

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 1 TIMOTHY 2 (PART 1)

AS WE MOVE FROM CHAPTER 1, PAUL IS GOING TO BEGIN GIVING SOME PASTORAL INSTRUCTION TO TIMOTHY AS IT RELATES TO THE PUBLIC WORSHIP. HE'LL BEGIN TO GIVE SOME PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR EVERYONE IN CHAPTER 2 AND THEN MOVE TO ELDER AND DEACON QUALIFICATIONS IN CHAPTER 3.

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-7 - PASTORAL INSTRUCTION BEGINS

PAUL'S FIRST PASTORAL INSTRUCTION TO TIMOTHY IS TO PRAY FOR ALL "MEN" (AKA PEOPLE). THIS IS SOMETHING PAUL PRIORITIZES IN GENERAL AND CERTAINLY WOULD BE IMPORTANT IN LIGHT OF THE CHALLENGES OF CHAPTER 1 (FALSE TEACHING, SORTING OUT THE PLACE OF THE LAW, ETC.) HE USES 4 WORDS FOR THE PRAYERS WHICH ARE VERY SIMILAR.

ENTREATIES & PRAYERS - REQUESTS, PRAYING FOR NEEDS. KJV & ESV TRANSLATE THIS AS "SUPPLICATIONS", GENERAL PRAYING TO GOD

PETITIONS - ASKING IN GENERAL. OTHER TRANSLATIONS USE THE WORD "INTERCESSION" WHICH INCLUDES THE IDEA OF PRAYING ON BEHALF OF OTHERS.

THANKSGIVINGS - GIVING THANKS, EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

G. W. KNIGHT SUMMARIZES THESE FOUR WORDS IN THE FOLLOWING WAY: (OUR PRAYERS OUGHT TO BE) "MAKING REQUESTS FOR SPECIFIC NEEDS, BRINGING THOSE PEOPLE & NEEDS IN VIEW BEFORE GOD, APPEALING BOLDLY ON THEIR BEHALF AND EXPRESSING THANKFULNESS FOR THEM. ("THE FAITHFUL SAYINGS IN THE PASTORAL LETTERS, PAGE 115).

Q - BASED ON PAUL'S INSTRUCTION IN VERSE 1, WE'RE TOLD TO PRAY THIS WAY FOR ALL PEOPLE. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

HE WILL THEN FOCUS ON THE NEED TO PRAY FOR "KINGS AND ALL WHO ARE IN AUTHORITY" (V. 2). PRAYERS SHOULD BE PRAYED FOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS, NO MATTER WHAT WE THINK OF THEM POLITICALLY OR PERSONALLY. THE PURPOSE OF THESE PRAYERS IS THAT WE MAY "LEAD A TRANQUIL AND QUIET LIFE IN ALL GODLINESS AND DIGNITY (2:2)." THIS IS WHAT WE DESIRE FOR THE NATIONS OF OUR PILGRIMAGE, AND WHAT WE DESIRE FOR OUR OWN SOULS. WE WANT TRANQUILITY AND PEACE IN OUR LAND SO WE CAN HAVE TRANQUILITY AND PEACE IN OUR SOULS AND GROW IN GODLINESS AND DIGNITY.

TRANQUIL & QUIET - THESE TWO WORDS ARE NEARLY SYNONYMOUS. TRANQUILITY MEANS "FREE FROM AGITATION OF MIND OR SPIRIT, FREE FROM DISTURBANCE OR TURMOIL. (MERRIAM-WEBSTER). WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT SILENCE, BUT PEACEFULNESS.

GODLINESS - GENERAL RELIGIOUS DEVOTION, HAVING CHARACTER LIKE GOD, HOLY LIVING

DIGNITY - HONESTY, INTEGRITY, HIGH STANDARD OF MORALITY

WE WANT TO "LET OUR LIGHT SHINE" BUT ALSO LIVE IN A QUIET AND TRANQUIL WAY THAT DOESN'T BRING UNNECESSARY ATTENTION TO OURSELVES/THE CHURCH - ESPECIALLY FOR NEGATIVE REASONS. THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH "BAD PRESS" AMERICAN CHRISTIANS HAVE BECAUSE OF

CHURCH SCANDALS, ARROGANCE OR VIOLENCE - THOSE THINGS MAKE A LOT OF NOISE. WE NEED TO PRAY FOR TRANQUILITY AND QUIET SO WE CAN LET GODLINESS AND DIGNITY SPEAK.

THE CONTEXT PAUL GIVES FOR WHY WE OUGHT TO PRAY THIS WAY IS IN LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL AND GOD'S DESIRE FOR SALVATION FOR ALL PEOPLE. PAUL IS SO ZEALOUS FOR THE GOSPEL TO MOVE THAT HE RECOGNIZES THE NEED FOR THE CHURCH TO PRAY THAT GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES WOULD NOT HINDER THE MISSION. NOTICE, PAUL IS NOT ASKING US TO PRAY THAT THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES WOULD BE CHRISTIAN, BUT THAT WHATEVER DECISIONS THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES ARE MAKING, THAT THE CHRISTIANS WOULD BE IN A POSITION WHERE GOSPEL OPPORTUNITIES COULD CONTINUE.

Q - DO YOU REGULARLY PRAY FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY? DO YOU FIND IT HARD TO PRAY FOR GOVERNMENTAL LEADERS THAT YOU DON'T AGREE WITH?

Q - HOW WOULD PEACE SUPPORT THE MOVE OF THE GOSPEL AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE CHURCH?

PAUL IN EPHESUS

ACTS 19:1, 8-11 - PAUL IN EPHESUS FOR TWO YEARS, VERY FRUITFUL MINISTRY

ACTS 19:17-20 - REPENTANCE & SALVATION SPREADS IN EPHESUS

ACTS 19:23-41 - LARGE DISTURBANCE BECAUSE OF THE GOSPEL & THE WAY OF JESUS

THE TOWN CLERK IN EPHESUS WAS A LEADING OFFICIAL OF THE CITY AND REPRESENTATIVE BEFORE THE ROMAN IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT ON ITS BEHALF. HAVING A REASONABLE AND PEACEABLE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL WAS BENEFICIAL FOR THE GOSPEL SPREADING. THIS CLERK WAS NOT A CHRISTIAN (THERE WAS NO SUCH THING AS A CHRISTIAN RULER AT THAT TIME), BUT HIS DEMEANOR PROMOTED PEACE.

(THERE ARE OTHER INSTANCES OF PAGAN GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS INTERVENING FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL, AS WELL AS PAGAN LAWS OR ORDINANCES BEING FAVORABLE FOR THE GOSPEL'S ADVANCEMENT.)

THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THESE PRAYERS IS NOT SO MUCH THAT THE POLITICAL LEADERS OF A NATION ARE CHRISTIAN OR BECOME CHRISTIAN (ALTHOUGH CERTAINLY EITHER OF THOSE BEING TRUE WOULD PRESUMABLY BE A GOOD THING), BUT THAT THE CHRISTIANS OF THAT NATION COULD SPREAD THE GOSPEL AS EFFECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE.

1 TIMOTHY 2:3-7 - WHY PRAY FOR ALL PEOPLE? BECAUSE GOD DESIRES ALL PEOPLE TO BE SAVED

WE PRAY FOR "ALL (2:1)" BECAUSE GOD WANTS SALVATION FOR "ALL (2:4)" AND GAVE HIS SON FOR "ALL (2:6)" GOD WANTS EVERYONE SAVED! (NOT EVERYONE WILL BE, BUT HE DESIRES THAT THEY ARE.) THAT'S A GREAT WINDOW INTO THE HEART OF OUR GOD.

IN THE ANCIENT WORLD THE POSITION THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD AND ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND HUMANS WOULD HAVE BEEN UNIQUE. THE WORLD OF 1 TIMOTHY WAS ONE FLOODED WITH MANY GODS AND DEITIES AND TEMPLES AND PRIESTS WHICH WOULD SERVE AS A PLACE OR PERSON TO CONNECT YOU WITH THAT GOD. IF YOU WERE PRAYING FOR LOVE, ROMANCE OR FAMILY, YOU WOULD PRAY TO A CERTAIN GOD AND SACRIFICE AT THAT GOD'S TEMPLE. IF YOU WERE IN NEED OF MILITARY VICTORY, YOU WOULD PRAY TO ANOTHER GOD AND SACRIFICE AT THAT GOD'S TEMPLE. PAUL AND THE EARLY CHRISTIANS WERE PROCLAIMING THE HISTORIC JEWISH VIEW THAT THERE WAS ONE GOD WHO CREATED ALL

THINGS AND WHO IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP AND NOW THE WAY TO HAVE ACCESS TO AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THAT GOD IS THROUGH FAITH IN HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST (WHO HAD PAID THE RANSOM OWED BY HUMANITY). THIS SIMPLE AND SAVING MESSAGE WAS WHAT PAUL HAD DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO SPREAD.

IN OUR MODERN CONTEXT, THE BELIEF THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD IS MORE COMMONPLACE - YET THE TRUTH OF THE MEDIATOR TO THAT ONE GOD IS JUST AS IMPORTANT. JESUS CHRIST IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE, AND NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH HIM.

IN LIGHT OF THIS GOOD NEWS, PAUL IS ENCOURAGING TIMOTHY AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TO PRAY FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY - THAT WHOMEVER IS IN POWER AND WHATEVER THEIR POLICIES MIGHT BE, THAT THE CHURCH CAN LIVE A TRANQUIL AND QUIET LIFE, IN ALL GODLESS AND DIGNITY - SO THAT THE GOSPEL CAN MOVE FREELY. THIS PRAYER WAS PRAYED FOR NERO, THE VIOLENT AND OPPRESSIVE EMPEROR AT THE TIME OF 1 TIMOTHY AND IT SHOULD BE PRAYED BY MODERN CHRISTIANS WHETHER THEY LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA OR THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN.

WE PRAY SO THAT WE CAN PROCLAIM - IN WORD AND DEED

REMEMBER, PAUL'S DESIRE FOR THE CHURCH DOCTRINALLY AND PRACTICALLY IS "LOVE FROM A PURE HEART AND A GOOD CONSCIENCE AND A SINCERE FAITH. (1 TIMOTHY 1:5)". THE WITNESS OF THE EARLY CHURCH WAS GOING TO BE POWERFULLY COMPELLING TO THE ROMAN WORLD. EVEN AS PAUL COMBATS FALSE TEACHERS, HE REMINDS TIMOTHY THAT THE VISIBLE FRUIT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THEIR WITNESS. HISTORICALLY THIS PROVED TRUE. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

"TO ARRIVE AT A TRULY COMPREHENSIVE EXPLANATION FOR THE EXPANSION OF CHRISTIANITY, WE MUST MOVE BEYOND IDEOLOGY (BELIEFS) AND ENTER INTO THE SOCIAL WORLD (BEHAVIOR) OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS. WE MUST UNDERSTAND HOW CHRISTIANS RELATED WITH ONE ANOTHER AND WITH THEIR PAGAN NEIGHBORS. TO POSIT A STRICTLY IDEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR EARLY CHURCH GROWTH IS TO MISS PERHAPS THE MOST CONVINCING REASON FOR THE GROWTH OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY. PEOPLE DID NOT CONVERT TO CHRISTIANITY SOLELY BECAUSE OF WHAT THE EARLY CHRISTIANS BELIEVED. THEY CONVERTED BECAUSE OF THE WAY IN WHICH THE EARLY CHRISTIANS BEHAVED. (JOSEPH HELLERMAN, "WHEN THE CHURCH WAS A FAMILY", PAGE 104)

JULIAN, A ROMAN EMPEROR WHO HATED CHRISTIANS AND VIEWED THEIR MONOTHEISM AS A THREAT TO HIS EMPIRE, SAID THIS: "WHY DO WE NOT OBSERVE THAT IT IS THEIR [THE CHRISTIANS'] BENEVOLENCE TO STRANGERS, THEIR CARE FOR THE GRAVES OF THE DEAD AND THE PRETENDED HOLINESS OF THEIR LIVES THAT HAVE DONE THE MOST TO INCREASE (CHRISTIANITY)?...WHEN...THE IMPIOUS GALILEANS SUPPORT NOT ONLY THEIR OWN POOR, BUT *OURS AS WELL*, ALL MEN SEE THAT OUR PEOPLE LACK AID FROM US."

IN OTHER WORDS, THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT WAS PUT TO SHAME WITH HOW THE CHRISTIANS CARED FOR THEIR NEIGHBORS COMPARED TO THE WAY THE GOVERNMENT WAS CARING FOR ITS CITIZENS. HELLERMAN CONCLUDES THIS:

"NOTICE THAT JULIAN DOES NOT ATTRIBUTE THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH TO MONOTHEISM OR TO ANY OTHER IDEOLOGICAL COMPONENT OF THE FAITH. THE MOVEMENT ATTRACTED PEOPLE BECAUSE OF THE CHRISTIANS' BEHAVIOR TOWARD ONE ANOTHER AND TOWARD THOSE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH. YES, CHRISTIAN BELIEFS WERE APPEALING. BUT FOR JULIAN AND HIS PAGAN PEERS, THE WAY IN WHICH CHRISTIANS TREATED ONE ANOTHER AND THEIR PAGAN NEIGHBORS WAS THE MORE PERSUASIVE EXPLANATION FOR THE GROWTH OF THE EARLY CHURCH." (HELLERMAN, PAGE 106)

SO, LET'S PRAY FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY OVER US FOR MANY THINGS, BUT FIRST AND FOREMOST THAT WHATEVER DECISIONS ARE MADE, WE CAN SPREAD THE GOSPEL. BEFORE WE MOVE ON, LET'S FLESH OUT THE WHO'S AND WHAT'S THAT SHOULD BE IN OUR PRAYERS.

Q - WHO ARE THE KINGS AND AUTHORITY FIGURES IN OUR WORLD?

Q - WHAT WOULD IT SOUND LIKE FOR US TO PRAY 1 TIMOTHY 2:2 FOR THESE INDIVIDUALS?

I THINK IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT PAUL BEGINS HIS INSTRUCTION WITH THE CALL FOR PRAYER. WHILE WE HAVE FOCUSED SPECIFICALLY ON PRAYING FOR GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES, LET'S FORGET WHAT WE STARTED WITH, THAT PAUL URGES THAT "ENTREATIES AND PRAYERS, PETITIONS AND THANKSGIVINGS BE MADE ON BEHALF OF ALL MEN (2:1)." PRAYER IS A CRITICAL MARK OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

JIM CYMBALA, PASTOR OF THE BROOKLYN TABERNACLE WRITES:

"HERE'S SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT: "YOU CAN TELL HOW POPULAR A CHURCH IS BY WHO COMES ON SUNDAY MORNING. "YOU CAN TELL HOW POPULAR THE PASTOR OR EVANGELIST IS BY WHO COMES ON SUNDAY NIGHT. "BUT YOU CAN TELL HOW POPULAR JESUS IS BY WHO COMES TO THE PRAYER MEETING." ("FRESH WIND, FRESH FIRE", PAGE 28)

AND CHARLES SPURGEON SAID:

"THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH MAY BE VERY ACCURATELY GAUGED BY ITS PRAYER MEETINGS. SO IS THE PRAYER MEETING A GRACE-OMETER, AND FROM IT WE MAY JUDGE OF THE AMOUNT OF DIVINE WORKING AMONG A PEOPLE. IF GOD BE NEAR A CHURCH, IT MUST PRAY. AND IF HE BE NOT THERE, ONE OF THE FIRST TOKENS OF HIS ABSENCE WILL BE A SLOTHFULNESS IN PRAYER. ("METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE PULPIT - 1873", PAGE 218)"

PRIVATE PERSONAL PRAYER, PUBLIC AND CORPORATE PRAYER, PLANNED TIMES OF PRAYER AND SPONTANEOUS INCIDENTS OF PRAYER - THESE ARE ALL PARTS OF THE "FIRST OF ALL" PRACTICES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. WE NEED TO REACH OUT, BUT FIRST WE MUST PRAY. WE NEED TO PROCLAIM BIBLICAL TRUTH, BUT FIRST WE MUST PRAY. WE NEED TO WORK FOR JUSTICE FOR THOSE OPPRESSED, BUT FIRST WE MUST PRAY. WE NEED TO LIFT OUR VOICES IN SONG AND PRAISE, BUT FIRST WE MUST PRAY. WE SHOULD SERVE, GIVE, REPENT, BELIEVE, BAPTIZE, EVANGELIZE, PROPHECY, FORGIVE, STUDY, FAST, FEAST, FELLOWSHIP, AND MORE - BUT LET US PRAY AND THEN PRAY AGAIN.