

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: **October 8, 2017**

Sermon Title: **The Importance of Prayer**

Sermon Series: First Timothy

Text: 1 Tim. 2:1-7

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

Date: October 8, 2017
Title: The Importance of Prayer
Text: 1 Tim. 2:1-7
Theme: "We are not a Church with a Prayer Ministry - We are a Praying Church."

Introduction:

We find praying for those mentioned to often be with indifference and apathy, but what if we existed in a country where that power was abused to the level of threatening our very existence?

I am glad to teach on this text today. Prayer is one of those Christian activities that we have so mystified as to make obsolete or a form of penance where we exist in "sackcloth and ashes." Yet praying to God is delightful and natural part of the Christian's experience and walk with their God.

There is much about praying and prayer that we could consider in a study of this text. If you desire to explore the idea of prayer more thoroughly let me turn your attention to our small booklet ROOTS that is available in our TORN VEIL RESOURCE CENTER. However, as it relates to the subject of prayer for this study we will bind ourselves to the text before us.

"For many Americans, every day is a day of prayer. More than half (55%) of Americans say they pray every day, according to a 2014 Pew Research Center survey, while 21% say they pray weekly or monthly and 23% say they seldom or never pray. Even among those who are religiously unaffiliated, 20% say they pray daily. Women (64%) are more likely than men (46%) to pray every day. And Americans ages 65 and older are far more likely than adults under 30 to say they pray daily (65% vs. 41%)."¹

"A Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2014 found that 45% of Americans - and a majority of Christians (55%) - say they rely a lot on prayer and personal religious reflection when making major life decisions. The same survey found that 63% of Christians in the U.S. say praying regularly is an essential part of their Christian identity."²

A reason why these statistics exist is because people fail to understand what biblical prayer actually is. I say this for two reasons. First, for many, prayer is scripted. They have no personal means of praying so they pray what they are taught to pray. Second, prayer for some is solely intercession when they pray for something or someone, or prayer is solely thanksgiving where they pray a rote prayer before a meal.

While both of these two expressions of prayer can be sincere and valid, neither is the sum total of praying. We will see this in our text.

THE BIG PICTURE:

The seriousness of what just happened with those who rejected the faith pushed the apostle to exhort Timothy to pray. Prayer is not our last resort, but our first appeal. We do not pray because we have come to the end of our abilities. We pray because it is our first ability. It is our first resource. Pray acknowledges God's priority/place in all of this.

What can we do to keep the gospel central in our church and in our community, pray? How might we protect others and ourselves from apostasy? Pray! When you begin to read the Bible as a single story, there are certain themes reoccurring. Listen to our Lord's Prayer and hear, "deliver us from temptation." This thought is that prayer.

"You say, "*Prayer?* Come on, I thought you were talking about a way I could *really* get involved. You know, a way I could do something that would really make a difference." That's precisely what I'm talking about. Prayer *is* doing something. Prayer will make a tremendous difference. The amazing fact is that the sovereign God has chosen to work in response to the prayers of His people. As Paul begins to tell Timothy how to conduct oneself in the local church (3:15), he puts prayer as the first priority (2:1, "First of all"). But Paul is not just talking about the need for prayer in general. He is talking about the need for prayer as it relates to the salvation of the lost. He repeats some words and ideas in 2:1-8 that show what he is driving at: "all men" (2:1); "all" (2:2); "God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved" (2:3, 4); "mediator ... between God and men" (2:5); "a ransom for all, the testimony" (2:6); "preacher and ... teacher of the Gentiles" (2:7). Paul is talking about *men* – people – and not just about a certain few, but about *all* men. And he is talking about the *Savior*. His concern is that all would be saved. What he is telling us is that, Prayer that all people may be reached with the gospel should pervade the life of the church."³

"The passage in 1 Timothy 2:1-7 consists of two units. First, the author requests prayer for those in leadership positions. Second, the author makes the theological statement that there is only one God, and that Jesus Christ is a mediator and saved humans through his atoning death."⁴

Outline:

I. The priority of prayer (vv. 1, 2)

The intent of this priority is for the spread of the gospel. When the government and world is at peace [or at least politically stable] the gospel has a greater chance of spreading.

A. Prayers' priority [first of all]

B. Prayers' diversity [entreaties and prayers, etc.]

When we look at each of the four words used, our tendency is to note the distinctions rather than see them as working synonyms. Each perhaps is a different facet of prayer, but they are all prayer. What is prayer? Prayer at its most fundamental level is our communication with God. It

is for this reason, when we think on Him and His work, we are praying. This, I believe, is how we “pray without ceasing.” Prayer is having a God consciousness.

“1 Timothy 2:1 starts with the words ‘first of all’ (NRSV), but the attentive reader will notice that no ‘second’ or ‘third’ follows afterwards. The Greek word *proton*, then, does not enumerate items of an argument, but rather emphasizes the subsequent argument. A more appropriate translation, therefore, would be ‘above all’ or ‘the most important thing is that ...’ It introduces an appeal to be persistent in prayer.”⁵

“The author employs four partially equivalent Greek words for prayer, each of which conveys a different nuance: the term *deesis* indicates an appeal for a particular need; *proseuche* is a general word for prayer that frequently occurs in petitions; *enteuxis* captures an urgent and bold request; finally, *eucharistia* denotes an expressions of gratitude.⁶ Similar lists of prayers requests occur in other Pauline and Deutero-Pauline letters, for example in Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6, and 1 Timothy 5:5.

Thus, the author of First Timothy solicits all imaginable forms of prayer.”⁷

“It is difficult to know the precise difference between the four words used here by the apostle. They are sometimes distinguished thus:-

- Supplications - Prayers for averting evils of every kind.
- Prayers - Prayers for obtaining the good things, spiritual and temporal, which ourselves need.
- Intercessions - Prayers in behalf of others.
- Giving of thanks - Praises to God, as the parent of all good, for all the blessings which we and others have received.

It is probable that the apostle gives directions here for public worship.”⁸

C. Prayers’ inclusivity [for all men]

Here, and in verse 4 the word “all men” is generic thus including all men and women, all people. “all men”; but here ἀνθρώπους (**anqrwpous**) is used generically, referring to both men and women.”⁹

For our rulers - Nero, Domitian, Obama, and President Trump. For all those who persecute Christians. To what end? So that, verse 2b.

When St. Cyprian defended himself before the Roman proconsul, he said: “We pray to God, not only for ourselves, but for all mankind, and particularly for the emperors.”¹⁰

Tertullian, in his *Apology*, is more particular: *Apol.*, cap. 30. “We pray for all the emperors, that God may grant them long life, a secure government, a prosperous family, vigorous troops, a faithful senate, an obedient people; that the whole world may be in peace; and that God may grant, both to Caesar and to every man, the accomplishment of their just desires.”¹¹

So Origen: “We pray for kings and rulers, that with their royal authority they may be found possessing a wise and prudent mind.”¹²

“They are to be spoken “for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions” (2:1-2). Why are the latter specifically mentioned here? The immediate reason might be the hope that Christians ‘may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity.’ In the first century CE as today, much of that was determined by religious tolerance and political stability guaranteed by those in leadership positions. Yet there was certainly one more reason why the author of our letter mentioned rulers in this context. When understood against the backdrop of the Roman Emperor cult of the late first century CE, these words take on a new meaning. Established in 510 BCE, Rome had been a republic governed by two consuls who were elected to their positions. This system was in effect for half a millennium, but was then changed in two significant ways: First, starting with the rule of Julius Caesar, the republic was replaced by the Imperial system; this means that one emperor would rule from now on. And second, Rome gradually introduced the apotheosis of the emperor. After his assassination in 27 BCE, Julius Caesar was soon proclaimed divine and accepted among the gods of the state, officially allowing for the initiation of his worship. Later in the first century CE, this type of Emperor Cult gradually developed in the whole Roman Empire as a unifying and politically stabilizing force. However, it gave rise to the custom of praying to the divinized Caesars. In this kind of imperial milieu, the request in 1 Timothy 2:2 to pray ‘for kings’ instead of ‘to the kings’ takes on new meaning. It implies most ostensibly that rulers, like everybody else, depend on the guidance and mercy of God. Furthermore, it indirectly implies that they are not divine but mortal humans. These reflections explain why a theological statement about the oneness of God follows the request of prayer for those in leadership positions. It explicitly challenges the Roman Emperor Cult as well as the Greco-Roman pantheon through the fundamental claim that ‘there is one God’ (2:5). Similar statements are typical for Pauline and Deutero-Pauline letters (see, e.g., Romans 3:30; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; Galatians 3:20; Ephesians 4:5, 6). They hearken to the *shema Israel*, the ancient Jewish prayer ‘Hear, O Israel’ (Deuteronomy 6:4) that also asks for undivided adherence and devotion to the one God.¹³ Early Christians were thus asked to worship the God of Israel while rejecting the Roman Emperor Cult. Such challenging words are more than interesting historical insights. Still today, there is a tendency to somehow ‘divinize’ humans; those who are successful in public life, sports, or show business are often celebrated and ‘worshipped’ as ‘stars.’ They, too, need our prayers, as there is only one God who saves us all.”¹⁴

D. Prayers’ possibility [so that]

- ¹“**First of all**, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Tim. 1:1, 2).

Leading a tranquil and quiet life is only possible through the gospel. Sometimes reading the text does not appear to “flow.”

Everything Paul says ties to the gospel. The following verses give us a direction as to the content of our prayers/praying. We are praying for the salvation of those around us so that we might live a quiet and peaceable life. We are praying for Christian perseverance and apostates’ restoration.

II. The place of the gospel – God’s Heartbeat (vv. 3-7)

- ³“This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,”
- ⁴“who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

“Our passage, therefore, concludes with the concepts of salvation and atonement. God, our Savior, “desires everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (2:4). For Christians, such knowledge refers to the story of Jesus Christ as the Gospels tell it. This is the truth, and therefore the Gospel according to John calls Jesus the “truth” (14:6). The story of Jesus comprises not only the events of his life, but also his crucifixion. Yet how can the death of Jesus have saving significance? The words of 1 Timothy 2:6 state that Jesus “gave himself a ransom for all.” In a similar fashion, Mark writes that “... the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). A phrase like this articulates salvation through Jesus Christ as redemption, which can be seen as a sub-category of atonement. It assumes that humans carry a debt that cannot simply be canceled but must be paid in full. How, then, can they achieve redemption? “If necessary, somebody else has to make the payment. Therefore, this interpretive category conveys the vicarious surrender of life for others ... Ransom and redemption are mercantile terms. They typically refer to money paid for the release of slaves or captives. Considering that a large percentage of the population in the ancient Greco-Roman world was slaves, this soteriological concept was intelligible to many. Its imagery must have strongly resonated with those at the bottom of society.”¹⁵ 1 Timothy 2:6, therefore, depicts the death of Jesus Christ in atonement categories; yet its imagery does not deploy sacrificial rituals from the temple cult. Instead, it draws on secular motifs: the death on the cross is understood as an event of existential exchange that provides new life for humanity. God appointed the apostle Paul to proclaim this good news to the Gentiles, and it is still at the heart of the Christian proclamation throughout the world.”¹⁶

The reason why He desires all people to be saved.

A. The purpose of Christ’s incarnation (v. 5)

“Traditionally this word (μεσίτης, **mesith**) is rendered “mediator,” but this conveys a wrong impression in contemporary English. Jesus was not a mediator, for example, who worked for compromise between opposing parties. Instead he was the only one able to go between man and God to enable them to have a relationship, but entirely on God’s terms.”¹⁷

“The word **mesithv**, mediator, signifies, literally, a middle person, one whose office it is to reconcile two parties at enmity; and hence Suidas explains it by **eirhnopoiov**, a peace-maker. God was offended with the crimes of men; to restore them to his peace, Jesus Christ was incarnated; and being God and man, both God and men met in and were reconciled by him. But this reconciliation required a sacrifice on the part of the peace-maker or mediator; hence what follows.”¹⁸

As there is only one PROMISE KEEPER there is only one PEACE MAKER and His name is GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON, AND GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT.

B. The purpose of Christ’s crucifixion (v. 6)

“*Revealing God’s purpose at his appointed time* is a difficult expression without clear connection to the preceding, literally “a testimony at the proper time.” This may allude to testimony about Christ’s atoning work given by Paul and others (as v. 7 mentions). But it seems more likely to identify Christ’s death itself as a testimony to God’s gracious character (as vv. 3-4 describe). This testimony was planned from all eternity, but now has come to light at the time God intended, in the work of Christ. See 2 Tim 1:9-10; Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7 for similar ideas.”¹⁹

“Who gave himself a ransom - The word **lutron** signifies a ransom paid for the redemption of a captive; and **antilutron**, the word used here, and applied to the death of Christ, signifies that ransom which consists in the exchange of one person for another, or the redemption of life by life. As God is the God and father of all, (for there is but one God, 1Ti 2:5,) and Jesus Christ the mediator of all, so he gave himself a ransom for all; i.e., for all that God made, consequently for every human soul. The argument of the apostle is plainly this: 1. There is one God; 2. This God is the Creator of all; 3. He has made a revelation of his kindness to all; 4. He will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth; and 5. He has provided a mediator for all, who has given himself a ransom for all. As surely as God has created all men, so surely has Jesus Christ died for all men. This is a truth which the nature and revelation of God unequivocally proclaim.”²⁰

C. The purpose of Paul’s commission (v. 7)

- ⁷ “For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.”

“Faithfully and truly; preaching the TRUTH, the whole TRUTH, and nothing but the TRUTH; and this fervently, affectionately, and perseveringly.”²¹

Verse 8 connects us to men and prayer. Do verses 9-15?

III. The picture of prayer in the Church

When we step back and look at the context of our passage, there are several initial observations we can make. We have little difficulty with verse 8, but we “choke” on verses 9-15. Part of our problem is cultural. First, we fail to understand what this text meant to them in its historical context. Second, the tension between the genders that came as a consequence of the fall continue to this day. We still struggle with what this passage means to us now. Third, in context we are dealing with prayer and its gospel centeredness. The application of public prayer that is gospel saturated as it relates to men and women is what is being highlighted. Fourth, in our struggle to answer all of our questions we try to use passages to answer questions that the text is not asking. Finally, we do not like not knowing. We do not like the mystery. Friends, whatever this text or any text teaches, it must be a celebration of the gospel and the power to set us free.

We will address those concerns in our handling of 1 Timothy 2:7-20.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. Learn to live with a God consciousness so that prayer becomes your priority.
2. Learn to breathe in and out the gospel so that the purpose of God in sending His Son is celebrated.

¹ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/05/04/5-facts-about-prayer/>

² <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/05/04/5-facts-about-prayer/>

³ <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-6-priority-prayer-1-timothy-21-8>

⁴ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1769

⁵ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1769

⁶ Cf. Knight, G. W., *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich./Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans/Paternoster Press, 1992), page 114.

⁷ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1769

⁸ *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on 1 Timothy 2:1.

⁹ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/1+Timothy+2>

¹⁰ *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on 1 Timothy 2:2.

¹¹ *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on 1 Timothy 2:2.

¹² *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on 1 Timothy 2:2.

¹³ ² Cf. Johnson, L. T., *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2008), page 191.

¹⁴ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1769

¹⁵ Eberhart, C. A., *The Sacrifice of Jesus: Understanding Atonement Biblically* (Facets, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 129-30.

¹⁶ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1769

¹⁷ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/1+Timothy+2>

¹⁸ *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on 1 Timothy 2:5.

¹⁹ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/1+Timothy+2>

²⁰ *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on 1 Timothy 2:2.

²¹ *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on 1 Timothy 2:7.