

**I TIMOTHY 2:1-8**  
**IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to I Timothy chapter 2 as we continue our in-depth study of Paul's first letter to Timothy.

Keep in mind that Paul probably brought Timothy to the faith as Timothy is called "**my true son in the faith.**" (I Timothy 1:2)

And Paul wanted Timothy to stay in Ephesus to fix some of the problems that were going on there in the church.

And thus, this letter is about how the church is to function, what it is to be about and how leadership is to be raised up. So it is very important for us to understand the role that God has established for the church today!

Keep in mind the theme for this letter. We see this in I Timothy 3:15 where Paul wrote, "**but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**"

In other words, it is what the church, not a building but the people of God are to be about.

When we gather, we are to be the pillar and foundation of the truth, and that is so important in the days we are living in when there is such much false doctrine out there.

And remember, the best argument for and against Christianity is Christianity!

What do I mean by that?

I mean that how we live out our lives as Christians can open doors for us to shine for Jesus, to let others know about Jesus.

But, on the other end of the spectrum, if we live our Christian lives in rebellion against God, not in a Christian way, then we can close those doors and we are representing a bad picture of the God we say we love!

So it is important how we live out our faith and that is what Paul is going to be talking about in our study this morning.

Paul is going to speak on some very controversial subjects in this chapter. He is going to speak of the role of men and women in the church.

Why is this such a hot topic and causes so many problems?

Because the flesh is there and it is saying, ***“So, you think you are better than me. You don’t think I can do this. Let me tell you!”***

And please understand, that is not the issue, men being more spiritual than women or smarter than women, not at all. It is the role that God has established and yet, as we will see, what is controversial should not be controversial because God has established it.

Now, in saying that, don’t you think that God knows what He is talking about?

You bet He does, and it is what is best for us when we follow the order that God has established and not what we think is best for us!

We will get to that next week, and we will deal with it and as you will see, women are not second-class citizens, they have a role in the church.

This morning we are going to focus on the – ***IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER!***

Today, prayer is not thought of as being important. Well, let me clarify that. It is not important until something devastating happens in our life. Sadly, that is when we get serious about prayer. But prayer should be something that is not only a foundation in our life but in the church as well.

When Hudson Taylor was sailing to China to begin his missionary work, the ship was in great danger. The wind had died, and the current was carrying them towards sunken reefs which were close to islands inhabited by cannibals - so close they could see them building fires on the shore.

Everything they tried failed.

In his journal Taylor recorded what happened next: The Captain said to me, ***“Well, we have done everything that can be done.”***

A thought occurred to me, and I replied, ***“No, there is one thing we have not done yet.”***

***“What is that?”*** he asked.

***“Four of us on board are Christians. Let us each retire to his own cabin, and in agreed prayer ask the Lord to give us immediately a breeze.”***

Taylor prayed briefly and then, certain that the answer was coming, went back on deck and asked the first officer to let down the sails.

***“What would be the good of that?”*** he answered.

I told him we had been asking God for a wind; that it was coming immediately.

Within minutes the wind began to blow and carried them safely past the reefs.

### ***THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER!***

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points. They are,

***A CALL TO PRAYER – I TIMOTHY 2:1***

***WHO TO PRAY FOR – I TIMOTHY 2:2***

***A PURPOSE FOR PRAYER – I TIMOTHY 2:3-4***

***THE WITNESS OF PRAYER – I TIMOTHY 2:5-7***

***WHERE TO PRAY – I TIMOTHY 2:8***

So with that as our introduction, let's begin reading in I Timothy chapter 2, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word this morning and look at –

***THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER!*****I TIMOTHY 2****VERSE 1**

As Paul opens up here, we see – ***A CALL TO PRAYER!***

Yes, as individuals we should be praying but I believe that Paul is focusing on public worship in the church and how important prayer is.

So this is something that men were to do in the church and it is at the forefront of what they are to be doing – ***PRAYING!***

How do I know that this is to be a priority in the church, that men pray?

Again, listen to what Paul says in this verse.

He wrote, “**Therefore I exhort first of all . . .**” In other words, this is first in importance, that men pray!

I am blessed that when we have prayer on Saturday mornings that we have a group of men that come out to pray, as well as women!

And let me be clear on this. Paul is not saying that women praying is not important, not at all. What he is saying is that in the church, men should be leaders and they should be praying!

They should be examples of how important prayer is because it is seen in their lives!

And I know, some may say, ***“How do you know that this is only speaking about men praying here?”***

Look at how Paul closes out this section here in I Timothy 2:8, **“Therefore I desire that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”**

Again, don't come to the conclusion that it is not important for women to pray, but Paul's point is pretty simple. Men must pray not just in the church but in their homes as well.

Why is this such a big deal?

Because men are to be the leaders in their homes and in the church and if you are not in communication with God, then how can you lead your families or how can you lead the church?

You can't, is the idea!

And keep in mind how Paul opens up this section, with the word **“Therefore”** and it brings us back to what Paul has said in I Timothy chapter 1.

In other words, because of all that Paul said in I Timothy chapter 1, you men need to pray!

Why would Paul have to make such a request for the Ephesian believers to pray for all men, for everyone?

There are a couple of reasons.

First of all, the Judaizers came in claiming that to be saved you needed to keep the Law and become a Jew.

That would restrict praying for Gentiles because it was up to them to change.

Secondly, an early form of Gnosticism was being taught and the idea here is that salvation came only to the elite, those who could ascend to the high levels of secret mystical knowledge.

Of course there is no need to pray here either, you either have it or you don't!

Thus, Paul reminded them that they are to pray for all men for salvation and sanctification so that men are not only saved, but by their actions, that they will mature.

Now Paul lists three things here: *supplications, prayers, and intercessions*.

What is the difference?

Let me explain it like this.

First of all, *supplications* are specific prayers. This kind of prayer arises from the sense of need.

Let me give you some examples from the Scriptures regarding prayers of supplications.

In Psalm 4:1 we see David cry out, "**Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.**" Here we see David cry out for the mercy of God in the situation that he was facing.

In Psalm 5:8 we are told, "**Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face.**" Here we see David cry out to God for direction.

In Psalm 6:4 we see David cry out for deliverance in the situation that he was facing. We are told, "**Return, O Lord, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake!**"

And in Psalm 7:1-2 David cries out, "**O Lord my God, in You I put my trust; Save me from all those who persecute me; And deliver me, Lest they tear me like a lion, Rending me in pieces, while there is none to deliver.**" David is crying out to God to deliver him from the persecution that he was facing, to deliver him from the attacks of the enemy that wants to destroy him!

Those are just a few prayers of supplication that we see in the Scriptures. Specific prayers for things we may be going through.

He then speaks of *prayers*, which are more of a general prayer. It speaks of all our communication with the Lord.

And then he speaks of *intercessions*, which speak of our prayers for others as we bring their needs before God.

We see an example of this in Romans 10:1 where we are told, **“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.”** Paul is interceding for the Jewish people that they would come to saving faith!

Also, we see another great example of intercessory prayer in the life of Moses as he is praying for the children of Israel because God said that He was going to destroy them for their rebellion against Him!

First, listen to what the Lord said to Moses, **“Then the Lord said to Moses: ‘How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.’”** Numbers 14:11-12.

God is going to wipe them out and start over with Moses. And listen to what transpires next, because I believe this is what God was stirring in the heart of Moses, to intercede for the children of Israel.

We are told in Numbers 14:13-19, **“And Moses said to the Lord: ‘Then the Egyptians will hear it, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, Lord, are among these people; that You, Lord, are seen face to face and Your cloud stands above them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying, “Because the Lord was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.” And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, “The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.” Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.”**”

Did they deserve this kind of prayer?

Absolutely not but none of us do. And thus, pray for your enemies as well as the brethren!

So we have seen those three types of prayer and they do overlap with each other. The key here is that prayer is something that needs to be part of our daily lives as well as in the life of the church!

And then, what is the attitude of prayer?

We are to pray with thanksgiving.



That is what Paul tells us in Philippians 4:6-7, as he wrote, **“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**

Once again we see Paul speak of praying with a heart of thanksgiving before God!

In I Thessalonians 5:16-18 we are told, **“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”**

Notice that Paul doesn't say to rejoice when things are going well but to rejoice always!

That is a tough one.

How can we do that?

Because, as Christians our joy is not based on outward circumstances but in the Lord and He never changes.

He is in control, He knows what He is doing and thus, I rejoice even though I may not understand why this is happening, but I rejoice in the Lord.

Now you may struggle with that as Habakkuk did. But he found out that his joy could not, should not be based on the outward situation, but on the inward reality of the Lord!

Habakkuk said, **“Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls - Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills.”** Habakkuk 3:17-19.

No matter what, Habakkuk was not going to let the outward situations, the outward circumstances, take away his joy because his joy was in the Lord, the God of his salvation!

Spurgeon gives us this perspective if we are struggling with rejoicing always. He wrote, *“Turn this book over and see if there be any precept that the Lord has given you in which he has said, ‘Groan in the Lord always, and again I say groan.’ You may groan if you like. You have Christian liberty for that; but, at the same time, do believe that you have larger liberty to rejoice, for so it is put before you.”*

Now how in the world can I give thanks in everything?

The only way we can is by knowing and believing that **“... all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse, Romans 8:28 like this, **“We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose.”**

Does that mean we will always know the good that will come out of a difficult situation?

No, we must learn to trust God by faith, to rest our weight fully upon Him!

God is still on the throne, He is still in control, and nothing happens without His knowledge!

Spurgeon said, *“When joy and prayer are married their first-born child is gratitude.”*

I think he nails that one. When we are rejoicing and in communication with God, we will have a heart of gratitude for all He has done, is doing and will do in our lives!

And here is the key to all of this; rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, giving thanks in everything to God, it is God’s will for our lives, and it is not that we have to do it, but we get to do it!

I want you to see the power of prayer and what prayer accomplished in this nation. Just a few examples to give you an idea of the power of prayer and how we should be thankful! We are told,

Prayer in 1620 safely guided the Mayflower with the Pilgrims to a new world.

Prayer in 1623 saved the Pilgrim fathers from starvation.

Prayer in 1777 at Valley Forge saved the Continental Army and won the war for American Independence.

Prayer at Philadelphia saved the Constitutional Convention and gave birth to the American Way of Life.

Prayer in 1857 saved America from economic destruction.

Prayer in 1918 ended World War I and lack of prayer started World War II.

Prayer saved England at Dunkirk. Myriads of fliers and service men of all nations lost at sea were saved through prayer.

- Church Chimes

Thus, the character of prayer in the church is seen in Supplications, Prayers, Intercession and Thanksgiving!

Let me sum it up like this, because, as Paul said, this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for our lives.

After each one of these exhortations – rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks – we are told to do this because it is the will of God.

The thought isn't "***this is God's will, so you must do it.***"

The thought is rather "***this is God's will, so you can do it.***"

It isn't easy to rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks, but we can do it because it is God's will.

We have looked at - *A CALL TO PRAYER!*

As we read on, we will be looking at – *WHO TO PRAY FOR!*

And, as you will see, this is not an easy section.

## VERSE 2

I know, some of you are thinking, *“Are you kidding me! Pray for our government leaders?”*

That is exactly who Paul is speaking of here. He is telling the Ephesian believers to pray for government leaders who were in authority over them, which was Rome at the time.

Again, there are some Christians who have a hard time with this because they feel our government is wicked; it is evil, which is true, many are.

But we live in a day and age where we see Republicans fighting with Democrats and Democrats fighting with Republicans and they even fight amongst themselves. And to pray for someone who is on the opposing side, forget about it!

And again, some feel *“What is the point. Our government, most of it is so corrupt why bother praying for them!”*

Let me make this point and you may get mad at me, but so be it.

The reason we are to pray for our leaders, and not for their demise, is because God commands us to!

That is what Paul is telling Timothy here and the church there in Ephesus, that they are to pray for the leaders who are in Rome.

Remember that Caesar Nero burned Rome in 64 A. D. and blamed the Christians for doing it.

Thus, persecution against Christians was beginning to grow and it was growing quickly.

Immorality and wickedness were rampant in Rome and really, through much of the Roman Empire.

The call for the destruction of Rome and the government officials could be justified by the Christians of that day just as many feel that way about our government today.

And yet Paul says that we are to pray for them and not to fight against them.

You see, less talking and more praying!

In fact, the early church leader Tertullian explained: ***“We pray for all the emperors, that God may grant them long life, a secure government, a prosperous family, vigorous troops, a faithful senate, an obedient people; that the whole world may be in peace; and that God may grant, both to Caesar and to every man, the accomplishment of their just desires.”*** (Clarke)

Remember all that happened in the life of Joseph. How his brothers who hated him sold him to Midianite slave traders who then sold him to Potiphar, the captain of the prison guards down in Egypt.

And yet Joseph served the Lord and served his master faithfully, even though it was not fair what had happened to him.

Not only that, as Potiphar put Joseph over his whole house, we see the wife of Potiphar make advances towards Joseph. And this was not a one-time proposition, but it happened day in and day out until Joseph finally had to run away from her. And she accused Joseph of rape.

When Potiphar found out what happened, I don't think he believed his wife because I believe this was not the first time that she tried this on someone, he put Joseph in prison instead of putting him to death.

Again, how unfair. He served the Lord faithfully and now this. But Joseph did not pout or rebel, but he served the Lord faithfully and, in the end, Joseph was raised up to be second in charge over all of Egypt!

The key for Joseph and the key for us is that as man may try to do things to us for evil, God has a way of turning it around for good. Never forget that.

So, as we have seen – ***WHO TO PRAY FOR***, we are told that we are to pray for our leaders, not based upon them being godly or wicked, we are just to pray.

Now you may be thinking, ***“Why should we pray for them?”***

That is what we will look at next – ***A PURPOSE FOR PRAYER!***

#### VERSES 3-4

Why are we to be praying for our leaders?

The reason we pray for our leaders is that it is **“good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior”** to do so!

Let me ask you this. If you are not praying for our leaders, are you honoring and obeying the Lord?

You are not!

I know, that is a hard one because we are very good at justifying our behavior.

***“Lord, you know how wicked they are and all the evil things that they are trying to do, the wicked laws they are trying to pass. Lord, just toast them!”***

Now, if you feel that way, let me ask you this. Before you were saved aren't you glad that people were not praying like that for you!

I know you would not want that kind of prayer being offered.

Now you may be thinking, ***“Before I got saved, I was better than they were. These people are evil!”***

Let's think about that for a minute.

I think you are in agreement that all of us are sinners separated from God apart from Jesus.

So then, what do you mean when you say, ***“Before I got saved, I was better than they were. These people are evil!”***?

Are you saying that you were a better sinner than they are? That really makes no sense because sin separates us from God and yes, those who reject Christ will suffer according to what they have done in their life, but why are you better than the politicians of today? We are not!

Here is the bottom line. It is good and God accepts our prayers for our leaders, it is what He wants us to be praying about.

But specifically, what is the purpose of prayer?

It is for the salvation of our leaders and in reality, of all those that don't know the Lord!

As you well know, I am not much for protesting, holding political rallies because I don't believe that is what God desires.

You see, you can change all the laws you want, but if you don't change people's hearts, it won't really matter. We have seen that very clearly over the last few years as we look at the political landscape. Changed hearts change behavior!

And the bottom line is this. God's desire is for all men to be saved and thus, we should pray for all men to come and know the Lord!

In II Peter 3:9 we are told, **“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”**

And in Ezekiel 33:11 we see the heart of God as we are told, **“Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’”**

That is the heart of God, to see all men saved. Now, in saying that, does that mean all will be saved in the end, a kind of universalism in regard to salvation, a kind of all dogs go to heaven mentality?

No, God desires all to be saved and He could accomplish that if He took away our free will, but then it would not be a love relationship on our part if we didn't have a choice.

God has given to us a free will to choose and thus, God does not send anyone to Hell, they go there because that is where they want to go, they refuse to accept the free gift of God in Jesus and they will die in their sins outside of Him!



It is as Jesus said in John 3:16-21, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”**

You see, the choice is yours! But we also see here that man loves the darkness and refuses to come to the light, but again, that is a choice on their part!

God loves them and died for them so that they can live with Him, but they don't have to receive the gift of life, and thus, tragically, many won't come to Him and will spend eternity apart from Him!

In Jeremiah chapter 29, Jeremiah sends a letter to the Jews who were taken captive to Babylon, God's judgment upon the Southern Kingdom of Judea for their wickedness, and in this letter Jeremiah tells them, **“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters - that you may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.”** Jeremiah 29:4-7.

In other words, you pray for the leaders who are in office because as they are blessed the nation is blessed. Even when your leaders have you in captivity! That is a hard one and yet, it should just make sense.

And for us as Christians, keep in mind that we are aliens and strangers in this world, we are just passing through for our citizenship is in heaven.

Thus, we may have some 70 years here on earth and, in that time, we are to live not in isolation but with the people of this world.

We are to pray for the peace of a nation no matter how wicked, immoral, pagan, religious it is for in their peace we will have peace!

We are to be fruitful and multiply not only in the sense of having children, but seeing people born again into the family of God.

We need to pray for our leaders, our country, our family, our friends, our churches and-so-on, that they would come to know the Savior, Jesus Christ!

It is as General Robert E. Lee said,

*Knowing that intercessory prayer is our mightiest weapon and the supreme call for all Christians today, I pleadingly urge our people everywhere to pray. Believing that prayer is the greatest contribution that our people can make in this critical hour, I humbly urge that we take time to pray - to really pray.*

*Let there be prayer at sunup, at noonday, at sundown, at midnight - all through the day. Let us all pray for our churches. Let us pray for ourselves, that we may not lose the word "concern" out of our Christian vocabulary.*

*Let us pray for our nation.*

*Let us pray for those who have never known Jesus Christ and redeeming love, for moral forces everywhere, for our national leaders.*

*Let prayer be our passion.*

*Let prayer be our practice.*

- General Robert E. Lee

You see, God "... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." I Timothy 2:4.

*A PURPOSE FOR PRAYER* – to see our leaders and others come to saving faith!

As we read on, we will see – *THE WITNESS OF PRAYER!*

#### VERSES 5-7

Now you may be thinking, "*What does Pastor Joe mean when he said these verses deal with – A WITNESS OF PRAYER?*"

We saw that *A PURPOSE OF PRAYER* was to bring people to Jesus and now, *A WITNESS OF PRAYER* is speaking of the Gospel message that will bring people to Jesus!

The Bible tells us that sin has separated man from God and there is no way for man to rectify that problem.

You might say that the bridge to God is out, and it can't be repaired by human effort, we can't bridge that gap that sin has made!

Job, in speaking of God, said **“For He is not a man, as I am, That I may answer Him, And that we should go to court together. Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both.”** Job 9:32-33.

Look at what Job is seeking, a Mediator. There is no one who could bring us to God! And we see that what Job cried for is here, the Mediator, the Bridge Builder, the One who restored our fellowship with the Father, Jesus Christ.

Jesus is that bridge that brings us to God and He is the only one that can do that. Listen to what Peter said in I Peter 3:18, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

Again, I do realize that this is not politically correct, to say that Jesus is the only way, but tough!

That is the reality, and I am not going to lie just to make someone feel good about themselves when they are dying in their sins.

Peter put it like this in Acts 4:12, **“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”**

Jesus said in John 14:6, “... **‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’**” This is what Paul is speaking of here in I Timothy, that Jesus is the only way. There are not many roads to God or to heaven, only one and that road, that door to get into heaven is Jesus.

So if you have a problem with that, bring it before God, He said it!

Regarding there being a specific Mediator, William McDonald wrote, “*The verse effectively answers the teaching so common today that the blessed Virgin Mary or angels or saints are mediators between God and man. There is only one Mediator, and His name is Christ Jesus.*”

Absolutely!

Now notice what Jesus did for us here in I Timothy 2:6. Paul said that our Lord “... **gave himself a ransom for all. . .**”

In other words, I don’t care who you are, what you have done, how bad you think you are. The work that Jesus did on the cross of Calvary was sufficient to save ***ALL SINNERS!*** And every person in this world fits into that category, they are, and we are – ***SINNERS*** in need of a Savior, Jesus!

Now please understand that I am not saying that all will be saved. Every person can be, but they must come through Christ since He is the One who can save us from our sins and bring us to God the Father!

Keep in mind that the word “**ransom**” in the Greek is very strong. And the idea is that Jesus didn’t just pay the ransom to set us free – ***HE BECAME THE RANSOM!***

Also, Paul said that the coming of Christ was brought about in “**due time.**”

Paul put it like this in Galatians 4:4-5, **“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”**

You see, Jesus did not come on the scene too early or too late but right on time as we have just read.

Author Jim Boice put it like this. He wrote,

***It was right time politically***

The Roman Empire was at its zenith of power and glory. Rome had given the world good roads, a relatively fair system of government, and most important it had given the world peace.

For the first time in history, people could travel with relative ease almost anywhere in the empire which meant those early Christians could carry the message of the gospel all over the known world.

***It was the right time culturally***

Alexander the Great had conquered the world three centuries earlier and then “Hellenized” it by imposing on it Greek culture, philosophy, and the Greek language.

The influence of Greek culture and language was so powerful that even after the Romans conquered the world people still spoke Greek.

Greek was the most precise and descriptive of all ancient languages, it was the language of the first century, the language everyone understood—it was a universal language perfect for the quick spread of the gospel.

- Jim Boice

So at the appointed time, the perfect time, God sent forth His Son to save the world from their sins!

And for Paul, this is the message he brought forth, the Gospel message. And as we have seen as we went through the book of Acts, Paul first went to the Jews with the Gospel message but they, for the most part, rejected it and thus, his ministry was primarily to the Gentiles even though his passion was to see the Jews saved!

But his message never changed as he tells us in I Corinthians 2:1-5, **“And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”**

Today people want to change the message because it is too narrow for them, that Jesus is the only way.

But we can't change the message because it is not ours to change! It is God's and thus, we need to proclaim it today just as Paul did in his day – in faith and in truth!

***THE WITNESS OF PRAYER*** is the Gospel message, that Jesus is the Mediator between God and man, and it is only through Him that we will get to heaven, we will see God the Father!

As we close this morning we are going to look at – ***WHERE TO PRAY!***

VERSE 8

Remember the context here, what this letter is all about. Paul said, **“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”** I Timothy 3:14-15.

The church is the focus and thus, when Paul said, *“men pray everywhere”* he is speaking that *“men pray in every church.”*

Yes, we can pray anywhere in the world, but that is not the point. The point is the church and how we are to conduct ourselves in the church as we gather to worship the Lord and hear from the Lord.

Now here is where it can get controversial. Paul says **“men”** not women are to lead in prayer as the church gathers together for worship.

Does that mean women should not be praying?

Not at all. But men are to lead the way, they are to be that example for the church to follow!

What happens many times is the exact opposite. The men are AWOL, and the women are at the prayer meetings. We are blessed here at Calvary as our prayer time on Saturday’s has many men coming out to pray. Praise God for that. And praise God for the women that come out to pray. But men, we are to be the examples to the church of how important prayer is!



You see,

The popularity of a **CHURCH** is measured by its Sunday morning attendance and the popularity of the **PREACHER** by its Sunday evening attendance.

However, the popularity of the **LORD** is measured at the prayer meeting.

- The Bible Friend

How true that is.

Now what does Paul mean when he says that men should pray and as they are praying, they are "**lifting up holy hands**"?

It is the posture for surrender unto the Lord.

So does that mean that when we pray we need to lift up our hands to the Lord?

That is not what Paul is saying and if you look through the Scriptures you will see that in the Bible there are many different postures that people have used when praying.

So I don't think that is what Paul is saying here. I don't think it is related to the physical posture of the body in prayer, but I think he is referring to the posture of our heart!

Think about it, "**Holy hands**" are hands that are devoted to serving God and not doing evil, it speaks of a person's entire life.

I hope that makes sense, that Paul is speaking of our actions, the things we do shows we are godly, set apart unto God and not towards evil.

It is not just the posture when you pray, it is the life you live before you pray!

And when we do pray, we are to do so in love and believing that God will answer our prayer, as John tells us, **“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”** I John 5:14-15.

We put our faith in so many things that really are not faithful, they are not even living many times, like statues and buildings!

Think about it for a minute. Has your car ever broken down before?

Of course and yet you put your faith in that car that when you turn the key the engine starts! You don't get in the car and say, *“What's the use, it probably won't start anyway.”*

No, you truly believe it would start or you would not even turn the key!

But when it comes to God, the true and living God, we tend to doubt!

God is faithful and thus, as we pray, we need to pray in faith believing He will answer our prayers according to His will!

And let me say this. God answers all our prayers!

I know that may shock some of you and you can give me examples of prayers that God did not answer.

You are wrong. He did answer them, maybe not the way you thought, but He did answer them.

You see, God does give us what we are praying for at times.

There are other times that God says no to our prayers.

And there are times where God says not yet, but He will answer our prayers in His time!

It is as James tells us in James 1:5-8, **“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”**

The Amplified Bible puts these verses this way, **“If any of you is deficient in wisdom, let him ask of the giving God [Who gives] to everyone liberally and ungrudgingly, without reproaching or faultfinding, and it will be given him. Only it must be in faith that he asks with no wavering (no hesitating, no doubting). For the one who wavers (hesitates, doubts) is like the billowing surge out at sea that is blown hither and thither and tossed by the wind. For truly, let not such a person imagine that he will receive anything [he asks for] from the Lord, [For being as he is] a man of two minds (hesitating, dubious, irresolute), [he is] unstable and unreliable and uncertain about everything [he thinks, feels, decides].”**

You see, by doubting you are saying that you don't trust God, you don't believe that He can answer your prayer and it makes us very unstable.

That is not what God wants, He wants us to pray and believe!

We are to pray in Church, as a body of believers together with men leading the way.

In our next study we will deal with the role of women in the church. We are putting up a bullet proof screen for that study! Just kidding, but it is controversial because many miss what is being said, they miss the point that Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is making. And we will deal with that more next time.

My prayer this morning is that you have seen – ***THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER!***

Let me share this with you before I close. We are told,

The greatest revival our nation has ever seen to date began in 1857 and its effect was felt for 40 years. [I believe the Jesus movement of the 70's and the 80's was the greatest movement of God in our nation.]

***It began in a movement of prayer, and it was sustained by a movement of prayer.***

The spiritual conditions in the United States deteriorated in the middle of the 19th century. People were making money ***“hand over fist,”*** and so their prosperity led to apathy and apathy led to apostasy as they turned their backs on God.

It sounds like what has happened in our day. The days of prosperity lead to apathy in the church and many have turned away from God!

But a man of prayer named Jeremiah Lanphier, who was a stockbroker on Wall Street and who was grieved by all the carnality and depravity he saw going on around him, started a prayer meeting in the upper room of the Consistory Building of the Dutch Reformed Church in Manhattan.

He had advertised it, but only 6 people out of a population of one million showed up.

That can be disheartening but he did not give up.

The next week fourteen showed up for prayer and then twenty-three the week after that.

They decided to meet every day. Soon they filled the Dutch reformed Church, the Methodist Church on John Street, and then every public building in downtown New York.

Famed newspaper editor Horace Greeley sent a reporter with horse and buggy riding around to the prayer meetings to see how many men were praying.

In one hour, he could only get to 12 meetings, but he counted 6100 men.

Then the spiritual damn burst and a landslide of prayer began. Soon, it seemed that the whole city of New York was shutting down at noon for prayer. Then people began to be converted, 10,000 a week in New York City alone.

The movement spread throughout New England. Church bells would sound calling people to prayer at 8am, 12 noon, and at 6pm. The revival went up the Hudson and down the Mohawk rivers. Every church was packed beyond capacity and Baptists had so many people to baptize, they couldn't get them into their churches, so they went down to the river, cut a big square hole in the ice, and baptized them in the cold water!

The revival spread through much of the United States. In one year, more than a million people were converted.

Make no mistake about it, we just need to listen – ***A CALL TO PRAYER!***

And it is not that difficult to figure out what this is all about – ***WHO TO PRAY FOR!***

The unsaved of course, leaders as well as others who are going through difficult times.

***A PURPOSE FOR PRAYER*** is to see people saved!

And – ***THE WITNESS OF PRAYER*** is to share the Gospel message!

***WHERE TO PRAY*** – begin in the church with men leading the way as an example to others and let it spread to all parts of our day and life!

And I will close with this,

***Speak to Him then, for He hears,***

***And spirit with spirit can meet;***

***Closer is He than breathing,***

***And nearer than hands or feet.***

- Alfred Lord Tennyson