

Pray for All People

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[0 : 00] Well, we can turn back to our reading in 1 Timothy, chapter 2. 1 Timothy, chapter 2.! We can read again at the beginning of the chapter, verse 1.

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, and so on.

I'm going to look at the beginning of this chapter, verse 1, down to verse 6 this evening. There's so many things happening in the world today.

When we look at our screens, whether it's online or on television, we see again and again just reminders to us as we were hearing this morning of the fallen world in which we live.

We see so much devastation. You think of Jamaica and the hurricane that hit there this week. So many people lost their lives, and when you see before and after pictures taken from above the land, you see just the vast destruction that's happened in that place.

[1 : 15] Places have been just wiped out. So much devastation. We see it, too, where there's war going on, whether it's the Middle East or the Russian-Ukraine conflict and other parts of the world as well.

And you see very often before and after pictures of how places were prospering and thriving with people and buildings, and now they're just raised to the ground. They're just devastation every way they look.

We see it in so many places throughout the world. We think of things even happening in our own nation, sad events like the attack on the train in these last 24 hours, as we've seen.

And we wonder just what's going on. There's so much persecution, so much violence, so much disorder, so much godlessness. The list goes on.

We are living in days when there are so many challenges all around us. And that's just thinking of things that we see in many ways away from ourselves.

[2 : 21] But there's so many other things going on for ourselves, whether it's personally and individually in our homes and our families, as collectively, as congregations or as communities.

There's so many challenges, so many uncertainties for us. And as we survey the world in which we live in, it does not strike us that so many people, so many nations, they're looking for answers. But the answers are being looked for without God. When there's so little thought towards God. It's a sign of our day and the time in which we live.

When all the talk about what is best for us as a people, what we need as a people, what we need going forward as a people, is all about what we can do and not what God can do.

We lose sight of that. We lose sight of the God who created the world, who sustains the world. And we begin to think that it is our strength, our power.

[3 : 26] The very warnings that God gave many, many years ago in the Old Testament. You go back to the likes of Deuteronomy and you read, When you go into the land that I have prepared for you, a land flowing with milk and honey, the warning that God gave was, Do not forget the Lord.

And yet the Lord is forgotten. So as God's people, as those who trust God, what are we to do? Well, as we look here in 1 Timothy, Paul is writing here to Timothy.

And he's writing to him with a great reminder to him of just what we have as God's people. And he's writing at a time when there were many challenges, many persecutions, much violence and disorder going on all around them.

Many challenges and uncertainties, but he's writing to them with confidence. And saying, This is what you can do. We often ask ourselves, Where do we start?

We feel so helpless, maybe for ourselves or for others. But we have a great God. We have a great God who is speaking to us, who is reminding us again and again that in the midst of all that is going

on, in the midst of all of the chaos, that God is a God who desires, as we've read here, a people to be saved.

[4 : 56] That that is his desire towards his people. A people to be saved. And so where does Paul direct Timothy and ourselves in this passage that we're looking at?

Where does he direct us to? He directs us to prayer. And then first of all, he says in verse 1, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all people.

He directs us to pray. And that's what we know. That's what's maybe obvious to us, isn't it? So many of us, we know that we have to pray, but it does no harm to think, How are we praying? Are we praying as the Bible commands us to? Are we praying as a people of faith? Or are we a people who have lost our faith? Who have maybe started to wane in prayer and think, Well, what's the point in prayer?

Paul here isn't saying that you have to start praying to the people. He's saying that you have to keep praying. And that is so often the lesson for ourselves as well, That we are to be a people who always pray and do not give up.

[6 : 08] And so in every circumstance, we are to keep praying and to be encouraged to do so. The church has a place.

The church has a role in the world, Despite so many who will say that the future is apart from the church, It's away from the church. So the church has had its day. And we think of Friday and marking the anniversary of the Reformation all these years ago.

We see so many almost being ignorant to what that actually meant. And now understanding the importance, the significance of that event over 500 years ago.

And yet here we are today just needing that reminder again. It is by the grace of God that we go on. But that God, as we pray to him, has that grace to give to us.

And to give it to us in abundance. And so Paul is writing to Timothy, Outlining the importance of the church for the people. People then and people today.

[7 : 12] He's really outlining the importance of worship. Just as we sang there in Psalm 5, in verse 7. There's a reminder of just the precious nature of worship in verse 7.

But I into thy house will come in thine abundant grace. And I will worship in thy fear toward thy holy place. We are reminded there of what worship is.

How we come to God by his abundant grace. And then this idea that we will come and worship in thy fear.

In that dependence upon him towards his holy place. So it's all about coming in dependence on God. And that is what prayer is.

Prayer takes us to that place of dependence. But also to that place where it's possible for God to do all things well.

[8 : 12] And so Paul is giving us this invitation to prayer. And then he outlines for us that we ought to pray for all kinds of people.

Prayer be made for all people. And then he goes on to speak about the implications, if you like, of this. In terms of the Christian mission. The church's mission.

And so as we approach God in prayer. We begin to see there the greatness of God. The more we lift up our eyes to him. The more we see beyond ourselves our own ability.

To the ability of the grace of God. And what he can do. As one commentator puts it. The wider the subjects for prayer. The larger becomes the vision of the soul that prays.

In other words, when we come to God in this dependence. And the wider we see the subjects of prayer. The enormity of all that we can pray for. To God who is able.

[9 : 15] The more becomes. The greater our vision becomes. As a praying people. Both of God and of his church. And so we look at three things in these verses together this evening.

The first is a directive to pray. And the second is a direction from prayer. And then thirdly, the desired outcome of prayer.

So the first thing we have is a directive to pray. There is a command here to us. First of all, it says in verse 1 here in chapter 2.

I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all people. So you have here, I urge.

Paul is using this word to convey encouragement to the people. And it's of a stronger sense than just saying, well, here's something you can try.

[10 : 19] It's far more important than that. Instead, it's a command. It's a command to the church. I urge. It's not just, this is what you should do, but this is what you must do. And this is not just Paul speaking.

This is Paul speaking by the Holy Spirit. So this is the word of the Lord to the church. I urge that prayer be made. I command that prayer be made.

And when you look at the way God speaks through his word, and you look at many cases in the Old Testament, when you have Moses or Joshua or David or so many others in the Old Testament, and the word of the Lord came to them.

And that's God speaking and giving directives and direction to them, commands to them. When God speaks, the people are to go. When people are disobedient, God often just brings them back to the way that he wants them.

[11 : 25] You think of Jonah, who says they don't deserve salvation in the great city of Nineveh because of what they have done. The Lord brings them to his senses.

The Lord speaks, and he urges his people to be a people of prayer, a people of listening to his commands, of doing as he says. You think of Paul himself and how he's been directed by the Lord throughout his life.

He's been saved by that amazing grace. And he's been turned in a completely different direction, but going in dependence on the Lord. And so we go too.

Paul is here giving instruction to the church, to the people of God. It is the word of God to us today. And so I urge you, me, all of us together, that prayer be central to all that we are doing.

That is the command that is here, to be engaged in the work of prayer. And we say, but it's obvious. We know it.

[12 : 38] But do we make it our priority? And do we make it this prayer that has this great vision, this broad nature of all that we're seeing that God can do?

You can imagine the people here being urged to pray. Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people. What would they focus on first?

If this is you being told tonight, I urge supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people. You can imagine some saying, but who are all the people?

Are there some that are undeserving of prayer, that our focus is on that second part and not the first? Because that's what we do so often by nature.

How can we pray for so-and-so? They don't deserve the Lord. And that's the attitude of Jonah. When he said, they don't deserve, Mershi, this great city of Nineveh, because of what they have done.

[13 : 45] But the Lord reminds Jonah, who are you to say that they don't deserve it? And so we shouldn't end up looking at, well, who are we to pray for? Who are we not? It's all people, and it's supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people.

And who would Paul have been asking the people to pray for? Well, when you look at Paul's day and Timothy's day, the people that he was asking them to pray for, as he goes on to say in verse 2, the kings and all who are in high positions, who was he asking them to pray for?

The Emperor Nero. The one who was wicked beyond anything we could imagine. Or the Roman Empire as it was, who were breathing out cruelties in all kinds of different ways.

Even to the authorities that were ruling over them and being, persecuting them. Pray for all people, he's saying. And you can imagine them saying, but how?

How can I pray for him? For Nero or for an emperor or for a ruler that's over us who's so cruel? But he's saying, pray. Pray. Because that is where it might lead to a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way, as verse 2 goes on to say.

[15 : 10] And so we are to pray for all people. Why was Paul keeping emphasizing this need for prayer?

You see it in most of his letters where he's asking for prayer for all kinds of people. For himself, for those who are missionaries, for those who are working in the gospel, but for those who are opposed to the gospel as well.

Because we are dependent on God. Because God has promised to hear and answer. God has said that he will do abundantly more than all that we ask or imagine.

When you go back to the Old Testament, Jeremiah 33, verse 3, God says, Call to me and I will answer you. And will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

God is saying, Just come to me in prayer. And so Paul is here saying, I urge you to make these prayers to God.

[16:19] Because he is the one who is able. And so how can we not take hold of this resource of prayer? How can we not call upon the name of the Lord?

When we can come, as I said in Psalm 5, Come into his house in his abundant grace. And we'll worship in fear towards his holy place.

All of which is coming to him in prayer. There is the command to pray. But there is also a challenge here in prayer. He says, First of all, Prayer is a priority.

First of all, And I urge prayer. It's our starting place. Billy Graham, The evangelist said, The three secrets of successful ministry are prayer, Prayer, And more prayer.

The importance of prayer is there for us all to see. It's not just something that fills part of our service. It's not just an add-on.

[17:28] It's not something that in our daily lives, That we can just pick and choose whether to do. It's there for us all the time. Our relationship with God is through prayer.

And we have it not just on our Lord's Day, When we come and pray publicly here, But we have it in the midweek, To make that our priority. And even when we think if it's a prayer meeting, And there's no sermon, as it were.

It's no less important. Just because it's only a prayer meeting. It's still as significant as any act of worship we do, As we're praying to God.

Even if we think of Bible studies together. No less important when that's crouched in prayer as well. Our life, our breath, our all, Is in that relationship with God in prayer.

If we want to be what God would have us to be, Whether it's individually, collectively, As a nation, as a world, It is in our dependence on Him in prayer.

[18:43] 2 Chronicles 7, verse 13. Words I'm sure many of you know well. When I shut up the heavens, So that there is no rain, Or command the locusts to devour the land, Or send pestilence among my people, If my people, who are called by my name, Humble themselves and pray, And seek my face, And turn from their wicked ways, Then I will hear from heaven, And forgive their sin, And heal their land.

Is prayer important? Well, there's the answer. If we will turn, He will forgive sin, And heal our land. So there is the command, I urge you to pray. The second thing we see is, A direction from prayer. As Paul is writing to Timothy, He's writing really in terms of, The conduct of the church. How they are a church. How they are a people of worshipping the Lord, In fear and by His abundant grace. All of these things. And what he sees is, It's not a selfish church. It's not to be a selfish people. That can easily be our attitude, In prayer.

[20:05] When we look just, To ourselves, To our own situations, To our own needs, And we don't look beyond. But that's why we see here, This urge to pray, Supplications, Prayers, intercessions, And thanksgivings.

He says, For all people. So our prayers go beyond, Ourselves. And that's why we see, The importance of prayer.

We hear the phrase used, Our moral compass. What does it mean? Well it means, How we are living.

One definition, Put it like this, Is a natural feeling, That makes people know, What is right and wrong, And how they should behave. That's a moral compass.

How we know, What is right and wrong, And how we should behave. And for some people, They would say, Well, We've started to lose, Our moral compass, Because of rising crime, Or all that's going on, In our world, In our nation.

[21:17] But what is it based on? What is the moral compass, Based on? What is right and wrong, Based on? It has to have, A standard.

And prayer, Directs us in that standard. Because it directs us, To God, And to his ways, And to his standards.

And if we need, A right compass, As the Amurda, Was preaching this morning, We were hearing, About how we lost, That moral compass, In the fall. But to get right, We have to come, By faith, To Jesus Christ.

Well, That is what the word, Of God does. It is our direction. And direction, Comes from prayer, You think of Psalm 25, A psalm you can easily pray, Show me thy ways, O Lord, Thy paths, O teach

thou me.

There is a prayer, In that, And it's a prayer, Asking for direction. Show me your ways, O Lord. We need that compass, It is our guide to God, And to salvation, That comes through, Jesus Christ.

[22 : 30] And so, This direction comes, Even as we see in prayer here. Paul uses four words, For praying. Some people would say, That they all mean the same thing, But, Well, There's four words, For a reason.

When he says in verse one, I urge that supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, And thanksgivings, Be made for all people. They are all prayer.

But there must be, A difference in them. And when you take each word, And look at it, Well, It reminds us of the direction, Our prayers go, And the direction that prayer, Gives.

Supplications, There firstly. It refers to, A focus on specific needs. The idea is of bringing, A deep, And a heavy, Burden, To the Lord.

Because we cannot, Deal with it, Ourselves. And so, Supplications can be made, In so many, Different ways.

[23 : 40] When we see, The needs in our lives, The needs of our nation, The needs of the world, These are burdens, That we cannot carry. These are many things, That we cannot change.

And yet, We are able to bring them, To the very throne of grace. And we can bring, Our supplications, To the Lord. We can cast, Our cares on him, Who cares for us.

And so we see there, The urging of prayer, Part of it is, Supplications. Part of it is just, Recognizing, That dependence, On him.

I can't do it. I cannot change, This situation. But Lord, We are pleading, With you. So you have supplications, You have prayers, Mentioned as well.

And prayers here, Really means, Coming into the Lord's, Presence, In worship. Coming in that, Abundant grace, That he has given to us.

[24 : 49] When you think of, The disciples asking, Lord, Teach us to pray. How does the Lord's prayer start? Our Father, Who art in heaven. So it begins, By recognizing, Who we are coming to.

That our prayer, Is to the Lord. And that we have this, Relationship with him. That we have, A father in heaven, Who we can call upon.

One who sees, His people, As their, His children. And one who loves, His children. And so we can come, With our prayers, To worship him, To adore him, To praise him, To give him the glory, That he is due.

Then you have intercessions, Mentioned there as well. And again, You think of that word, Well, It very often remains, Interceding for somebody else.

So that even when we come in prayer, There is one who is interceding for us. The Lord Jesus Christ, Our great high priest. We pray in his name.

[26 : 02] And so he is for us. But we can intercede for others as well. When you think of him saying here, That prayer and intercession and thanksgiving and supplications, Are made for all people.

Well, Part of that is because, All people don't want to pray. There are many who cannot pray, Who will not pray, Who don't know how to pray. And yet, It is our privilege, To intercede for them.

And it is our command, To pray in that way. That intercessions be made. That we stand in the gap for others. And what a wonderful privilege that is.

And is it a neglected privilege? Do you pray for others on a regular basis? Do you only pray for those you know?

Those you are comfortable with? Or do you pray for all people in that way? The people who cannot pray for themselves. The people who maybe you think don't deserve prayer.

[27 : 11] Well, why not pray for them? That the Lord would intercede in their lives. And you see also here, Thanksgivings be made for all people.

And again, The challenges there when you feel it. I don't got nothing to be thankful about that person for. And yet they still deserve our prayers.

And we have so much to thank God for. And all our prayers include that sense of thanksgiving. Who are we to pray for?

Well, we are to pray for all people. And he goes on to mention for kings. For those in high positions. And you think, Well, that deserves attention too.

All those who we feel may be losing sight of what's important. Or leading us in the wrong direction. The importance of praying for all people.

[28 : 14] So we seek a direction in prayer. Now a little takeaway for prayer for this evening. What do you do with your bulletin sheet? When you go into the week ahead.

Do you leave it tucked in your Bible? Just maybe go into the recycling bin. What do you do with it? Well, why not try using this as a prayer encourager if you like.

Because everything in there can be prayed about. If you look at the front page. You've got three sermons outlined there. Well, why not pray in this coming week.

That the word preached bears fruit. There's three sermon outlines there for you. You look in the middle pages. You've got a number of various activities going on in this coming week.

Prayer meetings. Meetings with Muriel. The vacancy committee. You've got the explorers. The Friday the Free. The holiday club planning meeting.

[29 : 24] There's a list of things to pray for. The mission of the church. Both locally. Nationally. Internationally. It's there before you.

And what the beauty of the bulletin sheet is. You can know when to pray. So for example. Tuesday evening at 7pm. If you're not on the vacancy committee.

Take time to pray. For those who are. Take time to pray. For a sense of the Lord's guiding hand.

And wisdom. In it all.

And so you have all of these things. You go through. The rest of the sheet as well. You've got. Remembrance Day coming up. As we remember.

What has been done for us. In the past. You've got other services. And praise nights going on. In the back. You've got Thanksgiving. For Ivor Martin's. 30 years in ministry.

[30 : 20] The 55 plus fellowship. Every item on this bulletin sheet. You can use for prayer. So why not. Instead of just throwing it in your Bible.

Or putting it in the recycling bin. Have it before you. In this coming week. And just use it. As a means of guiding. You in prayer. Because there we see.

The vision and mission of the church. It is to proclaim. The glorious gospel. Of Jesus Christ. To all people.

And that's what we see thirdly here then. A desired outcome. Of prayer. What is the desired outcome of prayer. That Paul has here.

Well it's that when we pray. We will see the blessing. Of God. And there are three things. That we can just highlight briefly here. The first is.

[31 : 19] That this would lead. To a peaceful life. That it would lead. To a peaceful life. You see that in verse 2.

When we are praying for kings. And those in high positions. That we may lead. A peaceful. And quiet. Life. One of the reasons.

To pray for those in our heart. Is that we might have. A sense of God. With us. Being governed. Wisely. In a godly way. And this is not a prayer.

That we would please. Everybody. But that we would see God. Guiding. Our nation. That we would be living. A peaceful life.

For the glory of God. So our prayers are. For those in authority. That they might rule us. In wisdom. In this way. But we also see that.

[32 : 16] Our prayers would lead. To the saviour. Being exalted. In verses. Three and four. It says. This is good. And it is pleasing. In the sight of God.

Our saviour. Who desires. All people. To be saved. And to come to a knowledge. Of the truth. And here we see. Well that is our prayer. That is our prayer.

For all people. That they would see. The saviour. Who desires. All to be saved. And to come. To that knowledge.

Of the truth. That our saviour. Would be exalted. That God. Would be glorified. When you look at. The old testament.

You see really. Paul is expressing here. What you see running. Through the old testament. To the prophets. The psalms. Think of Habakkuk. And what he desires.

[33 : 11] That as the Lord. Is speaking to him. That the day. Would come. When the earth. Would be filled. With the knowledge. Of the Lord. As the waters. Cover the sea. That is exactly. What we are seeing here.

That all people. Would know. A saviour. Who is Jesus Christ. That they would come. To that knowledge. Of truth. Or as so many.

