

Good morning, good morning.

There we go.

All right, I'll be reading from 1 Timothy 2, verses 1 through 10.

1 Timothy 2, 1 through 10.

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

This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle.

I am telling you the truth, I am not lying, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

I desire then that in every place

the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling.

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, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness, with good works.

I want to thank Pastor Drew and Denise for leading us in some rich songs.

I noticed, couldn't help but notice with that last one that it seemed like it was a little new to some of us.

If you download the church app, or you can go to the church website, but I would encourage you to download the church app.

So it's Lakewood Baptist Church of New York.

You can find it on Apple or Google Play or whatever.

There's a lot of things on the app that I think will be beneficial to you.

One of which is a playlist, Spotify playlist, with all of the songs that we sing today.

week in and week out.

So you can listen ahead and learn them so that even if it's a relatively new song that might be new to you, it won't be new to you anymore and you can sing it with us.

Also on the app, you can find, if you click on the live stream for today, don't watch the live stream, it'll be lagged, it'll be really weird.

But if you click on the live stream, the sermon notes that are in the bulletin are also there in kind of like a fill-in format so you can follow along.

It might be helpful to you or some of the younger kids that are with you just as an aid to help follow along with us.

All right, we've got a couple of doozies here today, next week.

You know, there were some things I was eager to preach out of 1 Timothy, and there were some things that are great, rich, doctrinal texts that we need to hear today.

that are a little bit difficult to explain in 30 minutes, which is what I shoot for and rarely get there.

So let's pray and ask for the Lord's help this morning, and we'll tackle this text.

Heavenly Father, we do ask for your help.

Lord, we ask that as we are faithful to do the work of uncovering what Paul has put for us here by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, Lord, that we just ask that your spirit would work it down deep into our hearts and transform us from the inside out.

Lord, would you renew our minds?

Would you soften our hearts to love you more?

Give us eyes to see and ears to hear.

We pray all this in Jesus' name, amen.

All right, it's no secret that we've got attention deficit disorder, generally speaking, as a culture.

I mean, we're not even making it to the end of reels before we're swiping up, right?

I mean, how long are reels?

Like 10 seconds, 15 seconds?

Can't even make it to the end.

Or, you know, if you just go back,

You know, if you're too cool for school and you don't do reels.

Well, like early 2000s, I was just rewatching a show that was filmed, you know, 2005, 2004, right around there.

And I couldn't help but notice that the camera rarely stayed in one frame for more than a second.

And when it did, it was like zooming in or it was moving around, kind of shaking around, right?

It was just kind of shot in this really like quick, keep your attention, always moving type pace.

And it's kind of been fascinating to watch the media try to keep the Epstein Files issue in front of us.

I mean, that's a big deal, right?

Moral failure on an epic scale, and yet they seem to be failing at keeping it in front of us because our attention for it and our appetite for it is just gone.

We're just on to the next thing, on to the next thing.

We can't even kind of remember that and demand justice.

So for the most part, we know, we generally know, we talk about it.

I'm not the first one to talk about our attention deficit issue as a culture.

We know that we need to be more disciplined in cultivating an ability to focus on things, that we need to help our kids be able to focus on a conversation or read a book or maintain eye contact and be engaged in a conversation.

We know this.

But I wonder if we know that even more important than just cultivating the ability to focus is the desire to focus on the right thing, to have our focus on what ought to be focused on.

We can be the most focused people in the world, but if we don't focus on the right thing, we might even be worse off than if we had the worst case of ADHD in the world.

Our passage today is a very focused passage in its main point.

He's drilling down to one singular thing.

And then Paul's application for us is that we ought to focus on this very focused point.

So he's going to help us drill down to a very focused truth.

And then what he wants us to do is to fix our eyes, fix our gaze, fix our focus on this point.

very focused truth.

All right, another way to put this here is that there is one God and one mediator over all people from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Therefore, we ought to pray for the flourishing and faithfulness of the church everywhere.

All right, so this is Paul's main point, the thrust of what Paul's saying.

I'm not gonna, Paul starts kind of with an application and then he gives the truth and then he moves to another set of applications.

And we're going to look at some of that set today and we'll look at some of that set next week.

I'm going to start with the truth.

Then we'll go to his first command slash application.

And then we'll go to a second, like the second set of commands and applications.

So we're going to start right in the middle.

And are you ready to follow?

I know we lost an hour of sleep last night.

Some of us got even less than that.

And it seems like I've lost you already and I didn't even make it through the intro.

So you're gonna have to work this morning, all right?

I'm gonna work to keep you engaged.

You work to stay engaged and it'll be great.

We'll honor and please the Lord as we work together.

All right, here we go.

One God and mediator for all peoples.

One God and mediator for all peoples is the truth that Paul is laying out.

He's drilling down to this truth that there is one God, one mediator for all peoples.

So he does this by laying out one God, one mediator, one ransom, right?

Or by implication, one ransom and one testimony.

And then he talks about how there's one God for all men, all peoples.

We'll talk about that in a second.

Let's look at the one first.

One God, one mediator, one ransom, one testimony.

So before we do that, though, we've got to step back a hair.

Paul, remember, he's talking to Timothy, he's writing to Timothy, who's a pastor at the church of Ephesus.

And just like every other point in history, this particular cultural moment that Paul's writing to, and this church, this church in Ephesus that he's writing to,

is dealing with racial tensions within the church, between Jews and Gentiles in particular.

We see this in a lot of the churches that Paul's writing to in the New Testament.

So he's writing to Gentiles

into this one particular situation.

And the heresy, we'll look at this in a second, the heresy that Paul dealt with in chapter one that we've been talking about for several weeks is also got racial undertones in that you have the Jewish people calling the other believers to this like special insight into genealogies, right?

And a special reading of the law that they need to adopt before they become Christians.

So in this church, you got Jewish believers.

They were God's chosen people, chosen nation.

They're the religious kind of folks that want to set the bar high, the barrier high for entry to the church.

They want to use the law to make it more difficult for the heathen to join the church so that they can kind of stay in control of things.

And then you got the Gentiles who are exercising their freedoms, but who also need to kind of learn to walk in a godly manner.

So you've got these two sides, and you can kind of see how there would be friction between these two sides, between these two cultural groups.

But Paul's reminding them here in chapter 2.

He starts this reminder that the destiny for racial relations within the church is unity and not division and strife.

And the reason that that's the destiny for racial relations within the church is because we worship one God and are brought to him by one mediator.

There's not many ways for different cultures.

There's one God, one mediator, and that means that there's going to be, there's destined to be unity among all different types of people.

So a mediator, just to clarify, is someone who takes two sides of a conflict and brings them together.

Christ did this by becoming a ransom, right?

He paid the debt God's people owed in order that...

God's people could come to God freely, right?

So Jesus paid the debt of sin and satisfied God's wrath and anger against him.

That's what Christ did towards God on behalf of his people.

Christ also became a testimony to us.

called the gospel, which says that God is not only just and holy and demands a perfect payment for sin, but he's also gracious and compassionate, and he's willing to forgive, so much so that he did it at great cost to himself by sending his son, right?

So we got Christ bringing together these two sides that are at war, that are at enmity, us without Jesus and God.

So you can see how Jesus brings these two sides together.

The question is, you know, you got God on one side.

The question is, who exactly is he doing the ransom for and the testimony for within this passage?

Does that make sense?

So we're told one God, one mediator, and we know that one side of this mediation process is God, while who's on the other side exactly?

And the reason I'm asking that question is because the way Paul phrases it raises some problems and some questions.

So let's just skip down and look here.

So Paul says, the words that Paul used are men, all, and I would include Gentiles here a little bit as well.

Let's read verses one to seven.

First of all then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving

Let's read it.

For this, I was appointed a preacher and an apostle, I'm telling the truth, I'm not lying, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

All right, so here's the problem in trying to determine who's on the other side of this mediatorial process.

If Paul is saying that God desires each individual to be saved and Jesus gave himself as a ransom, meaning that he actually paid the price for each individual,

then that would mean that every individual is saved and going to heaven, right?

So if Jesus's ransom is applied to every individual and he paid that price, God would be unjust to demand that there be two payments for somebody's sin.

Therefore, everyone would be going to heaven if the ransom was applied to all.

That's Paul's point in Romans 3.

God can't demand a payment twice.

So we know if Jesus paid for our sin, God's not gonna demand it from us as well.

So that is universalism, and that is clearly denied by other parts of the New Testament that I'm not going to go into right now.

That's a separate sermon.

I'm just going to say that I think most of us agree here, so I'm not going to take the time to defend it, that that's not what Paul is saying, and that not everyone is going to heaven.

The gospel needs to be preached.

The gospel needs to be believed on and faith needs to be extended.

If you need me to make a case for that, that's fine.

Shoot me an email or come talk to me.

We can talk about that later.

I'm just not gonna take the time to do it right now.

But not universalism.

So all here does not mean that Jesus's ransom was applied to every individual, that Jesus paid the price for every individual.

So what is Paul saying then?

We following so far?

I know this is a rough sermon for losing an hour of sleep.

You gotta keep with me.

You're doing great.

So what is Paul saying?

There's two things I think we have to keep in mind to determine what Paul is saying.

One, we've got to keep the context in mind.

Remember, in chapter one, Paul is addressing heresy that involves misusing the law, which usually means when the law is misused in other places in the New Testament, and we'll see here in Timothy as well, that usually means that false teachers are making everyone become more Jewish before they can become believers, right?

We're gonna use this law, you gotta have Jesus, and you gotta get circumcised.

Or you gotta have Jesus, and you gotta keep some of these rules and become a little bit more like us before you can get saved and become part of the church.

This heresy also, remember, in chapter one, involves an obsession with genealogies and lineages.

which both legs of this heresy are racially charged.

Basically, they're saying, you gotta become a certain type of person, or even worse, the gospel is only for a certain type of person.

You gotta become a little bit more like this before you can receive grace and mercy.

Paul, in chapter two here, and especially verses one and two, is telling the church to pray for everyone.

He's like, you don't have, not just one type of people, not just one type of person, but pray for everyone.

And in verses eight and nine, he tells men and women everywhere how to act godly, right?

So the emphasis here is not just one type, but all, right?

All peoples.

So what he's primarily trying to communicate

is that there isn't a type of person that God doesn't desire to be saved.

So there isn't a group of people that God's like, nope, don't want them to be saved.

God wants all to be saved.

And therefore, there shouldn't be people out there that we're not willing to pray for or that we don't think ought to be saved.

So that's one part.

That's the main thrust.

That's Paul's main argument.

That's how it fits into the flow of thought.

The second thing to keep in mind is that Paul here is talking from our perspective.

Our human, finite perspective.

He's telling us how we ought to pray.

That's the point of the passage.

This is how you ought to pray in light of what God has done.

And he's telling us how we ought to minister and evangelize, like how we ought to share the gospel.

Chapter four, verse 10 says, for to this end, we toil and strive, right?

We do ministry, we share the gospel because we have our hopes set on the living God who is the savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

I'm not going to exegete that right now.

That's for another day.

But all we need to see here is that in telling us how to pray and in telling us how to do work and evangelize, Paul's emphasizing that God is the Savior of all people, that he is a ransom for all.

He's talking, again, from our perspective and from how we ought to view Christ's work on the cross.

We work, we care for, we share the gospel with all people, every individual, because from our perspective, Christ is the Savior of all people.

He genuinely offers salvation to each individual, and so should we.

We should pray for all, we should work to share the gospel with all.

However...

I'm just gonna point out that in the New Testament, there's another perspective that we're given, right?

In the gospels and in Paul's writings as well.

And that's God's perspective.

We've seen this in the book of John.

You know how we hop around in books and we're usually in John in the fall.

We've seen this in John.

There's like two tracks running through John.

There's the characters that are with Jesus, that are experiencing the miracles, the disciples, all the characters.

And then every now and then, John pulls back the curtain and he gives us God's perspective on what's really going on, right?

What's really going on behind the scenes, what's going on in history while the characters are playing out.

God's perspective is something that we're privy to on occasion in the New Testament.

So for instance, while Paul tells us here in 1 Timothy that Jesus gave himself as a ransom for all, Jesus tells us in Matthew 20, 28, that even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Right, so which is it?

Is it all?

Did he give his life as a ransom for all?

Or did he give his life as a ransom for many?

Simply put, Jesus is saying that he knew in Matthew, Jesus is saying in Matthew, that he knew who he was dying for when he paid our ransom.

I know who I am dying for when I do the effective work of giving the check to God, paying the wrath and penalty for their sin.

He knows, so again, because Jesus is fully God and he exists outside of time and space, he knows, he's always known, and he will always know who his people are.

There's never been a time in that God existed that he doesn't know who his people are.

And he knows, Paul tells us, he knows because, Paul tells us in Ephesians 1, 4, and 5, that he chose us in him before the foundation of the world

that we should be holy and blameless before him, and love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.

That's how he knows.

So from God's perspective, Jesus, when he paid the penalty, when he gave his life as a ransom, he knew who he was dying for.

But Paul's point in 1 Timothy is that we're not God, right?

You and I are not God.

We don't know what it's like to live outside of time and space.

So I'm not gonna try to tell you how God having his people and Jesus dying and offering, giving a genuine free offer of salvation while still knowing who his people are, how that works out.

I'm not God.

I don't exist outside of time and space.

I don't know exactly how that works.

But we're told here when we're praying and when we're sharing the gospel that we are to do so as a ransom for all and to do so with the mindset that Christ is the Savior for all.

And if even Jesus...

who has God's perspective because he is God, even Jesus says, for God so loved the world that whoever would believe in him will not perish, that we ought to make the same offer and

pray for all people and not pick and choose who we think is worthy to receive God's grace and mercy, right?

God, everyone is offered God's grace and mercy and God can redeem and restore anyone.

All right.

That's the truth there that Paul's giving us in those couple of verses.

There's one God, there's one mediator between God and all men, right?

All men.

Doesn't mean that all men are saved, but it means that there's a free offer of salvation for all men.

And the big point that Paul's making, the reason he's bringing this up now, is that there's not a type of person that's not like you, that's not worthy of grace and mercy.

You ought to be thinking about and praying for all people and sharing the gospel with all people.

That's his point, right?

That's his first application that he commands right out of the gate.

Therefore, pray for all peoples.

Look at verses one and two again.

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

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

Paul gives four words for prayer that are to be offered for all people, right?

Even kings and presidents and people like that.

Prayers is pretty obvious.

I'm not gonna spend a lot of time just talking to God.

So you're to go to God, talk to God for other people, to bring other people to God in prayer as you talk to him.

Supplications here means asking God to meet specific needs in their lives.

So I think these four words, if you put them together,

indicate that when we come to God with other people in mind, that we ought to do so thoughtfully and compassionately.

Supplications, again, means to come to God with specific needs for other people, specific needs that they have in their lives.

It means putting yourself in someone else's shoes

And thinking through what they may need in a given situation.

Stuff that they may need in the situation that they're in and asking God for it.

These could be physical needs, could be spiritual needs.

It could mean praying, potentially, for the safety and success of our troops, which we ought to do.

I think that kind of comes easy to us because we know people that are across the world right now fighting on our behalf.

Also, we're the beneficiaries of the success of their mission, of our troops.

So while it's good to pray for the safety and success of those individuals, especially our brothers and sisters that are in the armed forces, I think that kind of, again, comes easy to us.

That comes naturally to us.

But what do you think the Persian people, especially the Iranian church, which a couple years ago we looked at how the church in Iran was growing leaps and bounds, what do you think they need right now?

Perhaps peace, safety, strength, perseverance.

Practically speaking, probably food, water, shelter, a safe place to live and worship.

maybe courage to take up the work necessary to provide freedom for themselves and their neighbors.

But right, he says to get supplications for all people, not just the ones that we immediately identify with.

He also uses the word intercessions.

Intercessions are when you go to God on someone's behalf, especially when they can't or they won't because something is wrong.

Kept that pretty vague and big, right?

When you go to God on someone's behalf because they can't or won't because something is wrong.

It could be that the person is ill or poor

or bitter and resentful and just can't find the strength to go to God with their own needs.

So you're interceding on their behalf.

It could also mean that the people are spiritually dead, right?

Hard-hearted, rebellious, evil even, and you pray on their behalf that God would soften them and bring them to repentance.

When was the last time that you prayed for bad actors, evil people, to repent?

What would it look like for us to pray for what's left of the Islamic Republic regime?

What would it look like for us to pray for them to repent?

Or our neighbors and local politicians that are up to no good, lifting them up in prayer that they would repent and turn to the Lord.

And finally, thanksgivings.

This is praising God and being happy for other people's successes.

Thanking God for the growth of the church in Iran, in China, in Africa, praising God for some diversity even in our community when he brings it our way, right?

Thanksgiving, being happy for other people, even other people that we don't immediately identify with.

All right, so the point here though in these four words is to offer thoughtful and compassionate prayer for others to God.

Getting our focus off of ourselves and onto others and viewing them and their needs the same way that God views them and their needs.

But Paul tells us specifically that as we do that, we ought to be praying for a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified, right?

As we're praying for kings and rulers and all types of people, that we ought to pray for a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified.

Now, Paul's not necessarily praying for the American dream of a comfortable rural life full of ease and relaxation.

He says over and over and over again, it's gonna be tough, right?

It's gonna be hard.

You're gonna be persecuted.

It's not gonna be easy for Christians.

But the focus here is on the ability to live

That's the sense here.

Godly, dignified, without fear, peaceful, quiet life, and that you're not causing conflict every time you follow God and do what he says.

He's saying...

Pray for a political environment that is conducive to the growth and the spread of the church and that's not hostile to it.

So as we shift our focus, right?

So this first couple of verses in light of there being one God and one mediator for all men, right?

Is that to shift our focus off of ourselves and to see others as God sees them, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ.

And our brothers and sisters in Christ who are out there and who are not culturally like us.

But then, as our focus shifts to our one God, one mediator, who's over all, even our brothers and sisters who are out there and not like us, as our focus shifts, it begins to change how we live with our brothers and sisters here.

It begins to shift how we live with our brothers and sisters here.

Sorry, I got...

behind again.

All right, there we go.

And he gives us two specific ways, and there's more to come, but we'll look at two specific ways that that focus on our one mediator and one God changes how we live together right now.

Look at verses 8 to 10.

It says, I desire that in every place that men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling, 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, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness with good works.

So he talks to men and women here.

And the point here is that there's cultural flexibility within the church.

There's a lot of cultural flexibility.

What we sing, the tunes to which we sing things, how long the service is.

There's a lot of flexibility, room that we're given in the New Testament to worship within our culture and even how we interact culturally.

But there are some things that are deeper than culture.

There's some things that are deeper than culture, and there are some things that are going to be recognizable no matter where you go to church.

Wherever there's a true church of redeemed people, born-again people, there ought to be certain things that are consistency that are beneath culture.

So Paul's talking about those things that are beneath culture.

File that point away when we get to the passage next week.

But for today, first thing that he says is that men everywhere, right?

Not just in one place, not just in one culture, not just in one time.

Men everywhere ought to lift hands to pray and not to fight.

There's a little bit of a play on words here.

I kind of like it, right?

You're lifting your hands to pray.

You're not throwing hands with one another and fighting.

Men everywhere.

When your focus is on God and other people and not yourself and your own pride and your own dignity, you fight on your knees, right?

You don't fight throwing your hands at somebody.

You fight throwing your hands up to God.

God's looking for warriors, but he's looking for warriors who fight most often in secret, praying for their families, praying for their church, praying for their friends.

And when these men, right, who fight on their knees get together, they're not bickering and quarreling with big egos.

but they're men who care about one another and pray for one another.

He also addresses women here.

He says, Ladies, when your focus is on God and others and not on yourself, you'll dress...

and act in a way that draws attention to God and not yourself, right?

I'm not gonna turn this passage into like a legalistic list of do's and don'ts based on Paul's cultural examples here in verse nine, but Paul does give us a universal principle of put off and put on here.

He says, put off obsessing with what you look like and dressing in a way that's meant to catch people's eyes and make them focus on you,

and put on spending a lot of time and energy making yourself beautiful with godliness and good works.

That's the kind of beauty you want, right?

That's the kind of beauty you want to have.

That's the kind of attention that you want to have, right?

It's the kind of beauty that can only come from God, and the kind of beauty that God and godly men admire.

Ladies that are single here today, when I go fishing, the kind of bait I'm using pretty consistently determines the kind of fish I catch, right?

So bait your hook with the right kind of bait is what I'm trying to say, right?

It's not always true, but generally speaking, it's true.

Probably shouldn't tweet that one out.

We'll leave that one in-house.

You want to exude the type of beauty that's going to be admired by the type of man that you want to notice you and to pursue you.

There's one God, one mediator over all people from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Therefore, because there's one God and one mediator, we ought to pray for the flourishing and faithfulness of the church everywhere.

Not just here, but in all peoples.

If you're an unbeliever here this morning, there's only one mediator that's standing in God's courtroom.

That's what you need to hear today.

There's one mediator.

And the offer of his mediatorial services still stands.

Let him bring you near to the judge.

Let him bring you near to God because in God's presence there is fullness of joy and at his right hand are pleasures forevermore.

He'd be glad to take you there.

Believers, Paul's calling us to examine our prayer life.

How's your prayer life?

Is it just focused on you and your circle of friends, those immediate needs?

Or are you growing in a heart of compassion for others, especially others that aren't like you, especially brothers and sisters in Christ that are culturally different from you?

Is a focus on God and his heart for others bearing fruit in your relationships with your brothers and sisters here as well?

Or guys, are you angry and quarreling, lifted hands to smack one another instead of prayer?

Ladies, are you seeking attention for yourself at the expense of others instead of drawing attention to God with your life and actions?

There's one God who gave his only son as a ransom, and he gave us a mediator as a testimony of his grace and mercy.

That's beauty, right, that we want to exhibit.

And that's beauty that we want to admire in all of its facets and all of its shapes that really, you know, sometimes only people that aren't culturally like us can bring out, right?

We want to see people from every tribe, tongue, and nation worshiping our great God and our great Savior.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we come before you as the giver of good things.

All good things come from you.

And so Lord, we thank you for this time in your word.

Lord, we're thankful that in one sense you make things really simple.

There's one ransom, there's one savior for all.

Let's tell everyone about it and pray that everyone comes to know him.

And yet, Lord, there's a deep and immense beauty in you that goes far beyond our understanding.

Lord, that behind that simple and free offer is a plan and a story of grace that goes far beyond the foundations of the earth itself.

and will extend far ahead into the future for eternity and beyond.

So Lord, we come to you in awe of who you are and what you've done.

And Lord, we want to give you all the attention and all the glory.

Lord, would we not inflate our own egos or draw eyes to ourselves?

But Lord, would we shine a spotlight on you wherever and whenever we can.

Pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.