

1 TIMOTHY

November 6, 2022

1 Timothy 2:1-10

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. ⁷For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

⁸I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; ⁹likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, ¹⁰but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.¹

What happens when a church decides that a project, event, ministry, or strategy is a good idea? Well, they (we) implement it. Money is spent, promotion is done, projects are planned...and another thing or group of things is placed on the calendar.

When done long enough by enough local churches an expectation is created among the people attending or looking to attend churches. It happens all the time and it may be a good thing, but eventually local churches become known for products. Thus, when a family or an individual is seeking a church, it often leads to a categorical search process for the product of choice such as: choir, preaching style, youth ministry, children's programs, schedule of convenience, music style,

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (1 Ti 2:1–10). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

groups, singles programs, married adult programs, senior adult programs, men's ministry, women's ministry, etc.

Thus, market analysis is done and church products are produced, offered to a community viewed as consumers with hopes people will buy, or buy-in, to the program.

The "goal is souls," so says the tag-line or bumper sticker, and it certainly is, but market-driven American Christianity develops an ick-factor over time that is hard to ignore.

Local churches may grow in attendees...but lose sight of the mission.

Local churches may shrink in attendees...and lose sight of the mission.

Large, fast-growing, franchised churches may have great energy but no life.

Small, holy-huddle, us-four-and-no-more gatherings of the righteous few may claim gospel identity without biblical fidelity.

This is not to say that all large churches are unhealthy, or all small churches are unhealthy. It is also not to say that either are automatically healthy based on the number in the room.

This is so hard, right? I mean, it is impossible not to subtly grade effectiveness by market share. Especially around here.

And as I read Paul's first letter to Timothy, as this young pastor is navigating the church-world in first century Ephesus, I discover that the struggle to be faithful, righteous, right, protective, evangelistic, God-centered, and healthy is not found in man's baptized business models, but in knowing who we are in Christ, whose we are, what we are to be doing.

And with all the good ideas faithful people of God have developed over the centuries with intent to honor God, bring him glory, and help others know him, the Holy Spirit's clarity in these few verses of chapter 2 melt away the fog of ministerial vision-casting and program development.

PRAY

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

Paul is not calling for a prayer ministry to be launched, a prayer guide to be printed, or a prayer room to be set-aside. Those are not bad...but that's not the call. That's not the urgent word from God's apostle. Even in delineating the prayer team and setting aside the ministry as I stated shows how we seem to just not be able to help ourselves when it comes to programmatic church structures.

The call for this church that has so many issues. BTW – do you know why the church in Ephesus had such issues? Why there was a command to Timothy to root out the heretics and club of deep-thinking self-elevating, falsely self-defined discipleship gurus? Because that church was full of **people**. People who had issues. Just like every single local church that has ever existed since Pentecost.

So, after Paul cuts to the quick initially, identifies the elephant in the room, gives Timothy charge and permission to remove some folks out of the fellowship, and emboldened the young pastor to stay the course, preach the Word, shepherd the flock, and proclaim the truth...he says "PRAY."

We get this, right? We prayed. If you have been here since 9:15am this morning, you likely prayed in your Bible study group. You may have gone around the room where folks were able to share requests. Those

can be interesting. You may have prayed when the class was over and you left that room to join us here in this bigger room. We began with an opening prayer. We all joined in prayer together as the pastoral prayer was shared.

We have prayed.

But have we prayed?

Or...did we just open and close a meeting? Or did we just sit quietly while someone else prayed?

Paul says “First of all” which means...first of all. You don’t have to be a language scholar to get this. First...before anything else...before you fill a calendar, build a building, promote an event, expect anything to change, complain about everything...pray.

Prayer is personal, right?

Of course, but here’s a missing element in many churches. Here’s the secret sauce that has been left out. And here is the Americanization of Christianity in a negative sense.

The elevation of independence and individualism has created a justified spirituality in the minds of many that eliminates much of what is commanded to and expected of New Testament believers. Isolationist Christianity is not biblical Christianity. Thus, the “I can worship God on my own” and “Why do I need to be part of a church?” thoughts permeate our culture and while “Good-ole boy, southern fried Christianity” may relish in that, it is nothing more than sinful disobedience to the commands of God.

I can pray on my own. Sure, and you should, but what about corporate prayer?

Corporate prayer has become the “invocation” and the designated spiritual opening of meetings and gatherings and has often become akin to singing the national anthem at high school football games and repeating a club motto.

John Stott, long time pastor of All Souls Church in London years past, how far short our call to holy living and corporate prayer has fallen.

Some years ago I attended public worship in a certain church. The pastor was absent on holiday, and a lay elder led the pastoral prayer. He prayed that the pastor might enjoy a good vacation (which was fine,) and that two lady members of the congregation might be healed (which was also fine; we should pray for the sick.) But that was all. The intercession can hardly have lasted thirty seconds. I came away saddened, sensing that this church worshipped a little village god of their own devising. There was no recognition of the needs of the world, and no attempt to embrace the world in prayer.

“Little village god of their own devising.” Convicting.

I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people.

What often comes last in our priorities, Paul puts first. How many times have we planned things (as a church, families, or individuals) and after we’ve worked out everything, we have asked God to bless our plans?

First of all...or “What I have therefore to say by way of a charge” as you connect it to the urgings given to Timothy in chapter one is to PRAY.

We do not need this as a model for prayer as Christ has already given us that in what we often call the Lord’s Prayer, but we are strongly reminded here that our for ALL PEOPLE.

For those struggling with what that means...it means ALL PEOPLE.

²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

This should be simple to understand, but this prayer for “kings” is for any who are in high positions over us...even if you didn’t vote for that person. If you can only pray for people you like, then don’t bother praying. Seriously. It’s empty. It’s a waste...because your prayers are man-centered, not God-centered.

The king reference by Paul here is not someone of his faith, political party, nationality, or at any level like-minded. At this point the leader of Rome is Nero.

And this prayer “that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life” is not a request to experience a nice, middle-class, restful, free from stress, all things nice and comfortable life. I’ve heard some wrongly use this verse this way in an attempt to spiritualize their goals of comfort.

Look at what Paul said to Timothy in his second letter:

2 Timothy 3:12

¹²Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,²

How can these two passage be rectified since scripture does not contradict itself and is fully true?

Kent Hughes says it well, “His prayer here for those in authority implicitly asked for peaceful conditions in which Christians could freely live out exemplary lives, so the unsaved would speak well of Christ and their teaching.”

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Ti 3:12). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Paul said the same to the Thessalonians.

Thus if the goal of our prayer for those in authority is so we can become hermits of faith, left alone in our gatherings, so that we can hide away from the world, we have misread scripture to the point that we self-justify our arrogance in isolation.

But we pray, to proclaim.

PROCLAIM

³ This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

There are apparently many prayers that are unacceptable to God, but the prayers mentioned here by Paul are acceptable. They are good. They are pleasing to God.

Peaceful, quiet, dignified lives lived so that God is glorified. Faithful prayers for those in authority glorifies God. The terms Paul used (supplication, intercession, thanksgivings) are important, but not the point. The point is God is glorified with his people pray. And he is glorified when people are saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

Our corporate prayers **fuel our proclamation** of truth.

Proclamation without prayer is just loud religious banter.

We pray so that we may proclaim. And proclaim we must. The silent Christian who keeps faith personal is sinful at best, lost at worst.

Our commission is to make disciples. We make disciples through proclaiming the truth about who alone has the power to transform a non-disciple into a disciple. For there is one God – and he is not created in our image. There is one mediator between God and man – and it is not an only human pastor, priest, or religious leader – it is the only one who is God and man. One mediator – one bridge – one way to the Father – one truth – one life – the man Christ Jesus.

This Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all.

Christ alone.

PRAISE

Corporate prayer within the church family – the family, not the attendees, not the crowd, not even the congregation but the church, the children of God, the family of God. The faithful prayers which fuel gospel-centered proclamation lead to God-centered praise.

Worship of the Lord.

Worship together.

As one body.

As one church.

⁸ I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; ⁹ likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, ¹⁰ but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.

The men of God should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarrelling. That is not a prescriptive verse regarding where your hands should be. Most of us who have been in Baptist churches all our lives struggle to bring our hands up over our head anyway. Yet, this position of praise shows that as a hand is raised in worship, the fist cannot be clenched in anger.

The fellowship of the faithful is holy as men and women remember they are brothers and sisters. Hands up in prayer erases fists clenched in rage. This is positional polity regarding where we all stand together, undeserving before a holy redemptive God who desires all should be saved and by his divine providence as accomplished that through Christ and thus, we are. We are the worshippers of I AM.

Men leading in prayer and praise. Women professing godliness in their actions and apparently in their wardrobe. This is not a statement focused on sexual suggestiveness, but on the call to holiness in all aspects of life. “Quiet, godly, and dignified in every way.”

So, quickly evidenced here for the man and the woman of God, each made in the image of God, each uniquely gifted and wired as man and woman from conception, each with specific, complementary callings within the body, all for the glory of God, are called away from self-centeredness, me-focusedness, macho manliness, ostentatious femininity, or any other descriptive term that elevates self-aggrandized identity over God to holiness without distraction or detrimental actions.

Prayer fuels our proclamation and results in holy, gospel-focused, God-centered praise.

PRAYER WITH AND FOR ONE ANOTHER, FOR LEADERS, FOR OUR ENEMIES, FOR OUR ALLIES, AND FOR GOD TO BE GLORIFIED THROUGH THE TRANSFORMATION OF LIVES.

LORD’S SUPPER