paul says we ought to pray for this! It is right to desire to be able to live in godliness and dignity without fear of recourse. We also understand it is a privilege to suffer for the name of Christ (2 Tim 1:8; 3:12) if such a setting is nonexistent where you find yourself.

King Josiah ushered in a revived spiritual environment in Israel by honoring God's word and obeying His commands. We should pray that God would appoint leaders who will honor the Word of God and follow His commands so that it influences the law of the land and freedoms that we have as Christians.

III. The Reasons We Pray for the Lost (vv. 3-7)

- A) Verses three and four give us the reasons why such prayers should be offered. First, *praying for all men to be saved is good and acceptable in the sight of God* (v.3). We ought to pray thoughtfully, making sure that what we pray for is consistent with what God's moral will (Rom 9:3, 10:1). **We can be assured that our prayers for the Lost is always good and pleasing in the eyes of God our Savior.**
- B) Second, *praying for the Lost is consistent with God's desire* (Ezek. 18:23, 32; Jn 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:10; Titus 2:11; 2 Pt. 3:9). Some argue that God does *not* desire all men to be saved. Rather, the "all" here refers to "all without distinction" (i.e., both Jews and Gentiles) or "all kinds of people." I am sympathetic to this interpretation because other Scriptures clearly delimit the "all" (Isa 53:11; Matt 1:21, 26:28; Mk 10:45; Jn 13:1, 15:13-14). Furthermore, we know that the doctrine of election teaches us that God has predestined us for adoption before the foundation

of the world (Eph 4:1-5; see Eph 1:11). However, though we ought not excuse what the rest of Scripture says, we also need to allow a text to stand on its own to feet as well.

- i. Is it contradictory to Scripture then to say that God desires all people to be saved? I do not think we have to delimit the “all” in this verse in order to reconcile what may seem to be a contradiction to the doctrine election or the extent of the atonement.
- ii. God’s revealed will (that which he has revealed in Scripture) is that all people to repent (Acts 17:30). It is possible that God’s prescribed will is what Paul has in mind when he says this. In other words, we ought to pray for the lost to be saved because God has commanded them to repent and be saved.
- iii. I believe that it does not contradict the character of God to say that He has a true desire for the salvation of all and yet has purposed that not everyone be saved. Christ had an appropriate (good) desire in the garden on the night of his betrayal to not go forward with the act of bearing the weight of sin and experience in himself the cost of sin. Yet, he was voluntarily obedient to the will of the Father.

Regardless of how you interpret this text, we are to pray indiscriminately for all the Lost. We do not know who the elect are. We know that it is pleasing when we pray for all me “to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” To come to a knowledge of the truth means that God has opened your eyes to the truth of the Gospel and you understand as the truth. This in contrast to what you formerly believed as the truth, whether it be some false religion or worldly philosophy.

C) The third reason we pray for the salvation of the Lost is *because there is only one way of salvation* (vv. 5-7). A fundamental teaching of Christianity is that God is One (Deut. 4:35, 39; 6:4; Isa. 43:10;

44:6; 45:5–6, 21–22; 46:9; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6). **The fundamental truth that there is one God not only highlights the Tri-unity of the three persons of the Godhead but also God’s eternal exclusivity.** “This truth runs counter to the pluralistic religiosity of our world, which rejects the concept of any exclusive religious truth. We are taught by the spirit of our age that the gods of the Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus are to be charitably considered equally valid gods.”¹ However, if this were true, there be little to no reason for us to pray so urgently for the unsaved to come to the knowledge of the truth.

E) There is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ (v.5b). The word mediator refers to someone who acts as an arbitrator between two parties (Heb 4:14-16, 9:24). Moses acted as a mediator between the people of Israel and God at Mt. Sinai (Ex 18:19, 19:21-24, 32:30). Aaron and Levitical priesthood acted as mediators between God and men. However, Moses, Aaron, and the Levites were imperfect mediators because of their own moral imperfections.

Job wished that there could be a man who could arbitrate between himself and God. A person who could “lay his hand” upon both parties and mediate between the two (Job 9:32-33). Christ is uniquely qualified to be the perfect Mediator. How so? He is both fully God—in every aspect of His essence—and He is fully Man—uniquely qualified to reconcile mankind with God (Heb 8:6, 9:15, 12:24). Christ presently functions as our Mediator.

F) Jesus Christ is the ransom for all.² Ransom means to buy out of slavery by the payment of a ransom price (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 1:30; 1 Pt 1:18-19; Rev 5:9). Apart from the payment of Christ himself

¹ 1 *Timothy*. MacArthur NT Commentary. Chicago: Moody Press, 1995. Pg 71.

² There are non-redemptive provisional aspects of the atonement that are applicable to all men, not just the elect.

we are all in bondage to sin (Jn 8:34; Gal 3:22; Titus 2:14; 3:3; 1 Pt 1:18). Ransom is a significant theological term to describe Christ's substitutionary death on the cross for us, which was a payment sufficient for all men. Think about this fact, **Christ did not merely pay a ransom to free us from our sin, He himself was the ransom** (Mk 10:45). Christ voluntarily gave His life (Jn 10:17-18), not just something He possessed.

- G) Paul was appointed to be an apostle of Christ to testify of the risen Christ and to be a preacher of the Gospel. This Gospel was available to both Jew and Gentile. If the Gospel were exclusive to just Jews, as perhaps some were teaching in the church in Ephesus, this would undercut Paul's calling. What Paul said was to be accepted as the truth. Paul was not lying about his calling to be a herald of the Gospel (Rom 9:1). We, like Paul, are called to be proclaimers of the Gospel. That call, like Paul's divine commission, is based on God's desire that all be saved.

Conclusion

In obedience to God's Word, we are called to participate both corporately and individually in the activity of praying for our all men. Such prayers should especially be on behalf of those in authority because their leadership role effects the Christians' ability to lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and reverence.

We ought to pray for the salvation of all because we know that it is pleasing in the sight of God, because He desires that all people to be saved. We ought to pray indiscriminately because we do not know whom God's elect are. Praying for salvation also reflects the fundamental truth that there is only one way of salvation. It points to the exclusivity of the only one true Living God.

We pray for the salvation of the unsaved we can have confidence that God will answer these prayers according to His perfect will, including providing a way for them to hear the Gospel. But be ready, His answer to your prayer may include you going and telling them the Gospel!