

Pray for All Men

2 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, ⁷ for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Men and Women in the Church



⁸ I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; ⁹ in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, ¹⁰ but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. ¹¹ Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. ¹² And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. ¹⁵ Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

Let us pray.

Last week the big idea of the day was that our faith can become shipwrecked. Paul was writing Timothy who was a pastor in Ephesus, telling him to stay faithful lest his faith would be shipwrecked like Hymenaeus and Alexander. We talked at length about ways we too can avoid “shipwreck” in our own spiritual lives. I stressed the importance of staying in Bible study and spending time in prayer. I spoke of remaining aware that we are in a spiritual battle whether we know it or not. These were analogies we drew out of the experiences that the captain of a ship. He must stay in constant communication with the lighthouse or even having good radar or he’ll dash the ship on the rocks. That’s the communication part. And staying in the Word we analogized to being thoroughly prepared for spiritual battle in one’s life. Paul now will give Timothy some spiritual truths needed as Timothy leads the Ephesian church.

- 1-4 Paul starts out with the words “first of all”. Paul means above all else, we should be people of prayer. That’s the glue that holds our spiritual ship together. Those prayers include our petitions (specific concerns of our heart), our prayers in general, and our intercessions; that’s prayers we say for others. This week Pastor Darrell spoke on Wednesday night about spiritual warfare, and praying is the cornerstone of spiritual warfare. We’ll get to this again at the end of the chapter, so I’ll reserve my thoughts on that until then.

This kind of a prayer life is good and acceptable to God. Another reason is that we should pray is because God desires “all men to be saved”. That sort of shoots a hole in the side of the idea that God predetermines whether certain people are going to heaven and He determines and destines all others to go to hell. God wants all men to be saved. God is sovereign and He knows who will accept Him, but He doesn’t determine it. And those that will receive Him are what the Bible refers to as the “chosen”.

And Paul reminds Timothy that we are to pray for all of our leaders. I like to divide my prayer time everyday into three parts. I pray for myself, I pray for our church members and others on my mind, and I pray for the government. This includes the president, the cabinet officials, and the whole gang in Washington and Austin. Paul tells us to pray for those that govern so we’ll have some hand in seeing that we’ll lead a quiet and peaceable life. You might say, “Pastor, I just can’t pray for Joe Biden. I hate his guts. Or, I can’t pray for Donald Trump, I hate everything about him.” Paul is saying that we should forget about the personalities involved and JUST PRAY. If Paul and Timothy could pray for a savage animal like Nero, then we can pray for anyone. Remember Nero was the Emperor that lit up his gardens by putting tar on Christians and burning them alive. Let’s pray for our leaders as much as we criticize them.

- 5-6 Paul reminds Timothy that Jesus is the only mediator between God and man. This is a very exclusionary statement. You and I do not need a priest to have a relationship with God. In fact, YOU CAN’T HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD BASED ON YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH A PRIEST. You don’t need a go between. You can go straight to the throne room of God at any moment wherever you might be. Paul says there is “one mediator” and He is Jesus. Jesus said it clearly, *“⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6 NKJV)*
- 7 Paul once again proclaims his credentials. He says I am an apostle, a preacher, and a teacher. The apostle means “one sent forth”. As I said last week, there are

no new apostles. The last one was John and he died on the island of Patmos. So what's the difference between a preacher and a teacher? Sometimes I'm preaching but usually I'm teaching. A preacher is a "herald"; he's an "official messenger bringing news." That's sort of like when Pastor Kevin comes and exhorts us and encourages us and proclaims something special to us. Or it's like when Judge Buddy brings us a specific message on reinvigorating our prayer lives. That's preaching. The preacher is to proclaim, but a teacher is one who instructs. My focus here at the Grove is to break things in scripture down to the point where we can receive instruction and application into our lives. I try to bring an application into everything I teach here at the Grove.

- 8 Paul now shifts to certain behavior and activity that should be welcomed and other behavior that should be avoided in our church services. He is saying that prayer should take place where there is not a lot of drama, doubt, or turmoil going on. We're going before the Lord praying for his mercy and grace to be poured out and we don't need to be looking across the room at others with whom we have a feud or some other kind of discord. Nobody needs that. Scripture tells us that those kinds of issues can hinder our prayer life. You might say, "You mean pastor my prayer life can be affected by the dislike I have for so and so who sits across the room from me?" ABSOLUTELY. We need to be deliberate in prayer. One of the things that hinders our prayer is when there are unresolved issues in the house of the Lord. I mean when you're at odds with someone in here. When you've done something wrong, go and apologize. If someone has wronged you, give it to God. Forgive them and don't carry a grudge. Before we address women in the coming verses, let me say that as men Paul is very specific that our prayers can go unanswered because of conflict with our wives.

Look at what Peter says to husbands concerning mistreatment of their wives.

⁷ Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, **that your prayers may not be hindered.**

You can't be harsh to your wife and expect to have a good prayer life. It is not going to happen. As a husband there should be ample apologies. We men were talking in men's group the other day and in seeing Paul address the men in the church, it is clear that we are to be the providers, protectors, and supportive leaders in the home. If we are not, how can we expect our women to follow us. With some of the stupid things we do, it's a wonder that our wives support us in anything that we do. If you want your wife to respect you and treat you like a man, then be a man. Be a man of God who lifts holy hands in prayer and has a good spiritual head on your shoulder.

9 Paul now turns to women so maybe I should just close this sermon right now. Paul is giving Timothy instructions concerning when the church comes together. I'm talking about a service like Sunday morning. Paul gives Timothy guidelines as to the behavior of women. I'll go through them and then I'll discuss what I think Paul was addressing. When we come together to worship together, women should dress in such a way that their attire is consistent with their profession of godliness. He's just saying that women should dress modestly and appropriately. That's how Jewish women dressed in the synagogue and Paul found the elaborate dressing of the Greek women to be a distraction. He's not saying to be "ugly for Jesus", but let your clothing match your acknowledgment of your faith in Jesus. Much of what we read in the Bible must be read in the historical context of the time. You won't be able to understand these next few verses without understanding a cult that existed in Ephesus at the time.

The Cult of Artemis (Diana to the Romans) was an odd worship practice that arose around the worship of Artemis. It was run by women for women. Part of the cult involved dressing up in costly embellished attire and putting one's hair up in braids to appear like a goddess. The women ran the services in the temple of Artemis and did all of the speaking. The goddess Artemis was a dualistic goddess who could bring blessing to the women but also a great part of belief in her was the curse of death associated with child birth. Some of these women became Christians, but they held on to an idol of Artemis "in the closet".

Paul is not telling women to avoid wearing braids or jewelry. Paul's concern is that these women were bringing vestiges of their paganism into the church. They were "dressing up like a goddess" as a relic of their past. The early church was directly patterned off of the synagogue in which the men said the prayers and held a discussion on the passage from the Torah. The women were behind a veil or in a special gallery, and they did not interrupt the speaker in the service. They didn't interrupt the rabbi with questions or arguments. They sat quietly and addressed their questions to their husbands when they got home. The disruption that these women brought into the church was a real problem.

Paul likewise was saying the way the women wore their hair or the jewelry that they wore sent off the wrong messages. The way some of these women dressed in Ephesus was bringing attention to their outward appearance instead of the condition of their hearts. Jewish women stressed modesty when coming to the synagogue. Peter spoke about inward beauty verses outward apparel in 1 Peter 3:3-5.

³ Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—⁴ rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God (1 Peter 3:3-5 NKJV)

10-14 So in reality, Paul is talking to Timothy about order in the church service. In Paul's letter to the Corinthian church, he talked about how distracting these Gentile women had become.

³³ For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.³⁴ Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. (1Cor14:33-34 NKJV)

In terms of women having authority over men, Paul is appealing to an order of things that God has established. In God's plan, every house should have a head, and by God's design that head is to be a good, godly, gracious, generous man. The church is to follow that pattern. It doesn't mean that a woman is inferior, but it means that a woman in the church should not be the spiritual leader as it would put the woman in command. This is contrary to the way God things made things. God gives an order in the marriage and that is reflected in the church.

²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, (Ephesians 5:23-25 NKJV)

God has given the husband a position of headship in the marriage, and likewise in spiritual matters in the church. Sometimes this leads to disaster because some men are weak and they are not good leaders either at home or in the church. They don't do what they're supposed to be doing. The woman willingly subordinates herself to her husband. She is not inferior. God just knows that there needs to be a head in the home. Jesus subordinated Himself to the Father and yet the Bible tells us that He was equal to the Father.

Paul is just addressing spiritual matters and authoritative teaching in the church. At the Grove we have capable godly women that are the head of all administrative matters. They do a great job and they are more than qualified by their abilities and by scripture. But the final spiritual decisions are made by those who are called by the congregation as pastors of the church.

- 15 This last verse is one of the most cryptic passages in the Bible if you don't understand what it was all about. The women who came out of the cult of Artemis believed that worship of Artemis would keep them from dying in child birth. Death by child birth was a real thing in the mind of every women in the ancient world. Some scholars have said that these new Christian women would hold back an idol of Artemis in their possession just to "cover their bases". They "kept a little idol of Artemis" in the closet so to speak. Paul is essentially saying, "don't worry women, it is your faith in God and your holiness that will preserve you in child birth. You don't need to rely on Artemis anymore!"

In summary, this caused me to think this week about whether or not I too keep "an idol in the closet" just in case God isn't enough. Wow! That's a sobering convicting thought, and it should be. Ask God this morning to reveal to you whether you've held on to something as a back up to your faith in Christ. Are you trusting in that "thing" or in the God who is sovereign in your life. I decided not to list the types of idols I'm talking about because it might distract each of us from what we ourselves need to deal with this morning. Paul is telling Timothy to preach trust in Jesus and in Him alone. And that too is what I preach. It's time to lay those "idols" aside.

Let us pray.

The link below is a wonderful little article that explains the Cult of Artemis in detail. It can provide more reading to those interested.

<https://katarmas.com/blog/2018/8/2/1-timothy-2-why-does-paul-tell-women-to-shut-it>