

Palmetto Baptist Church – December 27, 2020

Prayer Works – I Timothy 2:1-7

Inside the Text:

It should not surprise us then that Paul made such an emphasis on evangelistic prayer for the corporate body.

CIRCLE “ALL” mentioned 6 times in these 7 verses...

From a historical and contextual perspective Paul addressed this topic to right a wrong practice in the church. Why do you think the church in Ephesus needed a reminder to pray for the unsaved?

- They were distracted by the technical (genealogies) instead of the practical (salvation of souls) [1:3-7]
 - Judaizers teaching that salvation comes through keeping the Mosaic Law
 - The beginning components of Gnosticism (elitism)
 - The “ALL” includes the Gentiles (vs. 7)
- They were being taught that the resurrection already took place which would place someone past the point of making a decision for Christ (Hymenaeus and Alexander’s teachings in 2 Tim 2:14-18)

A common theme in both those heretical teachings was the denial of the universality of the gospel. Paul counters that teaching by showing the need to pray for all men, since the scope of the gospel call is universal. The goal of the church, like Israel before it, is to reach the world with the saving truth of God. Israel failed to be the faithful nation by which God could reach the world, and the responsibility has been passed to the church. (Romans 11:1ff. explains that Israel’s failure is not the end. The Jews will again be restored to faithfulness and used as an evangel to the world.) Paul writes out of concern that the exclusivity that caused Israel to fail in her mission not cripple the church. History shows that the church has, in fact, become content with itself and often neglectful of sinners.¹

I. The Priority of Prayer. (1)

A. Pray on purpose.

- **With Priority (D.A. Carson quote on public prayer) “first of all”**
 - **The word relates not to primacy of time but to primacy of importance (Donald Guthrie. *The Pastoral Epistles.*)**

“First of all” indicates that prayer is most important in the public worship of the church. It is sad to see how prayer has lost importance in many churches. “If I announce a banquet,” a pastor said, “people will come out of the woodwork to attend. But if I announce a prayer meeting, I’m lucky if the ushers show up!” Not only have the special meetings for prayer lost stature in most local churches, but even prayer *in the public services* is greatly minimized. Many pastors spend more time on the announcements than they do in prayer!²

In our services: (Adoration. Confession. Thanksgiving. Supplication.)

¹MacArthur, J. 1995. *1 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago

²Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, "An Exposition of the New Testament Comprising the Entire 'BE' Series"--Jkt. (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989), 1 Ti 2:9.

Practical Application: If Paul places such a high priority on corporate prayer, how are we to respond?

D.A. Carson (A Call to Spiritual Reformation) says: “In brief, public praying is a pedagogical opportunity. It provides the one who is praying with an opportunity to instruct or encourage or edify all who hear the prayer. In liturgical churches, many of the prayers are well-crafted, but to some ears they lack spontaneity. In nonliturgical churches, many of the prayers are so predictable that they are scarcely any more spontaneous than written prayers, and most of them are not neatly as well-crafted. The answer to both situations is to provide more prayers that are carefully and freshly prepared. That does not mean writing them out verbatim (though that can be a good thing to do). At the least, it means thinking through in advance and in some detail just where the prayer is going, preparing, perhaps, some notes, and memorizing them.” (Page 35)

- **In the lobby or auditorium before and after the service (people come to church for a reason... because they have a spiritual need or simply desire to worship)**
- **As we begin each gathering together**

B. Pray with passion.

Urge you – parakalō: to call to one’s side; appeal to, urge, exhort

- In an effort to fight against false teaching (“salvation is connected to your ethnicity”)
- In an effort to align the church to please God

C. Pray with precision.

Note: all four words are in the plural, indicating repetition.

PLEAD WITH GOD – “**SUPPLICATIONS**” OR **Entreaties** is from *deēsis*, the root meaning of which is “to lack,” “to be deprived,” or “to be without something.” This kind of prayer arises from the sense of need. Knowing what is lacking, we plead with God to supply it.

As we look out on the masses of lost humanity, the enormity of the need should drive us to our knees in evangelistic prayer. (The verb from which the noun is derived had the meaning “to have an audience with the king to present a petition.”)

The seventeenth-century English Puritan Richard Baxter wrote,

Oh, if you have the hearts of Christians or of men in you, let them yearn towards your poor ignorant, ungodly neighbours. Alas, there is but a step betwixt them and death and hell; many hundred diseases are waiting ready to seize on them, and if they die unregenerate, they are lost forever. Have you hearts of rock, that cannot pity men in such a case as this? If you believe not the Word of God, and the danger of sinners, why are you Christians yourselves? If you do believe it, why do you not bestir yourself 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. ... Dost thou live close by them, or meet them in the streets, or labour 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, thou wouldst run and help them; and wilt thou not help them when their souls are almost at the fire of hell? (Cited in I. D. E. Thomas, *A Puritan Golden Treasury* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977], 92–93)

SURRENDER TO GOD *Proseuchē* (**prayers**) is a general word for prayer. Unlike **entreaties**, in Scripture it is used only in reference to God. It thus carries with it a unique element of worship and reverence. Prayer for the lost is ultimately directed at God as an act of worship, because the salvation of sinners causes them to give glory to Him. **In 2 Corinthians 4:15, Paul reveals that all his efforts at reaching the ungodly were to spread saving grace to more and more people so they could give thanks to God, which would abound to His glory. (Read 2 Cor 4:15)**

2 Corinthians 4:15 – 15 For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

PLEAD WITH GOD
SURRENDER TO GOD

Struggle with GOD *Enteuxis* (**intercessions**) appears only here and in 4:5 in the New Testament. It comes from a root word meaning “to fall in with someone,” or get involved with them. The verb from which *enteuxis* derives is used to speak of both Christ’s and the Spirit’s intercession for us (Rom. 8:26; Heb. 7:25). They identify with our needs, and become involved in our struggles. *Enteuxis*, then, is a word not only of advocacy, but also of empathy, sympathy, compassion, and involvement. Evangelistic prayer is not cold, detached, or impersonal, like a public defender assigned to represent a defendant. Understanding the depths of their misery and pain, and their coming doom, we cry to God for the salvation of sinners.

Romans 8:26 – **26** Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Hebrews 7:25 – **25** Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost [\[1\]](#) those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words than thy words without heart. -- [John Bunyon](#)

PLEAD WITH GOD
SURRENDER TO GOD
STRUGGLE WITH GOD

GIVE THANKS TO GOD **Thanksgivings** are a fourth element in evangelistic prayers. They call for us to pray with a spirit of gratitude to God that the gospel offer has been extended, that we have the privilege of reaching the lost with that gospel, and that some respond with faith and repentance. Thanksgiving is the only element of prayer that will continue forever.

Philippians 4:6 – **6** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Colossians 1:3 – **3** We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,

Ephesians 1:15,16 – **15** For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love [\[1\]](#) toward all the saints, **16** I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

These four nuances enrich our prayers as we pray effectively for the lost. If they are missing, we need to examine our hearts. Do we fully realize the desperate condition the lost are in? Do we really want to see God glorified by the salvation of souls? Do we sympathize with the compelling reality of their lostness, both for time and eternity? Are we thankful the gospel message is extended to all and for our privilege of sharing it? If those components are lacking in our hearts we will be indifferent. If we are indifferent, it is because we are not obedient to these urgings.³

³MacArthur, J. 1995. *1 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago

Illustration: Prayer

Early African converts to Christianity were earnest and regular in private devotions. Each one reportedly had a separate spot in the thicket where he would pour out his heart to God. Over time the paths to these places became well worn. As a result, if one of these believers began to neglect prayer, it was soon apparent to the others. They would kindly remind the negligent one, "Brother, the grass grows on your path."

Today in the Word, June 29, 1992.

I. **The Priority of Prayer. (1)**

II. **The Purpose of Prayer. (2-4)**

A. **Participate in the salvation of the lost (1c-2a)**

- **The well-being of all people, inclusively (Not just those close to us... especially related to salvation)**

Acts 17:30 -- 30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, (Paul in Athens on Mars hill)

Titus 2:11 -- 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,

- **The receptivity of the gospel in all areas ["Authority Figures" Specifically]**

With Nero's growing resentment toward Christians—which came to full bloom after the fire in Rome in July, A.D. 64—and the general disintegration of the Roman Empire due to Nero's extravagance, Christians began to suffer persecution from the Roman authorities. Having recently been released from his Roman imprisonment, Paul was greatly aware of the deteriorating political atmosphere. Thus he urged prayer for the salvation of all men, but especially rulers, so that the stable, noninterfering environment of previous days might be recovered.⁴

PERSON OF PEACE

B. **Promote the prosperity of the church (2b)**

- **Hina ("so that") we may lead a life that attracts the unsaved to the gospel both internally and externally.**
 - **Internally** – peaceful (a gentle and quiet spirit and peaceful disposition; the absence of internal disturbances)
 - **Externally** – quiet life (well ordered; the absence of external disturbances)
 - **Internally** – godly (holy living [3:16; 4:7,8; 6:3,5,6,11] in front of God)
 - **Externally** – dignified in every way (moral earnestness and moral dignity before men)

HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE RELATE TO A CHRISTIANS INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS?

- We must keep in mind that this question is not answered in this passage... Paul is talking to the Church, not individual Christians
- Individuals are called to serve God over men in Galatians 1:10
- Individuals are called to submit to governing authorities

⁴Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. 1983-c1985. *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures*. Victor Books: Wheaton, IL

- Devoting your life to politics is not the topic of debate... bottom line is that a Biblical Church is called to pray!

Paul does not command us to pray for the removal from office of evil rulers, or those with whom we disagree politically. Believers are to be loyal and submissive to their government (Rom. 13:1–5; 1 Peter 2:17). If the church today took the time and energy it spends on political maneuvering and lobbying and poured them into intercessory prayer, we might see a profound impact on our nation. We have all too often forgotten that “the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses” (2 Cor. 10:4). The key to changing a nation is the salvation of sinners, and that calls for faithful prayer.⁵

Summary to how this text applies to our church – We are called to PLEAD WITH GOD, SURRENDER TO GOD, STRUGGLE WITH GOD, and GIVE THANKS TO GOD for the salvation of all men and the receptivity of the gospel in all areas... especially related to those who impact the masses. If we (corporately) function in a way that brings glory to God and directs attention to God, we will be used to attract others to salvation! Instead of inventing new methods to communicate the original message, how about focusing our attention on authentic worship and righteous living? YOU MUST BE DIFFERENT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

C. Bring pleasure to God (3-4)

Why to pray as a church (vs 3-4)

- Because prayer is good (kalos – beautiful... beautiful to whom = GOD) Intrinsically Good
- Because prayer is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior (acceptable to God)

God delights in bringing pleasure to Himself (this is not an act of selfishness for God is the ultimate object of worship... Not what did you get out of the services today but what did God get out of the services.... Instead of how was your day? Pastor reminds us to ask: “How was God seen through you today?”)

This is good

Pleasing in the sight of God our Savior

- Because prayer is in line with His will [WILL OF DESIRE MORE THAN WILL OF DECREE] (4)

It’s often said that the purpose of prayer is not to get man’s will done in heaven, but to get God’s will done on earth.

- God’s pleasure is maximize by the increase of people to a saving knowledge of the truth (add more worshipers to the majestic choir!)
 - All people to be saved
 - All people come to the knowledge of the truth

This does not mean all people without *exception*, for certainly the whole world is not going to be saved. It means all people without *distinction*—Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, religious and pagan.

⁵MacArthur, J. 1995. *1 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago

I. The Priority of Prayer. (1)

II. The Purpose of Prayer. (2-4)

III. The Power of Prayer. (5-7)

A. Jesus makes communication with God possible. (5-6)

- Because prayer is in line with His way of salvation (5-7)
 - One God
 - One mediator (advocate/ defense attorney)
 - The man Christ Jesus (100% man and therefore able to relate with us on all accounts)
 - Given for ALL (Jn 3:16)
 - “A testimony given at the proper time...” (God’s Sovereignty)
 - The birth of Christ (Gal. 4:4; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-20)
 - The death of Christ (I Tim. 2:6; Matt. 20:28)
 - The Return of Christ (I Tim. 6:14-15; Rev. 19)
 - The Reception of Christ (Titus 1:1-4; ... vs. 4 – Titus)

B. Jesus makes communication with God purposeful. (7)

- Paul concludes with an appeal to his own apostolic authority and personal integrity!

Conclusion:

Does prayer have a priority in our church...in your home? How passionately are you pleading with God, surrendering to God, struggling with God, and giving thanks to God? Have your prayers been inclusive (for all men) or exclusive (everyone but _____)? What we pray... why we pray...

APPLY THE TEXT:

- **Make prayer a priority in your walk with God in 2021.**
 - Develop a prayer journal.
 - Develop a prayer calendar (a different person for each day of the month)
- **Make prayer a priority before interacting in your community in 2021.**
 - Live peacefully among all men.
 - Pray for God to reveal a Person of Peace to you. (Luke 10:6)
- **Make prayer a priority in the body life of our church in 2021.**
 - Participate in the ACTS efforts...
 - Stay for the monthly Equip sessions dedicated to corporate prayer...
 - Pray together in your community groups...