

## 1 Timothy 2:1-7 – “Praying with Purpose and Perspective”

After Paul has spent the first part of this letter exhorting Timothy to fight the good fight and be aware of those coming in to disrupt the gospel, he now directs Timothy, and the whole church, to be praying. Paul no doubt placed great importance on prayer. Sadly, what should be of first importance in the church often becomes an afterthought. Prayer is key. And Paul puts the focus back on prayer sharing how to pray and who to pray for.

As the storm raged, the captain realized his ship was sinking fast.

He called out, "Anyone here know how to pray?"

One man stepped forward, "Aye, Captain, I know how to pray."

"Good," said the captain, "you pray while the rest of us put on our life jackets – we're one short."

### Summary Statement:

In this passage, Paul instructs Timothy on the vital role of prayer within the church, asserting that prayer should be made for all – including those in authority – thereby linking prayer to God’s broader plan for salvation for all.

### 1. Prayer for All – 2:1-3

**2:1 - *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,***

Paul’s first exhortation to this church is to pray. The word exhort is the Greek word *parakaleo*. It means to call to one’s side. To encourage and strengthen through consolation or comfort. The Holy Spirit is the *Parakletos* – the Comforter or Helper.

- Prayer is meant to indeed be a great help and comfort for us. Paul is urging this church to be about prayer.
- Remember what we just looked at in the previous chapter – the shipwrecked faith of two people: Hymenaeus and Alexander. We read in 1:15 that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and we’ll see this is God’s desire for all. So Paul directs us to pray for these things and pray in line with God’s desire. Pray for people that have gone wayward, pray for those that have not yet received this gospel truth. Pray for people to come to know this great salvation of God.

Paul lists 4 types of prayer: supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanks.

- There are about 7 different Greek nouns for prayer throughout Scripture. 4 of them are used here.

**Supplications** – [Gk=*deesis* / deh-ay-sis]. It's translated 12x as 'prayer', 6x as 'supplication' and 1x as 'request'. That's what this word has in mind – making a request. A part of prayer is bringing those things that are on our heart to the Lord. Prayer is not all about asking for stuff, but we can certainly come confidently before a gracious God who supplies all our needs (Phil 4:19). This type of prayer reveals we have needs and the only place for that supply is found in God.

**Prayers** – [Gk=*proseuche* / pros-yoo-khay]. This word is used 37x and it's always translated as prayer (1x as pray earnestly). This is the general term used for communication with God. The prefix '*pros*' would convey the sense of being immediately before Him and thus the ideas of adoration, devotion, and worship. Prayer is indeed an act of worship before an awesome God. There should be reverence in our hearts as we come before God in prayer.

**Intercessions** – [Gk=*enteuxis* / ent-yook-sis]. This word is translated 1x as intercession and 1x as prayer. The idea of this term is to speak to someone on behalf of another. We're praying for others in this type of prayer.

**Giving of thanks** – [Gk=*eucharistia* / yoo-khar-is-tee-ah]. All prayer should take on the attitude of thankfulness as we are turning to the One who holds all things together and is in control over all that happens. God is on the throne, and we have an audience before Him through prayer – that's pretty amazing! It should fill our hearts with complete gratitude.

- I think about some of the Psalms where the writers are coming to God in prayer and they're sometimes dealing with problems, or peeved off at enemies, but as they turn to the Lord in prayer, those predicaments turn into praise. That's the way it should be for us.

Paul would show in Philippians 4:6 that peace is the byproduct of praying this way.

- **Philippians 4:6–7**, *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup> and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

- **Colossians 4:2**, *"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;"*

So we have some marching orders here – pray. Don't let it be an afterthought, or a token prayer offered, let it be the very sustenance driving and guiding our lives.

And remember, Paul is saying that prayer is not just our communion before God – that's a major part of it, but he says let prayer ***be made for all men***.

Take Hymenaeus and Alexander for example. Perhaps they wouldn't have gotten so off course if people were praying for them. And how the church needed to be praying for them all the more at the moment, so that they might repent of their ways and return back to the Lord. You see, Paul's purpose in his disciplining of them was not to cast them off in final punishment, but it was to convict them so that they could be restored and reconciled. And people praying for them would be a tremendous help.

Now I can imagine praying for people like that, but giving of thanks be made for all men? How does that work? How do we give thanks for people that may hurt or malign us?

- Well, we don't give thanks for what they do, again, it's about the attitude of the heart. As we bring them before the Lord, we desire to develop God's heart for them (which we'll see in a minute).
- Paul said in **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**, *"Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* It's not that we give thanks **for** everything, but **in** everything we can be thankful as we take it to the Lord in prayer.

So pray for all men, not just your friends or family, pray for those who might be an enemy, pray for those who bug you and test you. Give thanks because maybe God is using them to show you where you are faltering and where you need God's help.

Speaking of potential enemies, look at who we are specifically called to pray for...

**2:2 - *for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.***

We're to pray for all people, but we are certainly to be remembering those who are in positions of authority. We're not under a monarchy as was Paul in this day, but we have democratically elected officials who are placed in positions of leadership – this means we need to pray for people like our Prime Minister.

- And don't think you can get away with praying those imprecatory Psalm type prayers like, Lord break their teeth (Psalm 58:6). That's not what Paul has in mind.
- It can be hard to pray for these people when they seem so far from God and it's easy to view them as an enemy to the gospel. But this is why we need to pray for them all the more. We're not called to love only the loveable, or pray for those who are only doing the Lord's work. We're to pray for all men. And especially those **in authority** – MP's, Premier's, mayors, city councilors, RCMP and police, church leaders, and the list goes on.

Some may think, *'It's different now, our leaders are so corrupt and carrying out their own agendas. It was so much easier in Paul's day.'* Really??

At the time of writing this, Paul was under the rulership of Nero, the Roman Caesar who made life miserable for Christians. Under his reign Christians began to be persecuted heavily. Nero was seen as a cruel madman. But Paul doesn't advise going on some revolutionary attack against him, he says to pray for him.

- Listen, Mark Carney may be a bit of a bozo, but if Paul could pray for Nero, we can pray for Carney.

Praying for our leaders is something that can aid in our living **a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence**. How so?

The Bible says in **Proverbs 21:1**, *"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes."* God's directing kings and leaders, and he's appointing kings and leaders. They all serve His purposes ultimately.

- **Romans 13:1–3**, *"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same."*
- We're to pray for our leaders with the understanding that they're there by God's appointment. We ultimately want them to be carrying out the heart of

God. When they do, they will provide a peaceful environment by which it will be a blessing for the church and allow Christians to share the gospel with freedom.

- We know what that's like when governing officials try to take away our religious freedoms. But we don't get crazy and form a political coup to overthrow these ungodly powers. That will only bring about greater turmoil. Rather, through prayer we turn it all over to the true King who is reigning above all.
- When we do, not only do our hearts align with God, but we trust these leaders will be led by God and do what's right to bring about peace.
- This is reflected in the words **quiet** and **peaceable**. "*Quiet* refers to the absence of external disturbances; *peaceable* refers to the absence of internal ones." <sup>1</sup>

When we're at peace, and living in a non-oppressive political environment, it allows believers that much more to walk in **godliness** and **reverence**. We're never without excuse for not doing that as believers, but a godly government certainly makes living a respectable godly life a little bit easier.

- This word **godliness** is a key word used in the Pastoral Epistles. It's used 15x in the N.T., 10 of which are in the Pastoral Epistles (3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2 Tim 3:5; Titus 1:1).

And we'll be at peace when we follow this directive because this is what's right...

**2:3 - *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,***

This kind of prayer is acceptable before God because we're praying according to His will (**1 John 5:14**, "*Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*").

- Anytime the Bible says what is good, or what pleases God, that's what I want to be doing. It's nice when we don't have to second guess if what we're doing is good. And praying for all men is a good thing in God's sight.

When we're praying for all in authority, whether secular leaders or godly leaders, we're praying for them to allow the church to function as it should, and allow the gospel to be shared unimpeded. This is in alignment with a God who is our Savior. That's the heart of God – to see all people saved (as we'll see next).

<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (1 Ti 2:2). Thomas Nelson.

- "The man who mobilizes the Christian church to pray will make the greatest contribution to world evangelization in history." (Andrew Murray)
- This is good and acceptable before God who is all about saving people.

So pray for all men. And at the heart of this is salvation and the advancement of the gospel. This is what becomes apparent in the second part of our passage...

## 2. Salvation for All – 2:4-7

**2:4 - *who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.***

We pray so that people will come to know God. We pray for governing officials so that they will be saved and act in accordance with what pleases God.

It is God's desire that **all men** be **saved** and come to know the truth (and Jesus is the truth – John 14:6).

Peter would write in **2 Peter 3:9**, *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*

God is not a God of partiality; He doesn't play favorites.

- This was most likely in contrast to the false teachers Paul was contending with in this Ephesian church. They would be very exclusive. They would teach a message that only the so called elite could attain to. But God's salvation is very inclusive – it's for all.
- Now this by no means promotes any hint of universalism (the teaching that all men **will** be saved). He **desires** all men to be saved, but not all will be saved.

"If God doesn't want anyone to perish, then why are so many lost? God is long-suffering with lost sinners, even delaying His judgment that they might come to Christ (2 Peter 3:9). But salvation depends on a "knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Not everyone has heard the truth of the Gospel, and many who have heard have rejected it. We cannot explain the mystery of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility (see John 6:37), but realize that both are taught in the Bible and are harmonized in God's great plan of salvation. We do know that prayer is an important part of God's program for reaching a lost world. We have the

responsibility of praying for lost souls (Romans 10:1) and making ourselves available to share the Gospel with others.”<sup>2</sup>

Legendary football coach Vince Lombardi one time after a devastating loss by his Green Bay Packers approached them in the locker room. They were all expecting a harsh verbal beat down from their coach. Instead, Lombardi picked up a football and said, “Gentlemen, this is a football.” And he took his team back to the basics. This is what Paul does next regarding the gospel and the means of salvation. It’s not hard, but too many have tried to complicate it.

**2:5-6 - *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,<sup>6</sup> who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,***

There is one God. That’s foundational. Too many today either say there’s many ways to God, or there’s many gods. Take your pick. As long as you’re religiously minded or doing your best. That’s all that matters.

But Paul makes clear that there is one God and there’s only one way to God! It’s through the Man Christ Jesus. He is our Mediator.

- Job cried out of this very dilemma: **Job 9:32–33**, “*For He is not a man, as I am, That I may answer Him, And that we should go to court together.*”<sup>33</sup> *Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both.*”
- Jesus is the answer to Job’s cry!

The word **Mediator** is the Greek word, *mesitēs*.

- “*Mesitēs* comes from *mesos*, which, in this case, means *in the middle*. A *mesitēs* is, therefore, *one who stands in the middle between two people and brings them together*. Jesus is our perfect *mesitēs*; He stands between us and God.”<sup>3</sup> He’s the only one that can do this.
- Because He is fully God, He is sinless in His divine nature. But because He came as a Man and clothed Himself in flesh, He can serve as a substitutionary sacrifice for sinful humanity.

Jesus is the way and the only way for us to be forgiven of sin and reconciled to the Father.

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 216). Victor Books.

<sup>3</sup> Barclay, W. (2002). *The Letter to the Hebrews* (p. 106). Westminster John Knox Press.

My friends, if you have not come to God through Jesus Christ, and Him alone, you have missed the runway. No praying to saints is going to do it, no amount of visits to a priest will save you, no prayers to ancestors are going to help, no amount of good works will cut it. Mary may be a wonderful woman, but she's no Mediator! Salvation and the path to the One true God is through Jesus Christ only.

This is substantiated because only He ***gave Himself a ransom for all***. You see it's not enough to just believe that there once lived a man named Jesus, you must understand your condition and what it is that He came to do for you. He came and gave His life as a sacrifice to pay the penalty for your sins. Because the wages of sin is death. The price had to be paid, but the price was too great for us. Jesus came and paid our fine.

And notice, He did that ***for all!*** This wasn't just for the elect, or a chosen few. His atonement was enough for everyone to come to salvation. It's unlimited. You don't have to wonder if Jesus died for you. He did. I've looked in the answer book. It says it right here. You don't have to question if your sin is too great to be forgiven. Jesus died to cover it all. He's paid the ransom so you can be free! But sadly, not all will be saved because not all will receive this incredible free gift.

And this is what boggles my mind. If you had a person fall overboard in the middle of the ocean and you threw him a life ring, would he not grab it? Would it make sense to say, '*Naw, I think I'll handle this on my own. What are my other options?*' They would grab a hold of that thing with all they've got. Yet this is the same problem we're faced with as we sink in this pool of sin. Only one way to be rescued.

- But the god of this age (the devil) has blinded people. It doesn't make sense, but they're operating without their cognizant ability to reason out truth. This is why we need to pray so urgently for these people.

***2:7 - for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.***

Paul was a person called to go and preach this gospel of Jesus Christ. He shared it with Jews, but he was called to the Gentiles – which constituted the largest segment of the global population. In other words, God was wanting this truth to go to all people! Again, we see the inclusiveness of God. Not that He

receives all people on their terms, but if they come to Him through Jesus Christ in repentance and faith, they will be saved.

People need to hear this truth, and we need to pray that they will receive this truth.

God has not called us to panic, but to pray; not to complain, but to intercede. And as we do, we align ourselves with His heart – a heart that longs to save. So let's be a praying people, because when the church prays, the gospel advances, hearts are changed, and God is glorified.

Points to Ponder:

1. Where does prayer rank in your daily priority list?
2. Do your prayers focus more on your needs or God's heart?
3. Are you relying solely on Jesus to be your Rescuer and Reconciler to God?