

8-15-21

Sermon- Praying As The Church

Scripture- 1 Timothy 2:1-8, CTW: Psalm 79:1-9

Hymns- 23, 600, 461

Theme- How is your prayer life? It's pleasing for us to pray for other's salvation because God loves people. It's pleasing to pray for leaders so that a peaceful existence might be a fertile garden for the advancement of the kingdom. A warning, however, if peacefulness comes, it can also lead to lack of urgency in prayer.

First, some background on this passage: after the introduction in chapter one of Paul's charge to Timothy to confront and correct some leaders in the church at Ephesus, Paul begins to move toward issues in the church.

Throughout the rest of the book, we are given truth and instruction about church life that relates to Ephesus specifically and to the church in general. First item up for bid is evangelistic intercessory prayer...there are three basic truths about for whom and why the church should pray.

## **I. Paul Reminds Timothy and Us that We are to Pray for All People. (v. 1-3)**

**A. Paul uses four different words for prayer, not really to emphasize the small differences and emphases of those words, but to express seriousness and urgency.** This could possibly be because the wayward elders had taught that prayer was unnecessary or discriminant toward a particular group or kinds of individuals.

**A CAUTION:** every instruction that Paul gave to Timothy had a reason, but we are not always able to deduce the exact situation. Paul tells us to pray for all people without distinction, but notice that since he specifically mentions kings, we must remember that

the emperor in power at that time was Nero, a crazed persecutor of the church.

**Paul is encouraging us to pray for the conversion of leaders because it is the right thing to do**, and because leaders who believe will fulfill the function of government more skillfully, **and in line with the desires and directions of God. Wouldn't THAT be nice!**

The believers of the time had either become lax, apathetic, bitter, or deceived, and were not praying for those outside the church. Paul definitely saw that as a problem.

**B. How is your prayer life?** Are you experiencing spiritual warfare? The prayer here is not battling against spiritual attack and for the use of the armor of God to fight it. The prayer here is evangelistic and intercessory in nature.

David Thomas, eighteenth century Pastor and professor of worship put it this way:

"I've concluded that feeling guilty about leaders is a very short-lived and ultimately ineffective incentive for prayer. It's pleasing for us to pray for other's salvation because God loves people. It's pleasing to pray for leaders so that a peaceful existence might be a fertile garden for the advancement of the kingdom. A warning, however, if peacefulness comes, which we do live in a peaceful society compared to much of the world, it can also lead to laziness and lack of urgency in prayer."

**C. So, How do we pray, what does it look like?** It is time that we think less about how bad our prayer life is and move on toward how the gospel calls us to **think** about prayer. The prayer that touches the heart of God and moves mountains into the sea is founded upon an attitude of brokenness, sense of boldness, and a heart that agonizes over its requests.

**Let's do some name dropping here:**

It looks like **Hannah's** prayer for a child, in **1 Samuel 2: 1-10**. It looks like **Isaiah's** resolve to "give (God) no rest" in **Isa 62**. It looks like **Jacob** wrestling with God, unwilling to let go. It looks like **Jeremiah's** determination to lay hold of God in prayer "as a belt clings to a person's waist" in **Jeremiah 13**.

We remember that according to **Hebrews** and **Luke**, Jesus "let loose petitions and **fervent cries and tears**" over Jerusalem.

**Martin Luther** spoke of **attacking** God with prayer; **Charles Finney** spoke of constant **argument** with God in prayer; **Jonathan Edwards** spoke of **grappling** with God.

**Charles Spurgeon** said, "You must get your battle-axe, and your **weapons of war**, from the armory of sacred communication with Christ. If you are much alone with Jesus, you will catch His Spirit; you will be fired with the flame that burned in His breast and consumed His life. You will weep with the tears that fell upon Jerusalem when He saw it perishing; and if you cannot speak so eloquently as He did, and yet shall there be about what you say somewhat of the same power which in Him thrilled the hearts and awoke the consciences of men."

His quote reminds me of that dear lady in the movie, **War Room**, who **cried out** to God, that He might raise up a generation of prayer warriors, who would go forth and do battle against the encroachment of the powers of evil in this world. **For those of us who saw that movie...what have we done about it?**

Yes!, you can receive that empowerment and anointing to pray through Christ and the gospel...just ask! The gospel says that when believed, Christ breaks the curse of sin, and you are freed to think the thoughts of the Spirit, for He dwells within you.

You become free from prayerlessness, from weakness in prayer You have been given **boldness, as the apostles**, to pray with power that brings down the rumblings of heaven.

There is no guilt, only grace to them that believe; grace for you to go before the throne boldly until you gain a hearing from the

Almighty. You need to own the fact that this kind of prayer accomplishes much!

## **II. Paul tells Timothy to Pray For Them To Be Saved (v. 4)**

**A. Verse four shows that God is a saving God.** He has a desire that all men in all times of all peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations to come to know Him through Jesus Christ in a personal relationship.

He wants men to come to a knowledge of the truth. One of the first verses we memorize as children, (**John 3:16-17**), captures this truth, "for God so loved the world...whosoever believes in Him will have everlasting life. God did not send Jesus into the world to **condemn** the world **BUT TO SAVE** the world through Him."

This means that if you are here today within the sound of my voice, **God wants you to be saved**. So, let me tell you how. You call out to God confessing your treason against a holy God.

Understand that we have not simply done bad things, we have thumbed our noses at the Sovereign God of the entire universe. We are deserving of wrath, an enemy of God, and separated from God by nature and by choice.

Therefore, in prayer, **the church** is to confess and ask for forgiveness of our rebellion with genuine repentance with sorrow and brokenness.

This is not what many would see as an easy way. It involves a total change in direction of our lives. That is what the word **REPENT** means. We are told to count the cost of following Christ and take up your cross and die...**the whole church!**

We as a church are called to be willing to sell all that we have, be willing to have greater allegiance to Christ than to family, to be willing to give our very life for Christ.

We are called to walk a narrow and difficult path, prepare and endure persecution, lay down our life for others, and make disciples of all nations.

**B. So, know what you are signing up for.** Realize that you are turning from loving self to loving Christ. This relationship is one of loving Jesus, not avoiding hell. It is one of devoted followership of a new master, **not simply going to church.**

But know it is one of joy without comparison, one of peace, one of overcoming grace, and overflowing love of that same God of **whose wrath we deserve.**

Come to the Savior who says, "Come to me all you who are weary, and I will give you rest."

Who says my yoke is easy and my burden is light? The same One who says I am the bread of life, water of life, you will never hunger or thirst with me, so come freely and I will give you eternal life.

### **III. Pray Because Of The Ransom (v. 5-6)**

**A. Paul gives us the reason that we pray for all people: there was a ransom paid on behalf of all people.** The term ransom is defined as purchasing slaves off of a boat. This intensifies its meaning.

Notice also that it is volitional of Christ himself following the will of God. Christ gave his life with fullness so that every man who believes receives full benefits of the atonement of Christ.

The payment is sufficient for all men; however, it is only effective for those who trust in Christ. If the application of the benefits of the ransom paid were to all men, regardless of belief, then all would be saved, and universalism would be taught here.

However, Paul says that there is only **one God**, and **one negotiator**, **one** who is able to put his hand upon God and upon man and bring forth a new arrangement between God and man.

This is the center point of the entire Christian faith. **Jesus Christ** paid for a people with death. It is the most God-glorifying event in all the history of the world!

**B. We are to fervently pray for others to come to know Christ because He laid down his life for them! He willingly became the go-between and bridged the gap.** He became the substitute and took upon himself all the wrath that was due us, and He offers us righteousness... **all the righteousness we need.**

He says that you don't have to earn your spot, He has earned it for you if you trust in Him and this ransom He has paid to free you. We pray out of gratefulness of what God has done for all of us.

We pray because we do not rejoice in the death of our enemies who die without Christ. We pray because some of those we love don't love Christ, but He loves them more than we do, and His death is sufficient for them to be redeemed.

**We pray for others that are trapped in other religions because they do not understand there is only one true God.** We pray for those who have no gospel witness, because they **must hear the gospel.** It is the greatest news ever!!

**IV. Don't Forget the admonishment in Verse 8: "I want all people, everywhere to lift up Holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing." Hello, are We listening?**

**A. The seventeenth-century English Puritan Richard Baxter wrote about this:**

"Oh, if you have the hearts of Christians or of men in you, let them yearn towards your poor ignorant, ungodly neighbors. Alas, there is but a step between them and death and hell; many hundred diseases are waiting ready to seize on them, and if they die unregenerate, they are lost forever.

Do we have hearts of rock, that cannot pity men in such a case as this? If we do not believe the Word of God and the danger of sinners, why are we Christians ourselves? If we do believe it, why do we not stir ourselves to the helping of others?

Do you not care who is damned, so you be saved? If so, you have sufficient cause to pity yourselves, for it is a frame of spirit utterly inconsistent with grace.

Do you live close by them, or meet them in the streets, or labor with them, or travel with them, or sit and talk with them, and say nothing to them of their souls, or the life to come?

If their houses were on fire, you would run and help them; and will you not help them when their souls are almost at the fire of hell?

**B. God is calling us as individuals and as a church to re-examine our prayer practices.** That is exactly what this sermon series has been up to...Stirring our hearts to contemplate our prayer life and practices, understand that the all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful God has chosen to allow us to help Him change the world through our prayers.

Is this a reality for your life as a Christian, and what have you done to accommodate that need? I would love to talk to you about this even more.

Resolve to come to Trinity Prayer time on Tuesday nights starting September 7<sup>th</sup>, and we will explore it together!

Let us indeed come to Him in prayer as His church now!

Amen?