

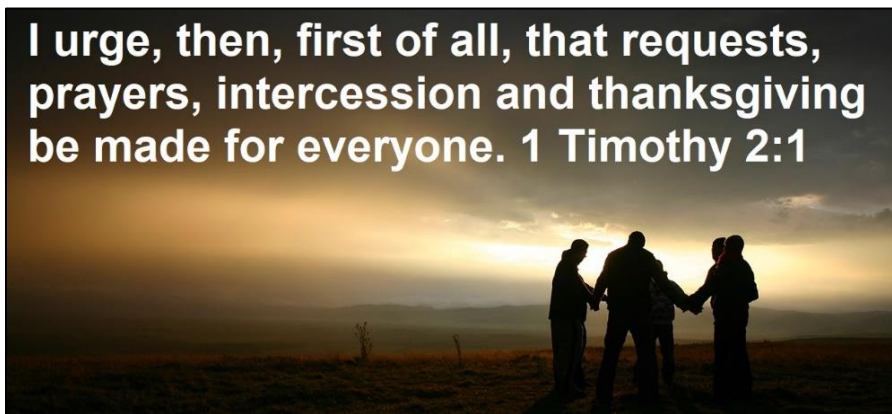
Sermon Notes 5/29/22

“First of All, Pray!”

Why is prayer so important?

1. Our prayers are _____ to God.
1 Timothy 2:1
Ephesians 6:18
2. Our prayers help us to live _____ lives.
1 Timothy 2:2
Philippians 4:6-7
3. Our prayers help us to live _____ lives.
1 Timothy 2:2
Colossians 1:9-10
4. Our prayers help people come to _____.
1 Timothy 2:3-4
1 Timothy 2:5-7

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone. 1 Timothy 2:1



Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 5: May 29 – June 5

1 Timothy 2:1-7

Why does the Bible place such a strong emphasis on prayer? Does prayer really make a difference in our lives? The Bible says that Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed (Luke 5:16). In many of his letters, Paul tells his readers that he is praying for them. He also asked his readers to pray for him. If Paul and Jesus thought prayer was an important part of their lives, shouldn't we? Chapter 2 of First Timothy begins a major section of the book about how God wants His people to conduct themselves in church (1 Tim 2:1 – 3:15). The most important activity on Paul's list of things to do at church is prayer (1 Tim. 2:1).

Read 1 Timothy 2:7

1. What did Paul urge Christians to do "first of all" in verse 1?

C. Michael Moss notes, "The phrase 'first of all' does not introduce the first item in a list of issues to be discussed. It rather indicates that prayer for all kinds of people is of primary importance to Paul."¹

2. Who are we told to pray for in verse 2?

3. What should be our hope when we pray for our leaders? (2:2)

As Christians in a free country, it is easy to pray for the leaders we like and complain about the leaders we don't like. However, consider who was leading the Roman Empire when Paul wrote this passage. This letter was probably written sometime around AD 64-65. Nero was the Emperor from AD 54-68. The great fire of Rome took place in July AD 64. When people started to accuse Nero of arson, he looked for a scapegoat. This was the beginning of the first major persecution of Christians by the Roman government. Tacitus, a Roman historian, and eyewitness of these events, wrote the following account:

Then, Nero, in order to avert this report from himself, caused

¹ C. Michael Moss, *The College Press NIV Commentary: 1, 2 Timothy and Titus* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), 48.

those called Christians by the common people, to be accused and exceedingly tormented. The author of this name is Christ, who was publicly put to death under the reign of Tiberius, by Pontius Pilate, the governor. Those who confessed that they were Christians, were first apprehended, and afterwards by making it known themselves a great multitude were all condemned, not so much on account of the conflagration, as of the hatred in which they were held by mankind. The taking of their lives was accompanied with much mockery; they were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and then torn to pieces by dogs; or nailed on crosses; or placed at stakes and burned; serving also as torches for spectators, when the day was over.²

With these events taking place at the time Paul wrote to Timothy it is not difficult to see why Paul was so urgent in his prayer requests. When times were bad, Paul did not give up on praying for leaders in government. And he didn't complain or grumble when the Roman government started persecuting Christians. His first and most important step when confronting a corrupt government was to pray for the civil leaders. Jesus said, "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5:44).

4. What kind of prayers are especially pleasing God? (2:2-3)
5. What does God want in verse 4?
6. Who is the one and only mediator between God and men? (2:5)
7. For whom did Jesus give Himself? Why? (2:6)
8. To what ministries was Paul appointed in verse 7? Why?
9. Why did Paul tell Timothy that he was not lying in verse 7?
10. What was Paul called to preach and teach to the Gentiles? (2:7)
11. What important doctrines does this passage teach us about Jesus?

² Thielemann J. van Braght, *Martyrs Mirror* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press. 1996), 79.

12. How do those doctrines help us to pray with confidence?
13. What are some things you have been praying about recently?
14. What difference (if any) has prayer made in your life?

Paul Miller observes,

What do I lose when I have a praying life? Control. Independence. What do I gain? Friendship with God. A quiet heart. The living work of God in the hearts of those I love. The ability to roll back the tide of evil. Essentially, I lose my kingdom and get His. I move from being an independent player to a dependent lover. I move from being an orphan to a child of God.³

15. Who are some civil leaders we can pray for?
16. Who are some spiritual leaders we can pray for?
17. What kind of prayers should we make on behalf of our leaders?

Mitch Simpson has suggested three ways we can pray for our leaders in government. First, we can pray for God to direct them to help keep our society stable and peaceful (1 Timothy 2:1-4). Second, we can ask God to withhold His judgment on a sinful society as Abraham interceded for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:22-33). And third we can pray for God to transform our society to conform to His values. Like Esther we can fast and pray for God to move in the hearts of leaders so that they will stand up for righteousness (Esther 4:13-17).⁴

18. Which local or national leaders will you pray for this week?
19. Who are some people in your life who God wants to save?
20. How will you pray for them this week?

³ Paul Miller, *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2017), 125-126.

⁴ Mitch Simpson, *What the Bible Says About Prayer* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1987), 191.