

Small Group Notes

Sermon: 12 May 2024

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SCRIPTURE

1 Timothy 2

OVERVIEW

In Chapter 2, Paul transitions from his personal focus on Timothy (1 Timothy 1:18–20) and a general reference to sound doctrine (1 Timothy 1:3–20) to information regarding worship practices in the gathered church in Ephesus. Two major areas are developed in this chapter. These include an emphasis on prayer in the church (1 Timothy 2:1–8) and the specific highlight on the conduct of women in the gathered church setting (1 Timothy 2:9–15). Paul's focus, as was the case in his previous letters to the churches was to bring instruction and correction to both spiritual and practical challenges, to encourage growth and health.

On prayer in the church (1 Timothy 2:1–8)

- Paul raises the centrality of prayer and

the need for the church to be constantly reminded of its primary importance - "First of all"!

- He highlights the need for a diversity of prayer (petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving) made for everyone (a universal need). Therefore raising an important reminder of the Christian duty to pray for those in authority and leadership, and for the salvation of those yet to be saved.
- He describes how Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all" – the truth that summarises how we gained salvation! By using the language of atonement, Paul makes it clear that salvation through Jesus Christ is a result of God's act of redemption – we all carried a debt that could not simply be cancelled but had to be paid in full!
- Finally, he reminds the church of the need to examine their hearts in prayer, addressing the need to avoid quarrels and arguments, which was a common relational challenge in the church.

On the Conduct of Women in the gathered church setting (1 Timothy 2:9–15).

Paul addresses a contextual issue in the local church in Ephesus addressing two main things.

- On the apparel and outward appearance (vs 9-10). In its proper context, Paul is not saying that a woman must have straight or unkempt hair. He is not saying women cannot style their hair. Paul is referring to elaborate hairstyles and to very expensive jewellery which was an issue in the

gathered church. He is referring to an appearance that was designed to attract attention and to flaunt wealth - was ultimately a distraction to worship". The church was being encouraged to dress in a way that "professed godliness".

- Issues of authority and demeanour (vs 11-12). The challenge to women teaching was in recognition of the role of male eldership and teachers that had been ordained, and not against the general teaching ability or gifts of women (acknowledged in several places in scripture and by Paul himself – eg, Acts 18:26; Rom 16:1; 2 Tim 1:5 and women instrumentality in Jesus' ministry). Paul's call in context was to maintain order in the gathered church in Ephesus, by recognising the established authority and headship role of the teachers/elders and avoiding disruption/interruptions in the services. The word "Quietness" is also critical to understanding the passage. The word "quiet" does not refer to absolute silence (or an 'absence of sound'), but refers to a "quiet demeanour" — "the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit" (cf: 1 Peter 3:3-5a). The same word used is in verse 2 referring to "peaceful and quiet lives" as a result of praying for leaders.

The verses 9-15 are quite challenging and have been the subject of much debate and discontent about Paul's position on women in particular. This challenge is duly acknowledged given the culture and times we find ourselves, however understanding the context of these verses allows us to receive what is still an applicable and relevant encouragement to us today.

In Summary:

Paul's instructions to the gathered church based on 1 Tim 2:1-15 was to

1. Pray for all
2. Pray for those in authority
3. Pray for Salvation
4. Remember your calling
5. Examine your heart
6. Profess Godliness
7. Maintain order

QUESTIONS

1. Read verses 1 & 2: What is your response to Paul's call to prayer? How should we be praying for our leaders and those in authority? What issues does God lay on your heart for them?
2. God desires that all people be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth! (verse 2). How do you feel when you read this verse? How can we encourage one another to build faith and pray for the salvation of others?
3. Read 1 Peter 3:1-5a. How does this additional scripture shed light on your understanding of Paul's instructions to women in 1 Timothy 2?
4. Paul's instructions to women and reference to the order of creation in Genesis brings us back to the subject of submission and God's plan in marriage, Christian households and the church. Read Phil 2:5-

8, how does the description and example of Christ in this passage help us understand submission? How can we all (See Eph 5:21 too) grow in our understanding and modelling of submission?