

Title: First of All - Prayer

Text: I Timothy 2:1-8

Turn in your Bibles to I Timothy chapter 2. Today, we come to 2A on your outline. We are beginning the second section in this little letter of Paul to his brother in the Lord, Timothy. This second section (2A) deals with THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PEOPLE WITHIN THE CHURCH. You see, I Timothy is concerned with how we conduct ourselves in the household of God, which is the church of the living God. So, what are some of the things we are suppose to be doing as Christians?

I Timothy chapter 2, beginning with Vs 1 .. (Read Vs 1-8)

### Prayer

FIRST OF ALL -- WHAT? What is Paul talking about that is FIRST OF ALL? Answer: Prayer. Beginning with chapter 2, Paul is instructing the young man Timothy about several things that were to be done in the church. (1B) And the first thing that is on his agenda is PRAYER.

Some folks read this verse, "FIRST OF ALL, THEN I URGE THAT....." And then these items in order: First, supplications -- secondly, prayer -- third, petitions -- and finally, thanksgiving.

NO .. NO .. it really isn't in that order

The words, "FIRST OF ALL" are tied in with the word "urge." I am urging for the first thing on my agenda -- PRAYER. You see, Paul has a list of things that he wants to instruct Timothy and the church. He is going to talk about "WOMEN IN THE CHURCH." We will look at that subject next Sunday (that is, if I am brave enough and my wife let's me).

Then Paul is going to talk about the office of Pastor and Deacon.

But, FIRST OF ALL, he is going to talk about Prayer. Prayer was the number one thing on his agenda of instructions to the church. Now, there are a number of things that I want to share with you concerning Prayer.

(1C) So, let's look at Vs 1 and the COMMAND TO PRAY.

Vs 1 says, "First of all, then, I urge.." The word "urge" in the Greek carries the idea of a command. It is not just a mere suggestion. Dear friends, it is God's command to us to pray.

Jesus said <sup>vs</sup> that men are always to pray. Prayer is to be the number one duty of all of God's people. And yet, it is the thing that we least do. It is the thing that many Christians, by their attitude or lack of, do not do. ~~Very few Christians spend much time, these days, in prayer.~~ Oh, we pray in formal meetings...we pray in church...we might ask prayer at the dinner table..BUT, few Christians spend time alone with God ~~on their knees~~ in prayer.

And that is sad. This is an area we need to be aware of. If we are not presently spending time in prayer each day, then we need to make that commitment. START TODAY...Spend time in prayer.

That is bad enough. But, here in this verse, Paul is talking about public prayer. Prayer within the church. Dear friends, what is the thing that is missing in so many ~~church~~ <sup>churches</sup> in this day and age? What is the one service of the week that many churches have done away with? What is the one service that has the lowest attendance in our own church? IT IS THE WEDNESDAY NIGHT PRAYER SERVICE. No one wants to go to prayer meetings anymore. And maybe that is why many Christians people are so weak in their faith; and many churches are slowly dying on the vine. But God put prayer as number one on ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> list of things that the church ought to be doing.

NOW, WHY IS THAT? There is only one answer that I know of ..POWER. PRAYER HAS POWER.

The Bible tells us that if we come in prayer with faith believing, we would receive the things we ask. Jesus taught people to pray. "Ask and you shall receive..seek and you shall find..knock and it shall be opened to you." This is how God taught us to pray..TO ASK...TO SEEK..TO KNOCK IN FAITH BELIEVING

One time the Lord taught his disciples about a wicked judge. A woman came to Him and tormented Him day and night with her problem. And she wanted a decision. But, the wicked judge wanted nothing to do with her. But, the Bible says that because she constantly came back day after day and tormented him, he finally answered her request.

Then Jesus said, "how much more will your heaven father answer you." You see, God is looking for people who will come constantly, daily, seeking Him. And Jesus said in that same illustration, when God comes, when the Lord <sup>return</sup>~~comes~~ "will He find such faith on the earth."

If Jesus were to return today, would He find such faith in this church?

First of all -- PRAYER. Prayer is to be first on the list of a Christians and a churches responsibilities.

(2C) Now, Secondly, in Vs 1, Paul gives to us the character of prayer. The character of prayer. Paul tells us that prayer involves four things. It involves ENTREATIES. Then he uses the word "PRAYERS." Then he uses the words "PETITIONS" and "THANKSGIVINGS."

O.K. WHAT DO THESE WORDS MEAN? All of them are referring to prayer. But they each have a special content.

(1D) The word "entreaties" means "the earnest pleading of the heart." It refers to the kind of person who just can't quit. He prays...YES...But, he does more than that. He pleads earnestly that God would meet his needs.


(2D) Then we have the word "PRAYERS". This is a word for worship. It refers to the heart as it adores or worships the Lord. Often times our prayers are to man and not to God. But prayer must be real prayer. The prayer of worship <sup>adoring</sup>~~adoring~~ and loving God and praising Him and telling Him how much we love Him.

It also refers to "group" or "corporate" prayer in comparison to private or individual prayer. The body of Christ coming together in prayer.

(3D) But, also, prayer is "PETITIONS." This refers to praying for others *and* their needs. Petitions on the behalf of others.

(4D) Then, "THANKSGIVING." Paul says in I Thess. 5:18, "in everything give thanks. For this is the will of God." When you pray...pray with thanksgiving.

(8D) O.K. That is the character of prayer. <sup>BE this</sup> Now, let me ask you a question. WHO SHOULD WE PRAY FOR? As the church gathers for prayer, who should we pray for? As Pastor, I receive from people all kinds of prayer request. I remember <sup>once</sup> receiving a prayer request from a person who wanted the church to pray for men, everywhere. And I smiled when I received this request. And I couldn't help but wish that the person had been more specific - then just to pray for men everywhere.

But, the Lord has a way of working things out. Because I was doing, at the time, some study from I Timothy. And I was reading along and I came to chapter 2 verse 1 which says, "that prayers be made on behalf of all men." Wow! So, that person was very scriptural. 

(1D) WHO SHOULD WE PRAY FOR? <sup>(U)</sup> First of all, all men. Yet, let's be honest with ourselves. YOU know as well as I do that it is easy to pray for those ~~for whom~~ who are close to you, for those that we like. It is easy to pray for the things that we want. It is easy to pray for our church. It is easy to pray for those missionaries that we know. It is easy to pray for our family. BUT, OH, how our vision needs to be enlarged. We need to pray "FOR ALL MEN." The ones that we don't like, the ones who are unlovely, the ones who are seemly beyond the hope of God's grace. PRAY FOR ALL MEN.

(2D) Then, Paul narrows it down. Vs 2, he says to pray for "kings and all who are in authority."

I was listening to a Preacher on T.V. who was criticizing our government. And as I listen to that man, I couldn't help but wander if he ever prayed for those that he criticized. Then I thought..here I am criticising that preacher for criticizing the government. And his heart must often be like mine: It is easier to criticize someone than it is to pray for them.

People who have responsibility in places of authority. We are told to pray for them.

I wonder, young people, do you pray for your school teachers as often as I hear some of you criticizing them? Teachers who have the great responsibility of teaching truth. We are told to pray for those in authority. It is what God would have us do.

~~(11)~~ O.K. Let me ask you another question. Why should we pray for those in authority? Why? Well, notice Vs 2. Here is the purpose for prayer. "That we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity."

It is interesting that we have two words, here, which describe the same thing. The word "tranquil" and the word "quiet." They are both really the same. But, they approach it from a different angle. <sup>(10)</sup> The word "tranquil" refers to outward circumstances. Those things that happen around you.

<sup>(23)</sup> The second word which is translated "quiet" is referring to the inner peace of a person's life. And inner peace regardless of the outward circumstances. There maybe trouble on the outside and we long for peace for this outward trouble. But, there is a more wonderful peace. The peace as God gives that is not dependent on outward circumstances. *This inner peace*

Now, Paul is saying that we should pray for people in authority. WHY? So that we may live a tranquil and quiet life. You see, God wants His people to be at peace. And notice..that it is we not they . But, WE ..may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness.

<sup>(30)</sup> Now, there is a ~~third~~ reason why we should pray for those in authority. Vs 3 says, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior."

Christians should pray...WHY? Because this is good and acceptable in the sight of God. In other words, this is God's will for your life.

<sup>(4)</sup> Now, beginning at Vs 4 and going through Vs 8, Paul is dealing with the concern of prayer. The concern of prayer. It is amazing to me to see how Paul moves to the heart of the Gospel. WHAT IS THE OVERALL CONCERN OF PRAYER? What should be the concern of our hearts as we come to the Lord in prayer? Paul mentions 4 things..

(1D) Number one, Our concern involves the purpose of God. Vs 4 says, "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." You see, God loves everyone and He desires everyone to be saved. The Bible says that "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentence." That is God's great purpose. And that should be our purpose in prayer. We should be praying for the salvation of our friends, and loved ones. *[Show Pringer - Physical Healy - Temporary*  
*Spirited Healy - cell eternal]*

(2D) Secondly, Vs 5, notice the person who makes it all possible.

We read, "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

There is no other. It is Jesus who brought reconciliation, who brought justification, who brought redemption, who brought man and God into fellowship. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." You know, no one can take the place of Jesus.

*out* Many of us go to anyone and anyplace to find solutions to our problems. When all else fails, we come to Jesus. But that is the place to start. It is Jesus that will never leave us nor forsake us. And we need to thank God for that wonderful truth.

(3D) Third, in Vs 6 we find a wonderful principle. In this verse we are taught that there was a price that was involved in our redemption.

We read, that Jesus "gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony born at the proper time."

Notice, if you would, please, the preposition "FOR". This is the word meaning "IN THE BEHALF OF." Jesus gave His life "in the behalf of all men." The word "men" is referring to everyone.

In other words, Jesus death on the cross, his ransom is available to all people. He died "in the behalf " of every single man, woman, boy and girl that has every lived and every will live. Jesus died for all.

But, this must be personal. The question is: have you every trusted Christ for personal salvation. You see, Jesus only substitutes His life, His atonement, for those who believe in Him.

It is true that Jesus died for all. He paid the price for your sins and mine. But, you will never receive the benefits from that truth until you trust Jesus for personal salvation.

Let me illustrate. The story is told of a young man who was convicted of murder and was sentenced to death. His parents with great effort finally obtained a stay of execution from the governor, and eventually the person was granted a pardon.

This man, still sitting on death row, was given the news that he had been given his freedom. But, when he was handed the pardon, he rejected it. He said, "I'm guilty and I want to die."

Try as they could, his family and friends couldn't persuade him to change his mind. In an effort to keep him from being executed, his family took the case all the way to the state supreme court. And the court ruled "THAT A PARDON IS NOT A PARDON UNTIL IT IS ACCEPTED BY THE ONE FOR WHOM IT WAS INTENDED." So, the man went to his death, not because he had no other alternatives, but because he refused to accept the pardon.

So it is with us. Those who spend eternity separated from God in bitter anguish of soul and body in Hell will do so, not because there isn't an alternative, but because they won't accept the pardon that has already been made available to them from God through Jesus Christ.

My friend, you maybe here, today, and you say in your heart, "Well, I know that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. I know that. But, you may never have appropriated the death of Christ "in your behalf." You may never have said to Jesus, "Lord, I am trusting you. And you alone for my eternal salvation." So, why not accept his gracious pardon and forgiveness. (4D) Then, finally, in Vs 7 and 8, Paul tells us that this is why he was appointed a preacher. He was appointed a preacher to tell people that Jesus is our ransom for sin. And this is why we should pray and lift up our hands and voices in prayer without wrath and dissension.



So, that people will realize that God wants all people to be saved. Oh, how we need to pray for those friends, our neighbors, members of our families who so desperately need Jesus in their lives.

Dear friends, WHAT IS YOUR CONCERN IN PRAYER? I hope it is that all folks might be saved.

SHALL WE CLOSE IN PRAYER