

**Good morning**, happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July, welcome to Cornerstone Community Church including everyone watching on the livestream. I am Cole McDaniel, I'm a lay elder here at Cornerstone, this year will be my 20<sup>th</sup> year as a structural earthquake engineering professor, the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 at Washington State University in Pullman WA on the border of Idaho and the past 16 years here at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. I've been married 23 years to my beautiful wife Kim and we are blessed with 3 daughters, Naomi, Maggie and Ellie. It's been a blessing to be able to serve as a Cornerstone elder the past 10+ years and it is a privilege to fill in this morning for Pastor John Marc.

Pastor John Marc likes to remind us of 3 things each Sunday, my version of those 3 points are:

- 1) You are among **equals** here, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, as we sang earlier we stand forgiven at the cross, our worth is solely in the life Jesus lived on our behalf
- 2) We love you enough to speak the **truth** to you, and that is becoming increasingly rare, and we shouldn't be surprised, the Word of God warns this will occur
- 3) Your faith is **personal**, but it isn't meant to be **private**, many of you remember singing "This Little Light of Mine" in Sunday School. This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine, hide it under a bush \_\_\_\_\_ ! The Bible would say "May it never be!". We are called to share the Good News of the glorious gospel of the blessed God 1 Timothy 1:11

Pastor John MacArthur recently said that "The Bible is the only source of divine truth... for God's people... Divine truth is the most valuable reality in existence"! Psalm 19 puts it this way

The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul;  
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.  
The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.  
The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;  
The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.  
They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.  
Moreover, by them Your servant is warned;  
In keeping them there is great reward.

On this 4<sup>th</sup> of July we celebrate God's blessing to freely assemble and open His Word together as well as the **sacrifice** so many men and women have made, many making the ultimate sacrifice so that we can worship together. I know you love our country like I do, so what is one of the best ways we can support our country this 4<sup>th</sup> of July and throughout the next year and years to come? Let's look at God's Word together to find out, please turn with me to 1 Timothy 2:1-3

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.

## **I. The call to evangelistic prayer**

Verse 1 states "I urge that entreaties, prayers, petitions and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men"

God uses **4 similar words** to give us a fuller view of evangelistic prayer.

**Entreaties** comes from the greek root word 'deesis' meaning to lack, to be deprived, to be without something. We see this prayer throughout the Old and New Testaments.

1 Samuel 12:23-24 says "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way. Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you."

Romans 9:1-3 says "I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen."

Paul knew how desperately his people needed a Savior, he was willing if possible to trade places with them, wow that is a deep love.

The world desperately needs one thing today, the same as it has always needed, Psalm 27:4 says "**One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek:** that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to meditate in His temple".

Pastor John Mac Arthur said: Evangelistic praying springs from a sense of need. We understand, don't we, that those without Christ, need Christ. Do we understand that? Do we understand that the world that does not know the Savior, a world that has not had forgiveness of sin is in dire disastrous straits headed for an eternity without God in hell? Do we understand that need? Does that need to be articulated to us anymore? I think not. So we understand that a supplication is in reference to a need. And when we look at a lost world, we can – with any kind of penetrating gaze at all, any kind of understanding of Scripture – realize the gravity of that need.

English Puritan Richard Baxter said "Dost thou live close by them or meet them in the streets or labor 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?"

**Secondly**, in verse 1 the word **prayer** is used, prayers are to be directed solely to God, this word is given to us to remind us of the reverence we should have as we pray, that God alone is omnipotent and able to answer our prayer, and that the goal of all that we do is to glorify God. The more people who come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior, the more the glory of God abounds.

2 Corinthians 4:15 For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

In John 14 Jesus tells us that the purpose of all of our prayers in Jesus' name is so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. Verse 13 says "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

**Third**, we have the word **petitions**, to petition is to intercede on behalf of someone, to empathize with their circumstances. Remember Jesus is described in 1 John 2:1 as our Advocate, "If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous! The Holy Spirit is also described in Romans 8:26 as our Intercessor, "helping us in our weakness... interceding for us".

In addition to entreaties, prayers and petitions, we have a **fourth** word in verse 1, **thanksgivings**, the greek word is 'eucharistias' which means giving of thanks. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." We give thanks to God for listening to our prayers, for answering our prayers, for the privilege of being His ambassadors as it says in 2 Corinthians 5:20 which we will touch on more in a few minutes.

1 Timothy 2:1 highlights 4 aspects of evangelistic prayer, entreaties, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings. As we pray for the salvation of the lost we agonize over their desperate need for salvation, we pray with reverence knowing that we are unworthy to approach God and that God alone can save, we serve as a loving advocate imitating our great Advocate Jesus, and we also include thanksgiving for how God will work everything out for His glory and the good of those who love Him.

**II. The object of evangelistic prayer** - Verse 1 states to pray on "behalf of all men".

Why should we pray for everyone? Because in Acts 17:30 it says, "God commands all men everywhere to repent." Every single person on the face of the earth is commanded to repent. That is why Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy

Spirit". In Acts 10 when Peter was sent to Cornelius, a Roman centurion, to share the gospel with him and his family, Peter says in verse 34-35

"I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him."

We are called to pray for everyone because everyone needs salvation. Romans 3:23 says that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God".

1 Timothy 2:2 also highlights a specific group of people that we should be praying for, not only friends, family, neighbors and coworkers... we certainly pray for them often, but we are also called to pray for "Kings and all who are in authority".

Pastor John MacArthur commented on this verse, "Certainly because of the tremendous role authorities play in the life of the church, in its ability to lead a quiet and tranquil life wherein godliness and dignity can be made manifest, we ought to pray for them. How the church functions in any government is dependent on that government.

We got a taste of that this past year with the restrictions on meeting in person. Canadian authorities have jailed pastors recently for preaching in person to their congregations, in other parts of world the entire church is underground, I remember one of our missionaries visited a few years ago saying it was so nice to sing out loud in our church service because in their country they whisper the songs so that they don't get caught assembling as believers. Why does God call us to pray for everyone including our authorities? This leads us to the 3<sup>rd</sup> point:

**III. The benefit evangelistic prayer** – favorable conditions for the church's evangelistic efforts

Verses 2-3 state "so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior."

Paul knew first hand about dealing with challenging authorities, Roman emperor Nero was infamous for tarring Christians and lighting them on fire to illuminate his garden at night. Paul also surely remembered Stephen praying in Acts 7 for Paul (at that time Saul) and all who were stoning Stephen to death, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!".

Pastor Adrian read earlier in Acts 26:29 when Paul said to King Agrippa "I could wish to God whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains."

We are called to pray for the people God has put in authority over us not only "so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity", but also so that who hear us will come to saving faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Psalm 34:1 states "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

We talk about what is most important to us. Remember Woody the butcher from Santa Maria that I mentioned when I preached a little over a year ago, in his radio commercial he described his pork ribs this way "they're meaty, delicious, marbled like crazy, they're fantastic on the grill". Well as a good businessman Woody the Butcher has a new commercial on the radio, where he waxes eloquently about the variety of delicious cuts of meat he has to offer and then he describes his favorite ribs again as 'stupid good'... He must be trying to sell ribs to teenagers with that language! I enjoy eating ribs as much as anyone, but if Woody can describe a rib like that then what words should we be using daily to tell people about the God who created the tasty hog in the first place!

The last point I have this morning is focused on us being stewards of the Good News. You can label it at point IV or as an application to point III.

#### **IV. We are the stewards of the Good News**

We have been challenged the past 11 weeks to be the men, women, husbands, fathers, children that God has called us to be. We also need to be the ambassadors we are called to be.

There are many great passages in the Bible focused on the gospel from the book of Genesis to Revelation, let's look at verse 5 in 1 Timothy 2, "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

The great thing is that the gospel is simple and crystal clear, we don't need a degree in Greek language studies to properly interpret this verse, one means one, I know that might not be the case in the new math that is being taught in schools these days but we all know what one means, Romans 3:10-11 says "as it is written,

THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;  
THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,  
THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

One means one, and none means none, that is why Acts 4:12 says "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Deliverance from the wages of sin only comes through Jesus. Jesus said the same in John 14:6 "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

In addition to acknowledging that salvation comes through Jesus Christ alone, we also need to repent of our sin and place our faith in Jesus alone. Repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for our sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and turn to faith in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God with a desire to walk in obedience to Him. In Acts 2:37-38 after Peter shared the gospel in Jerusalem, the people responded to the gospel call:

“Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I know each believer here has dear friends, family, coworkers, neighbors that you deeply desire to hear the gospel. So how do we grow in our stewardship of the Good News?

J. Mack Stiles “Evangelism”, Elder at Redemeer Church in Dubai – ring a bell?

- “Sing the gospel, pray the gospel, preach the gospel” , praise God all 3 are done here every Sunday morning, including clear presentations of the gospel in Sunday school classes, youth group, discipleship groups, community groups throughout the week...
- “Don’t be lulled into thinking that people are what they seem to be. Don’t believe it for a minute. We bring the words of life to those that are desperate and dying, no matter how they look on the outside.”

2 Corinthians 5:16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer.

Paul knew that the same power that transformed him from a murderer of Christians to the greatest preacher of the gospel could transform anyone from an enemy of God to a worshipper of God

2 Corinthians 4:4 states that people are spiritually blind, unable to come to God unless He opens their eyes to the truth

Romans 10:14,17 says that this happens through the sharing of the gospel, “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?... So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

- "Remember the power behind the message, Jesus Christ", the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last 2 Corinthians 5:20  
Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
- Start by taking a step  
What does that mean? I heard a pastor this week teaching about the fears we need to overcome to share the gospel. His advice was to talk about God wherever you go. Instead of talking about the weather talk about who God is doing in your life, or talk about the weather and praise God for it. I was at the hardware store yesterday looking for glue to glue on a Tyrannosaurus Rex leg for a rubber dinosaur that one of the kids in our community group likes to play with. The cashier mentioned that he turned 50 recently and was feeling old, I told him congratulations, he asked me why I said that, I said because each day is one day closer to heaven. He replied, that sounds a lot better. I agreed, as Paul says in Philippians 1:23 "it is very much better!"

In conclusion this July 4<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate our freedom, giving thanks to God for His provision and for the sacrifice men and women have made for centuries to protect our freedom to freely assemble here this morning. We began by asking the question, what is one of the best ways we can support our country today and throughout the next year and years to come? We shouldn't be surprised that it begins and ends with prayer. Jesus spent many mornings and evenings alone with God in prayer, how much more then do we need to strive to pray without ceasing, particularly for the salvation of our loved ones as well as those who have been placed in authority over us. Let's encourage one another to be praying for opportunities to share the Good News of the gospel, let's encourage one another to take small steps in talking about how God has blessed our day, let's encourage each other to be like the Thessalonians who were described in 1 Thessalonians 1:8 "For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith in God has gone forth."

Please join me in prayer.