

1-2 Timothy – 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Review

Last time, we looked at Paul's life story from the standpoint of his reminder to Timothy that it was God who gave him the strength to persevere in his apostleship despite his previous persecution of the Church. We discussed the question whether God somehow deals with sins committed in ignorance differently than so-called "high-handed" sins. We considered the possibility that we see such drastic disintegration in the Church today due to lack of persecution that would otherwise bind us closer together in Christ. We then talked about the sacred duty of church leaders to protect their flocks from wolves in sheep's clothing – pointing out that sometimes we must "name names" in warning. Finally, we talked about the power of the tongue to do harm within the Body, and the need for us to ensure our words are **True, Helpful, Inspirational, Necessary, and Kind**.

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Let's continue now in our study of the text of 1 Timothy 2 starting with Paul's admonition to pray for everyone.

¹First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 (ESV)

Prayer – both individual and corporate is a "spiritual discipline" which should be emphasized in church fellowships along with worship and studying God's Word. Sadly, I am personally quite weak in this area of my life in Christ. But prayer should be an enjoyable time of fellowship with God rather than an imposed burden. As Paul mentions here, continual prayer in the heart of the believer leads to a "***peaceful and quiet life***." God desires to hear from us – establishing an intimate relationship between our Father and His reborn children. Having been rescued out of our sins and the world, prayer is the glue that binds us as children of God's Kingdom drawing us ever closer to Him as He perfects us into the very image of His Son Jesus.

Jesus modeled continual prayer throughout His ministry on Earth. This is one of the great mysteries of Jesus' incarnation. After all, Jesus – God the Son – is a person of the Holy Trinity. He has been in continual inseparable fellowship with God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit even before there was time and will continue being One with them for all eternity. The mystery is exactly how the nature of that fellowship changed when Jesus – God the Son – was born into the flesh of the man – Jesus of Nazareth. Paul spoke of this in his letter to the Philippians...

⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV)

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As Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night He was betrayed, He anticipated the restoration of the original relationship He had previously enjoyed with the other two members of the Godhead.

4I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. 5And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. John 17:4-5 (ESV)

Here in our human flesh, until God calls us to Himself or Jesus returns to gather His Church, we are separated from the full presence of God's glory just as Jesus was to some degree when He walked on Earth. In the meantime, prayer is the means by which we draw closer to God in eager anticipation of His promise that one day we will dwell fully in His presence forever.

<https://youtu.be/VluBuIji6ic>

Although Jesus prayed frequently – even continuing all night in prayer before choosing the twelve whom He named as His apostles (Luke 6:12-13), I find it quite intriguing that none of the gospel accounts records Jesus ever directing His disciples to pray. Certainly, He taught us **how** to pray throughout His ministry, but He never actually commanded us to pray. In Matthew's report of Jesus teaching about prayer in His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus repeats three times – "**when you pray...**" He seems to have simply assumed that we **would** pray – desiring to speak with our Father just as He desires to commune with us through prayer. This implicit understanding of the necessity of prayer is like the assumption in Genesis 1:1 concerning God's being. God's Word never makes an argument for the existence of God. Instead, He starts by simply stating that in the beginning He אֱלֹהִים 'ēlōhîm already is.

ASIDE – The triune nature of the Godhead is presented in God's Word right from the beginning by the use of the Hebrew multiple form of אֱלֹהִים 'ēl – God. Similarly, the שָׁמַע *šāma* of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 which is placed inside the **mezuzah** מְזוּזָה – “doorpost” of Jewish houses, and inside the frontlets and **φυλακτήριον** *phylaktērion* – phylacteries worn by orthodox Jews begins with the simple statement...

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD [יהוה Y'hōvâ] our God [אלהים 'ēlōhîm], the LORD is one.

Deuteronomy 6:4 (ESV)

...indicating that our God is multiple persons in One being.

But meanwhile – back at Paul's letter to Timothy...

Notice that Paul admonishes Timothy to encourage his flock to pray for **all** people. In this, Paul is echoing Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.

43“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who

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persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Matthew 5:43-45 (ESV)

Notice that Jesus' teaching here contains a promised blessing for those who humble themselves in prayer for our enemies, just as Paul's admonition contains a promised blessing for those who pray for all people. Paul takes special care to mention that we should pray "***for kings and all who are in high positions.***" In his letter to the Roman church (Romans 13:1-7), Paul made an extensive admonition regarding the relationship between the Church and earthly governing authorities. Similarly, when spies of the scribes and chief priests sought to stumble Jesus by asking Him whether it was lawful (under the Law of Moses) to pay taxes to Caesar, His response was straightforward – "***...render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.***" (Luke 20:25). Our submission to Earthly authorities is often difficult, especially those who behave in and overtly ungodly manner and implement policies clearly in opposition to God's Word. Yet we know that God Himself has ordained those in positions of authority to the offices they hold. Therefore, Paul advises us to be subject to them in quiet dignity. Not only that. Paul directs Timothy here in this passage to ensure his flock prays for these authorities just as we pray for all people.

³This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:3-4 (ESV)

Above all, we must pray for all people that they themselves would come to know and follow Jesus unto eternal life. This is an act of love for our neighbors – what Jesus called the second greatest commandment. In this, as Paul mentions here, we align our desires with those of God.

***³Trust in the LORD, and do good;
dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.
⁴Delight yourself in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.
⁵Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him, and he will act.*** Psalm 37:3-5 (ESV)

⁵For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. 1 Timothy 2:5-6 (ESV)

Many years ago, brother Abraham from India visited our church in Aiken, SC. In his message to the church, he said something that is forever lodged in my mind. He said that if we were to go to India proclaiming that Jesus is **a** god, many Indians would not take issue with our contention. He said that there are over a million gods worshipped in India. What would one god more or less matter? But if we were to go to India proclaiming that Jesus is the **only** one true and living God, most Indian people

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would vehemently disagree. In today's Pakistan we could be in violation of the local laws against "blasphemy" and might even be subject to the penalty of death! But we don't need to go to India or Pakistan to find such opposition to the Gospel. Many people right here in the USA – even some professing "christians" – firmly believe that many different paths lead to God. But Jesus' own claim speaking to His disciples on the night of His betrayal refutes that idea.

6b... "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." John 14:6b-7 (ESV)

This unambiguous statement is what makes the Gospel of Jesus so contentious. Everyone likes to hear about the love of God and His promise of eternal life. But we don't like to be told that we are wretched sinners condemned to a punishment of eternal torture apart from the redeeming grace of God found only through faith in the birth, sacrificial death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But this stark claim by Jesus to be the only means through whom we may be saved out of death in our sins also implies the converse – that all other religious beliefs must therefore logically be wrong. Everyone has seen the "Coexist" bumper stickers. In today's society, where the rallying cry is "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" most would agree with their message that we all should just play nice together.

Many jurisdictions that tout their support for freedom of expression have hypocritically passed "inclusiveness" legislation that makes anyone who dares repeat Jesus' claim to be the only way for us to be saved out of death – and its logical implication that other religious belief systems must therefore be false – guilty under the law of so-called "hate speech." But the fact is that Jesus' statement to His disciples leaves no wiggle room. It is either true or it is not. We must either accept Jesus' claim and seek redemption by God's grace alone through faith in Jesus' Gospel alone, or we must reject Him and be condemned to death in our sins. There is no third option or "plan B."

Testifying before the council of Jewish elders as he and John were being questioned after healing a lame beggar at the entrance to the temple in the Name of Jesus, Peter also proclaimed this **true** Gospel that belief in Jesus is the only way we can be saved.

8Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, 9if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, 10let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead— by him this man is standing before you well. 11This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. [Psalm 118:22] 12And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:8-12 (ESV)

Before we move on, I'd like to take a closer look at two Greek words we find in 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

The first is **μεσίτης mesitēs** – mediator. It means **one who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and friendship, or form a compact, or for ratifying a covenant. A medium of communication, arbitrator.** Someone very dear to me once said she doesn't need anyone to act as a "go-between" for her with God. At the time, she was speaking of

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human intermediaries like priests and pastors. But she was clearly missing the point Paul is making here in his letter to Timothy.

All of us need Jesus as our “go-between” with God the Father. This too is a great mystery. Even in His glory, Jesus remains a distinct person of the Holy Trinity along with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus is in fact “...*the Way*...” through Whom we come to the Father – the **only** way as Paul, Peter, and Jesus Himself have affirmed. Not only is Jesus in His glory the means through Whom we seek and find God, He is continually defending us to His Father from the accusations of our great enemy (Revelation 12:10, 1 John 2:1).

The second word is ἀντίλυτρον *antilytron* – **what is given in exchange for another as the price of his redemption, ransom**. There are several essentials of the Christian faith – e.g., the virgin birth, the deity of Jesus, the resurrection of Christ, etc. This ἀντίλυτρον *antilytron* – the substitutionary atonement of Jesus on the cross taking the punishment for our sins upon Himself – is equally essential. Belief in the fact of Jesus’ crucifixion isn’t enough. We must also understand and believe the **reason** Jesus sacrificed His own life in our stead. God in His perfect holiness can’t simply “give us a pass” for our sins even after His Spirit examines our hearts and finds that our faith and our repentance are real. Our sins must still be dealt with somehow. God’s righteous judgment upon sin must match His perfect holiness. David wrote of God’s righteous judgment in my personal favorite psalm.

*Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.* Psalm 51:4 (ESV)

The animal sacrifices prescribed in the Law of Moses, provided only a temporary model of the permanent atonement only God Himself could provide to redeem sinful mankind out of death for all eternity. Jesus chose before the beginning of creation to take this burden upon Himself. This is another of the great mysteries of the Holy Trinity. How could God the Son who **is** from everlasting to everlasting possibly die in our place taking the rightful punishment for **our** sins? Yet we know that is exactly what Jesus did. We don’t understand the “how” of Jesus’ ἀντίλυτρον *antilytron* but we certainly know the “why” of it, and God’s Spirit dwelling within us affirms the fact of it just as Paul affirms here in 1 Timothy 2:6.

We also recognize that Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross in our place is the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.

*4Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
5But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.
6All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.* Isaiah 53:4-6 (ESV)

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This is what Paul means here in 1 Timothy 2:6 when he says that Jesus' *ἀντίλυτρον antilytron* was paid in its "*proper time*," having been foretold by the Old Testament prophets and come to fruition at the exact time ordained by God the Father, Jesus God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in His great plan of salvation conceived by Him before the dawn of creation!

For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. 1 Timothy 2:7 (ESV)

Last time, we discussed the Greek word *ἀπόστολος apostolos* – *one who is sent forth under orders* that Paul uses here to describe himself for the second time in this letter. The word translated as "preacher" here is also worthy of closer examination. *κήρυξ kēryx* means...

a herald or messenger vested with public authority, who conveyed the official messages of kings, magistrates, princes, military commanders, or who gave a public summons or demand, and performed various other duties. In the NT God's ambassador, and the herald or proclaimer of the divine word.

Quoted from Blue Letter Bible Lexicon Strong's G2783 - <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2783/esv/mgnt/0-1/> (May 21, 2023)

Paul emphasizes here in this passage that he was appointed as a preacher, apostle, and teacher of the Gentiles. Paul was a Hebrew of the tribe of Benjamin. He was a learned student of the Law of Moses. Yet Jesus chose to send Paul to the Gentiles instead of to his own Hebrew people. Jesus chose Peter and John – largely unlearned Galilean fishermen to carry His message to His own chosen people – Israel along with His other apostles. At first glance, this might seem counterintuitive. Wouldn't someone well-schooled in the Law have been a more logical choice to bring His message to His own chosen people?

When we deeply consider Jesus' appointment of Paul to the Gentiles though, it makes better sense. After all, Jesus wasn't giving His Gospel message primarily to the learned men of Israel who were spiritually blinded by their devotion to the Law. Peter and the other apostles brought the message mostly to the "rank and file" Jews of that time who anxiously awaited rescue out of oppression by their promised Messiah. The Jewish leaders for the most part had already rejected the Gospel message by plotting and calling for Jesus' crucifixion by the Roman authorities. Peter, John, and the other apostles were lowly, uneducated, oppressed Jews themselves. They too had faithfully awaited the coming of the Messiah. Who better to bring the Good News of the Messiah's arrival to His chosen people?

Similarly, although Paul was a Jew by his lineage and education, he was born a Roman citizen in the Roman province of Cilicia. He therefore knew firsthand the "lay of the

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land” in Gentile society. He was much more widely traveled than the Galileans Jesus chose as His other apostles. Therefore, Paul was the better choice to spread the Gospel message around the broader Mediterranean basin. Paul clearly accepted this calling. He mentions it explicitly in five of his epistles. Yet, if we read between the lines, we get the sense that Paul strongly desired to preach the Gospel to his own Jewish people as well as the Gentiles. Paul devotes an entire chapter (11) of his letter to the Romans to this topic. Today, Paul’s writings handed down to us do indeed testify the Gospel of Jesus Christ to **all** people – Jew and Gentile alike. This should be an encouragement to all who patiently await God’s answers to our prayers. He’s **got** this, whether or not we can understand the details of His works day-by-day.

Looking Ahead

Next time, God willing we will continue our study of Paul’s first pastoral letter to Timothy with Paul’s instructions to Timothy regarding the role of women in the Church.