

## ***“Living For Christ In A Confused and Confusing World”***

### **A Study of Paul’s Letters to Timothy**

#### **Sermon #4**

#### **“The Priority of Prayer In Worship!”**

#### **1 Timothy 2:1- 7**

It seems to me that we live in a society that is growing more and more anti-Christian by the day. We live in a society which declares right wrong and wrong right. We live in a nation where most of the people around us live as if God were dead or at least irrelevant? We find ourselves in a situation not a little unlike Daniel’s. How do we live for God in a confused and confusing world? I wish I had all the answers as to how we are to live every area of our lives. Paul, in his advice to young Timothy deals with one area where we can all impact the people that live in our world. It is an area of Christian activity that been demonstrated to have the power to show Christ to a lost world and to change society. I am talking about the area of prayer.

We noted in the first lesson that the overall aim of the first letter to Timothy was to address six main topics. He began in chapter one with doctrine urging Timothy to remain in Ephesus and counter the false teaching by remaining loyal to that the faith as presented by the Apostles. Just as he had previously urged Timothy to remain in Ephesus to combat error he now “exhorts” him to give a priority to public worship.

#### **The Place Of Prayer (v. 1a)**

“Therefore I exhort first of all” - “first of all” - means first in order, rank and importance. Paul tells us that the first priority in the church is that of prayer.

Paul tells us that we are to pray "first of all". That is, prayer is to be the top priority of the church. It is not just to be the filler, thrown in between songs, or as something to take up a few minutes of time. No! Prayer is the life's breath of the church! Billy Graham said, "The three secrets to successful ministry are: prayer, prayer and more prayer." If we will be all that God wants us to be, then we will be a people who places a great emphasis on prayer! Let us determine that here at First Baptist, we will pray "first of all".

As Paul continues his call to prayer, he uses four words to describe the total scope of prayer. All four are related, but each has a different shade of meaning and we can learn something from each of them. Together they reveal the nature of prayer and the proper attitude of prayer. Verse one says, “that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.”

1. Supplications – making requests, sharing our needs with God (Phil 4:6) This refers to prayers focused on special needs. The idea is that of bringing a deep and intense burden before the Lord. When we have needs in our own lives, and when we see needs in the lives of others, we are to be moved by these needs and we are to bring them to the throne of grace, Heb. 4:16.

2. Prayers (*Proseuche*)– this is the act of worship that should accompany prayer. This word calls to mind those times we set aside to come into the Lord's presence to worship Him and just to spend time at His feet. Every believer must have that time when we go before the Lord, without distraction, without hurry and we just spend time loving Him. Public prayer is no substitute for personal, private worship!

3. Intercessions (*Enteuxis*)– this is the taking of the needs of others before the Lord. This refers to bold praying on behalf of others. Jesus is our intercessor, 1 Tim. 2:5. He stands in the gap between us and the Father and boldly prays for us, Heb. 7:25. We are to carry out the same ministry on behalf of others. The main idea in these verses is that of making intercession for those who do not know the Lord. We are to stand in the gap for them, praying for God to convict them and save them by His grace!

4. Thanksgiving – a spirit of gratitude to God. No prayer is complete until we spend some of that time thanking God. We are to thank Him for that which He has already done, such as salvation, blessings, answered prayers, etc. We should thank Him for the fact that He is hearing us as we pray. We should thank Him for those things that He is yet to do! You see, as we pray, we are to pray in faith, believing that the things we are asking God to do are already done, even though we can't see them at the present time. That is the very essence of faith, Heb. 11:1.

Who Are We To Pray For? (v. 1b-2)

Prayers are to be ... “made for all men. (2) for kings and all who are in authority.”

Paul makes it clear that we are to pray for "all men". There is no one in the world who should be beyond the prayers of God's people! Paul specifically mentions those who are in places of authority. As we pray for our family, friends and neighbors, let us not forget to pray for our leaders. They need the wisdom of God to be able to carry out their offices. (Note: When Paul wrote these words, a man named Nero was the Emperor of Rome. He was a wicked man who even had his own mother and brothers executed to secure his throne. He took Christians, dipped their bodies in wax and set them on fire, using the light to light his dinner parties. He was a wicked man!) There is a message in this for the church tonight! Even when we do not agree with the policies of the people who lead us, we should still pray for them. Regardless of how wicked they may be, their work should be bathed in the prayers of God's saints. I firmly believe that God intervenes in the affairs of men. He can overrule a wicked leader. He can impress a wicked leader to make godly decisions! We need to pray for those in power, especially right now. Because there are many serious and far reaching decisions that must be

made by the leaders of our country we should be continually be making intercession for them before the throne of grace!

What Does Prayer Accomplish?

“...that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”

The Bible describes both that which is accomplished outside of us because of prayer - “quiet and peaceable life” and that which is accomplished inside of us because of prayer - “godliness and reverence.” The two words used to describe the inner transformation produced by prayer, “godliness” and “reverence” are difficult to find exact synonyms for in English. The word translated “godliness” means to live knowing realistically, knowing what is required in life with respect to God, your fellow man and yourself. That of course can come only through a life of prayer! The second word translated “reverence” means that this kind of prayer life gives you a kind of graceful dignity.

Why Pray For The Lost? (vv. 3-7)

1. Because It is Pleasing to God (vv. 3-4)

“For 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.”

What Paul is saying here that the prayerful life is good and acceptable to God because it is God's way of opening up men and women everywhere for salvation. When Peter says "God is not willing that any should perish," (2 Pet 3:9). Here Paul says virtually that same thing when he says, "God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Ray Stedman says it this way, “Prayer is the first artillery salvo that opens up a territory to possess it for God. Thus, when we pray for people we can expect that they will hear truth that they have never heard before. We can expect that they will see things in a different way than they ever saw them before. Prayer does not change them immediately. It is not a magic wand. But there comes a gradual dawning light.” [Ray Stedman. The First Thing: Prayer. 1 Tim 2:1-7. [www.pbc.org/dp/stedman/timothy/3768.html](http://www.pbc.org/dp/stedman/timothy/3768.html)]

2 Because There Is Only ONE way to be Saved. (vv. 5-6)

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, (6) who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time”

Verses five and six point out that the gospel rests on the twin foundations, namely that there is but one God and that there only one mediator.

It is no longer politically correct to insist that there is only one way to heaven. In our age of “anything-goes tolerance” we hear that all religions are the same, and there are many

pathways to God. Enlightened people say if you want to take the Muslim pathway to God, that's okay; if you choose to take the Buddhist pathway, no problem; if you want to take the Hindu pathway, or the New Age

pathway: go for it! All these pathways will take you to God. There's only one thing wrong with that philosophy—it's false. Other than that, it sounds pretty logical. But if you start with a false premise, then all your conclusions are wrong as well. If you start with the false premise that there are many pathways to God, then everything you surmise after that will be faulty. Of course, you have the freedom to believe whatever you choose, but please be advised the Bible never suggests that. The Bible doesn't teach Jesus is one of the ways to God; it doesn't even teach Jesus is the best way to God. The Bible unequivocally teaches there is only way to heaven – Jesus! Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me." (John 14:6) How can you misunderstand that? The Book of Acts says, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Pretty clear, huh? And again, our text says, "There is one God one mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ."