

On Community Prayer

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to 1 Timothy, 1 Timothy, chapter 2. If you're visiting with us, you need a Bible, the Bible in the chair in front of you, there's a black Bible, you can pull that out.

Go to the back, find page 163. You'd find 1 Timothy, chapter 2, page 163. 1 Timothy 2, we're gonna do the first eight verses, we're just trucking through.

This first letter to Timothy by Paul, it's God's manual for church life. God's manual for church life. 1 Timothy 2, verses 1 through 8.

Let me read this. Let me read this. Therefore, first of all, I urge entreaties, prayers, petitions, thanks, be made on behalf of all men for kings and all who are being in authority, so that we may live a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and respect.

This is good and pleasing in the sight of God, our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there's one God, one mediator also between God and men, man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony at the proper time, unto which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle.

[1:49] I speak truth, I'm not lying. A teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. Verse 8, Therefore, I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands without wrath and dissension.

Listen to this quote. I found this. You extol me so much, your high opinion of me shames and tortures me, since, unfortunately, I sit here like a fool and harden in leisure, pray little, do not sigh for the church of God.

In short, I should be ardent in spirit, but I am ardent in the flesh, in lust, laziness, leisure, sleepiness. Already eight days have passed in which I've written nothing, in which I've not prayed or studied.

This is partly because of temptations of the flesh, partly because I'm tortured by other burdens. End quote. You know who said that? Martin Luther. Unbelievable that someone like Martin Luther, wait, wait, eight days, he didn't pray or read the Bible?

[3:19] Unbelievable that someone like Martin Luther would say such a thing. I think there's another quote that's in there.

He's, oh, I have so much to do, I have to, so I have to start work, so I have to wake up and pray for three hours, right? Yeah. And then you have this quote. I mean, if he said this, what does it say about us?

What does it say about us as a church when we gather together? It's said, no prayer is like having a vacuum turned on when it's not plugged in.

It usually doesn't work. Community prayer is vital within a church. Another person said this, quote, anything that can undercut the church's prayer life is an attack on our very existence as a church, end quote.

Anything that can undercut community prayer, when the church of God, when the body of Christ gathers together, anything that undercuts that, that's an attack on our very existence.

[4:41] It's striking how as you come to this part in Paul's first letter to Timothy, remember, this is God's manual for church life.

The how-tos on church life. And the very first thing, notice, first of all, Paul says, community prayer. First of all, this on community prayer. It's like your manual, when you get your manual, when you're trying to put something together. This is for all you ladies I'm speaking to, all you men, I know you don't use this.

You open up the manual, and then you see the page numbers here. On community prayer is the first thing. God calls us to pray, and specifically, for the men to breathe the prayer warriors.

Usually you find the women being prayer warriors, which I don't, Paul's not saying that that's bad, nor would I even say that. But it's the men who should rise up in the church and be the ones who pray.

[6:04] When the church body gathers together, I'm just saying different ways, I'm putting in statements for you. When the church body gathers together to worship God, God calls and expects the men to lead the church body by praying.

You have two aspects, actually three, where that happens. Two from me, one from another man, another gentleman, another member in the church. God calls us to pray.

And specifically, what you see that from verse eight, which we'll look at that in a moment, the men to lead in that way. Another way to say it, when it comes to the church body gathering together to worship God, God wants the men to pray for all kinds of people, even more specific, to pray for our civil government.

For those who are in authority. This letter gives us good instructions on how we function when we gather together as a church body. Remember, this is Paul writing to Timothy to the church.

This is how I want you to direct the people there in Ephesus. And these principles are not just for the first century, but for the 21st century and even into the 31st century.

[7:30] When we assemble together, what should it look like? A couple weeks ago, what was our goal? Love out of a pure heart, out of a good conscience, out of a sincere faith.

That was the goal. We gather together. What was the means to the goal? The gospel. It's all about the gospel. God is a just God where sinners, Jesus died for sinners, repent and trust Christ.

Everything, it's all about the gospel because that's the only means by which God brings about the goal of love out of a pure heart, out of a good conscience, out of a sincere faith. Now Paul began to give even more specific instructions.

Now he starts to deal with even more specific things of what God wants to take place in his church when we're, how we're to conduct ourselves in the household of God.

And first, the men, pray for all kinds of individuals, specifically those in authority and in power.

[8:36] Oh, oh, oh, oh, is this not timely? Is this not timely? You know, it doesn't matter what you think who won the election.

You should be praying for both of those men because at the end of the day when push comes to shove, I'm going to say it, both those men are going to hell.

Do you even care about that? One of them said he didn't need to be forgiven. The other's bent on Roman Catholic doctrine, which you know damns you.

What more can we say? Do we not care about that? The purpose of this is civil peace, he'll say, and godly living before people.

And the basis is it's good and pleasing to God, the Savior, who desires all sorts of people to be saved since Jesus paid the ransom for all sorts, all kinds of people. He died for Gentiles, not just for Jews.

[9:46] And Paul knew this because he was an apostle to the Gentiles. The thought is pray for all kinds of people because God saves all kinds of people. You never know who God is going to save so pray for them.

How do you know God's not going to save that gay guy? How do you know God's not going to save that lesbian? How do you know God's not going to save that Antifa guy? How do you know that? How do you know he can't save a white supremacist? How do you know he can't save Trump and Biden? How do you know that? You know what's the amazing part? Here's the amazing part, we'll just look at it a little bit more later on God's decreed will is brought about by us praying that's an amazing statement in and of itself that God would even do that God's compassion reaches humans irrespective of their race social status financial well being or any other condition he will show his grace to whomever he wills Romans chapter 9 15 to 16 I will have mercy upon whom I have mercy I will have compassion upon whom I have compassion it's not for you to judge that and again I started out this way and although the introduction with Martin Luther's quote came across as about individual prayer we're not talking about you have an individual prayer time in your personal life this is not what that's about

I'm not saying that that's not that you shouldn't have that but the text is not talking about that this is about corporate church gathering community prayer not your personal individual prayer time it's not talking about that so don't don't be thinking that I mean and it doesn't mean that you shouldn't do

that it doesn't mean you and your personal time with the Lord you shouldn't have a personal time praying I'm not saying that but this passage does not have to do with that it has to do with corporate prayer community prayer when the church gathers together we're called to pray verse 1 and 2 notice first of all therefore after talking about the goal after talking about the means to that goal Paul urged the church to proactively pray specifically for all men he's going to delineate that in just a moment all kinds of men pray as the church gathers together to worship Christ and notice he gives four specific words entreaties prayers petitions thanks four prayer words entreaties for a particular benefit or need prayer is just a general word for prayer meaning your devotion to Christ to the Lord petitions means you appeal to him with urgency and boldness and childlike confidence and thanks you give gratitude this is the action to take when there's internal conflict in a church you'll see that later on verse 8 you take your eyes off of yourself and onto others and praying for them and then outside of that so we make requests for specific needs we bring those before

God we appeal boldly on their behalf giving thanks this is what our prayers should look like for all sorts all kinds of people and notice he gets specific for kings verse 2 and for all who are in authority specifically one kind of persons the civil authorities the ones who were the supreme rulers and who was ruling at this time as Paul was writing Nero you know can I tell you you may be wanting Trump to be president and you're freaked out if Biden becomes president you know what if we can weather through Nero as Christians we can weather through anybody Nero was a psychopath right that guy was crazy if we as Christians our forefathers can weather through Nero it's okay we can weather through anybody don't forget

[14 : 49] I sent this to a friend of mine Matthew 16 I will build my church and the gates of hell cannot stand against it I mean is that true or is it true I mean it's true do we believe that or not pray for Nero I'm sorry what did you just say yeah pray for Nero yeah we call upon the sovereign one asking him to work his will through these earthly kings placed there by his sovereign will God was the one who placed them there God was the one who put them there they're there to do his bidding right don't we believe that you know it's amazing that our very prayers can affect the national and foreign policies of our country they can do not underestimate

God pray he's going to give two reasons why because first it produces godly peace with the government you see that in verse two on behalf of kings and all who are in authority so that here's the purpose we may live literally live a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity so what's the practical purpose that we may live a tranquil and quiet life tranquil means untroubled from without from outward disturbance quiet peace within ourselves one writer says this it's quote freedom from the turmoil that threatened to thwart Paul's ministry freedom from turmoil that threatened to thwart the ministry of this church and notice what he says you live a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity godliness means piety our beliefs and action you're a God fear it's the outward evidence of genuine faith in Christ dignity means seriousness worthy of respect it affects your outward attitude and your internal intention sin in all godliness and outward evidence of genuine faith in Christ in all dignity all this worthy of respect it produces godly peace with the government how can we avoid an offense to others that would inhibit the goal of being able to proclaim the gospel we pray corporately so look at Paul saying here as we expound this text Paul encouraged Christians to pray for all sorts of people specifically those in authority so we will show ourselves to be quiet tranquil people not troublemakers displaying in our actions and our attitudes that we fear god trust god and worship god that's what he calls us to do that's the response and that's what happens when we have community prayer one writer says this quote that we might live daily lives free of the controversies and conflicts that might arise with people of power not so we can be comfortable but so we might outwardly fully and appropriately evidence the inward reality of our faith relationship with god through christ end quote now this calls for wisdom doesn't it because you have two things that we hold as americans on the one hand for us as americans we have rights given to us by the constitution don't we so we have those paul himself used rights given to him as a roman citizen to further the gospel do you remember in the book of acts he was in the temple the jews arrested him they're about to beat the living tar out of him rome came they rescued him and they strapped him down and they're about to beat him and he's like do you beat a roman citizen before he's for trial and they're like oh and i say what and uh so then they went to the commander and said hey this guy's a roman citizen he's like hey are you a roman citizen he's like yeah he's like hey i purchased my roman citizenship he's like i was born one they're like oh they all backed away they took their hands off him because they were freaking out it's one thing to have to pay for it's

another thing when you're born a roman citizen so paul used that he used his rights to further the gospel see you have this in one hand based upon the constitution we have certain liberties guaranteed but yet at the same time we need to be a people who are not troublemakers but who truly display that we believe god is in charge he rules over all people especially those authorities and thus we pray for them which can draw harsh criticism from others this is where it calls for wisdom doesn't it it's hard to navigate especially with the things going on today by the way i had a conversation with somebody about prayer prayer and he said that's all you do is just pray as far as paul was concerned prayer is not a non-action in other words it's not well we can't do anything all we can do is pray if you were to say that paul would probably slap you what's wrong with you that's ridiculous prayer is a big deal because it shows what we truly believe about god and it calms us down and we're talking about again corporate community prayer coming together or praying so as he says the first reason because it brings about a godly living peace with the government that's the first reason second reason he gives it pleases god and is the means god uses to save sinners this pleases god he likes it he likes to hear when the body comes together to pray notice what it says here in verse three this is good and pleasing in the sight of god our savior prayer is encouraged by the fact that it is good and pleasing to notice god god our savior god our savior who is the originator and initiator of salvation you did not originate your salvation you did not initiate your salvation god did when we remember that god is our savior saving us by his mercy and grace we will be urged to pray for other sinners since god was merciful and gracious to us we are sinners indeed aren't we we are just we are here as a bunch of sinners in need of grace just as much as everybody else as anybody else right

I should be hearing a bunch of amens to that it's true we are sinners in need of grace and we have that perspective like oh god has been so gracious and merciful to me how come i'm not praying for these people too notice he says the next part here verse four who desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth what's god's attitude toward all sorts of people god desires all sorts of people all kinds of people to be saved yes yes even those civil authorities yes even donald j trump yes even joe biden yes even kamala harris yes even them how do you know oh christian if god will not use your prayer to save them how will you know a christian if god will not use your prayer to save that lesbian gal how do you know you don't you don't and herein lies the mystery what notice he's bringing up prayer and salvation look god decrees everything that happens right everything all the little decisions we make all the big decisions everything has been decreed by god nothing is outside of god's decree and yet he also decreed the means to his end and one of the means he decreed is prayer so our prayer is the means god uses to bring about his sovereign decreed will for that person to be saved for that person to be saved this is truly amazing and it's humbling that god would do that god uses the means of us praying for that person and they'll be saved so there's all men to be saved and to come to knowledge of truth all men

[25 : 19] Jews and Gentiles a truth Paul continually contended against with Jews and Judaizers possibly even with these false teachers who were so into the law remember we talked about that a couple weeks ago and when he says to be saved that phrase is parallel to the next phrase to come to the knowledge of the truth to become Jesus followers in other words to come to know the person and work of Christ Jesus in the gospel that you receive Jesus for all he is he died for my sins he resurrected from the dead i repent i put my trust in Jesus that gospel truth that truth so God desires that all sorts all kinds of people will have a personal response to him in Christ and the gospel so we should pray for them one writer says this

God desires all people Jew and Gentile slave and free ruled and ruler etc. to be saved and this should elicit our prayers for all people don't blow off anyone because you never know you never know and look here's the basis for God's desire for all kinds of people to be saved look at verse 5 for there's one God one mediator also between God and men man Christ Jesus the basis for God's desire for all kinds of people to be saved is a mediatorship of Christ and his sufficient sacrifice i mean look at what he says here there's one God so there's not many gods and there's not many ways to God and the one God we know he's talking about is the God of the Old Testament Yahweh God he's the only God there is no other God and notice second first there's one God one mediator also between God and men there's one mediator between us and God and he says there's no article there that's why i translate as man Christ Jesus man knows he's trying to emphasize the quality of the fact that Jesus Christ was human so God provided one mediator between himself and humanity and that mediator is none other than the God man this emphasizes

the humanity of Christ as well as exclusivity for salvation there is no other person there's no other name by which we must be saved it's only Jesus there's no other way there's no many ways to God you must trust Christ or you will be condemned

Christ is God's representative and the only representative from God that's what Paul's saying he's the mediator he's the one who brings us together it's the God man Christ Jesus emphasizing his lordship emphasizing who he is the Messiah Jesus he's the one who brings us together and in what way did he serve as the mediator in what way does Jesus bring us together verse 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all he gave his life as payment and this payment sacrifice was totally sufficient he was a substitute ransom that's what the word means this actually has a preposition in front of it anti so substitute ransom he's the exchange price he paid for sinners the word means a price paid to free captives

Jesus paid the ransom price so that you can be set free and and he didn't pay that ransom to Satan no no Jesus paid the ransom to the father who should judge all sinners by unleashing his wrath in them by eternal judgment forever but Christ paid the ransom to God resulting in our salvation you're no longer a slave you've been freed and now you belong to God when Christ died on the cross it was not some potential atonement it was actual atonement actual forgiveness no more debt it's gone you're forgiven the debt is paid you're free you're free Christ paid the ransom as a mediator for all sorts of people thus were to pray for them and that ransom was sufficient you don't need something else you don't need some work you don't need to do this you don't need to do that all you need is the sufficient ransom price of

[30 : 59] Christ that's it and trusting Christ that's it Christ paid the ransom for all sorts of people for all kinds of people now I want to be clear here with this passage just so that we understand I want to be clear this passage does not teach that Jesus died for everyone who's ever lived it does not teach that what's called unlimited atonement it does not mean that Jesus Christ died for everybody he only died for his elect he only died for his people the context shows this to be true from verse one into verse two he died for all kinds of people what's also known as particular redemption which is my position this is what the passage means and Cottonwood Bible Church is our position too as a church and you don't have to believe this to be saved praise God or even to be a member of this church but this is true from God's word but even if you don't believe that

I disagree with that we all would agree to this Jesus died for all sorts of people all kinds of people millions upon millions of people from all sorts of background social status ethnicity skin color even for those in civil government we just don't know who yet remember prayer is the means that God used to bring about his will so pray as a community and notice what he says here the next part in verse six the testimony at the proper time what's that testimony what's testifying well it's testifying to God being the savior that he's merciful and gracious who loves to save sinners God is not some sick sadistic God who goes save sinners whatever I wish I didn't have to do that come on that's not God that's why we read that in Ezekiel 33 11 I don't take pleasure in the death of the wicked he's not some sadistic sick person who goes that's not God he's not like that if you're not a Christian here today he says come I will save you I will forgive you I will love you I will pour out my grace upon you that's what he says come if you don't know Jesus repent trust Christ and you can trust that the ransom has been paid for you that's the testimony Christ and his death testified to God being the Savior merciful and gracious to us and notice what Paul says look at verse 7 and for this literally unto which I was appointed what's the which the testimony so

Paul was appointed by God to testify as a preacher an apostle and teacher of the Gentiles he was appointed by God to be a preacher what's a preacher a herald ambassador messenger the herald just gave the message he's in no position to change it you can't do that you can't change the message you don't do that you can't change the Bible and notice he says an apostle he's sent with the authority of Christ as God's spokesman and notice he immediately adds I'm telling the truth I'm not lying I'm telling the truth I'm not lying for those who may have doubted or challenged his authority as a true apostle because he's one of the twelve he's not a real apostle

Jesus truly called him and notice he says not just he's a preacher he's a herald he's an apostle but notice he says he's a teacher of the Gentiles he explained and expounded on the truth so notice Paul spoke the truth had authority to speak the truth and taught the truth that's Paul so the truth is that Jesus ransom God saves that's the truth that's the testimony he says I'm a herald of this message I have authority to preach this message and I teach this message and this is for the Gentiles to non-Jews he's an apostle to the Gentiles he's a preacher to the Gentiles he was a

teacher to the Gentiles calling them to notice the next part the last part verse 7 in faith and truth faith which corresponds to save from verse 4 and truth which corresponds to the part in verse 4 come to the knowledge of the truth Paul was appointed as a preacher of the gospel to the Gentiles [36:28] Paul was appointed an apostle sent by Christ to the Gentiles and Paul was the teacher to the Gentiles the truth is for all sorts of people that was Paul's calling so here he tells us God desires all sorts of people to be saved here's the two reasons he gives why we pray now verse 8 actually tells us how how do we pray and that question is going to be answered in a way that you probably don't want to expect he repeats the command look at verse 8 therefore I want the men in every place to pray so when the body comes together now he's being more specific pray okay corporate prayer community prayer now he's specific when the body comes together the men should lead in this way the men of a church give leadership in public prayer as they lead the time when God's people gather together to worship him so I want to be clear with something else as well

I was cleared about in reference to particular redemption I want to be clear again men are called to lead God's church not women and we're talking about the church talking about politics talking about within the church and you're going to see more of this next week so I encourage you as we go through 9 through 15 which is one of the most hotly debated passages in all of scripture I want the men in every place what's that mean the various million places of the body we have the privilege for all of us to meet here in one building they didn't have that privilege in first century well they probably did that in the temple but as years wore on you couldn't meet in the temple and you couldn't have like more than 50 or 60 people tops maybe 60 but once you start doing that Rome is going to be like oh hey what are you guys doing you guys planning something you couldn't do that in the Roman Empire you couldn't have like 200 people meeting in one place you'd be like what's going on so you had house churches different house churches and other groups meeting together so the men are called to give leadership to these body gatherings and notice now he answers the question how do you pray first with holy lives he says lifting up holy hands a very

Old Testament type action you see that a lot in the Old Testament remember Solomon he was raising his hands lifting up his hands when he was praying consecrating the new temple and it's a way to emphasize seriousness urgency of prayer especially for those in civil authority and the holy hands display holy lives see their entire lives are holy to the Lord so they lift up holy hands to pray how should the men pray with holy lives but also without anger and arguing notice he says this without wrath and dissension unresolved conflicts lead to bitterness that's not the kind of attitude men should have within Christ's body one writer says this a life and attitude of forgiveness is necessary for effective prayer without dissension which means disputing arguing barriers are built between us and God when barriers are built between believers the sins the sins of men affect the prayer livelihood of the church men were called to be one in Christ and when we're not it will mar our community prayer true prayer cannot exist alongside anger or disputing in other words our attitude toward others affects our approach to

God our community approach to God it affects that that's how we should pray as men with holy lives without anger and arguing because disunity can destroy our prayer life and actually render our prayers null and void as a body when it comes to the church body gathering together to worship God God wants us to pray specifically to men for all kinds of people to pray for all kinds of people even more specifically to pray for those in civil government those civil authorities when the church body gathers together to worship God God calls and expects the men to lead the body by praying and again we're all called to pray as a corporate body when we commune together but he's calling God calls us to pray specifically for the men for you men you members you should be part of this to be the prayer warriors when you're like Caitlin or other guys praying you should grab a hold of that and be praying that's why we do that so you're actually praying with us you're actually praying with me you're actually praying with Daniel or Caitlin or Aaron or Travis whoever or one of the members you're actually praying with us so good let's ask let's pray now and ask the spirit to work in us as his body and we do pray for that oh spirit work in us as your body that we as your body would not have anger or arguing we'll have holy lives and even specifically for us as the men we would lead in that way and we need your grace and we thank you for your grace that you give to us in Christ Jesus thank you that you're molding us and shaping us do that in your church thank you that you are doing that and we see that taking place it's exciting to see that keep doing your work take this time just a few moments if you would between you and the Lord to pray maybe to reflect upon the passage pray for God to work in your heart maybe you want to pray for the church whichever make

this a time of personal prayer between you and the Lord and you know we sing a couple songs and then we'll pray but this quiet time between you and the Lord just a few moments do that please right now