

1 Timothy 2:1-8 Sermon — Pray for All, Trust the One Mediator

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TEXT

1 Timothy 2:1-8 “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; **2** For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. **3** For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; **4** Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto 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** Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. **8** I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”

INTRODUCTION

This passage starts with prayer, moves into salvation, tells us who the mediator is, tells us what Christ did, tells us why the truth has to be preached, and then comes right back to prayer. Paul is following one connected thought.

Who should we pray for? All men. Who does God want saved? All men. Who did Christ give Himself a ransom for? All. And how many mediators are there between God and men? One: the man Christ Jesus.

So the burden of this passage is broad. Our prayers should be broad. Our concern for the lost should be broad. Our preaching should be broad. But salvation itself comes through one mediator.

I. PRAY FOR ALL MEN — VERSES 1-3

1 Timothy 2:1-3 “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; **2** For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. **3** For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;”

Paul says first of all. He is giving prayer a place of priority. Then he gives us several parts of prayer: supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks. Supplication is asking God for something that is needed. Intercession is praying for somebody else. Thanksgiving belongs in our prayers too.

Then look at the reach of the command: for all men.

Some people say all men here means all kinds or classes of men. Verse 2 certainly includes every class because Paul specifically names kings and people in authority. But kings are part of all men; they do not replace all men. The verse says to pray for all men, and then Paul makes sure we understand that rulers are included.

That matters because rulers may be people you do not like. They may make wicked decisions. They may oppose things you believe. Paul still says to pray for them.

Look at the same principle in Jeremiah 29:7. God's people had been carried into Babylon, yet God instructed them to seek the peace of the city where they lived and to pray concerning it. They did not have to approve of Babylon in order to pray for peace under Babylon.

Now look again at why Paul says to pray for those in authority.

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We want to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. We ought to want the freedom to live right, raise our families, serve God, preach the gospel, and do the work God has given us.

A quiet and peaceable life does not mean a silent Christian life. Paul himself says in verse 7 that he was a preacher. You can want peace and still preach boldly.

Then verse 3 calls this good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. Paul has been talking about prayer, but now he moves directly into why God cares about all these people in the first place.

II. GOD WANTS MEN SAVED THROUGH THE ONE MEDIATOR — VERSES 4-7

1 Timothy 2:4-7 “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto 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** Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.”

Verse 4 says God will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Now we run into the same question again. What does all men mean? The passage has already said pray for all men. Now God will have all men to be saved. Then verse 6 says Christ gave Himself a ransom for all.

The Bible certainly includes every class and every nation. Verse 7 even points us toward the Gentiles. But there is no reason in this passage to turn all men into only certain kinds of men.

Does that mean everybody eventually gets saved? No. John 3 gives us the distinction.

John 3:15-18 “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. **16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. **17** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. **18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

God loved the world. He gave His Son. The world through Him might be saved. Then verse 18 makes the division clear: he that believeth is not condemned, and he that believeth not is condemned already.

So we can believe exactly what 1 Timothy 2:4 says without becoming universalists. God will have all men to be saved, but Scripture still distinguishes the believer from the unbeliever.

Go back to our passage.

1 Timothy 2:4-7 “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto 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** Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.”

Verse 5 says there is one God and one mediator between God and men.

A mediator stands between two parties. Paul tells us exactly who that mediator is: the man Christ Jesus.

Christians can pray for one another. Verse 1 commanded intercessions. But praying for somebody and being the mediator between God and men are two different things. Christ alone holds that position.

Paul calls Him the man Christ Jesus. Jesus truly became man, and He is still God.

John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** The same was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

John 1:14 “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

The Word was God, and the Word was made flesh. Jesus Christ is God, and He truly became man.

Then verse 6 tells us what He did.

1 Timothy 2:4-7 “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto 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** Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.”

Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. A ransom is a price paid to deliver, and Jesus gave Himself.

Matthew 20:28 “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

The Bible says Christ gave His life for the sheep. The Bible says He gave Himself for the church. Believe those passages too. But none of them erase the words sitting right here: He gave Himself a ransom for all.

And why does Paul immediately talk about being a preacher and a teacher of the Gentiles? Because men need to hear the truth.

Romans 10:12-15 “For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. **13** For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. **14** How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? **15** And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

Jew and Greek. One Lord over all. Men hear. Men believe. Preachers carry the message.

So quit deciding ahead of time who is worth preaching to. Do not look at somebody's nationality, neighborhood, money, education, politics, reputation, or past and decide the gospel probably is not for them.

God will have all men to be saved. Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. Preach the truth to all.

III. MEN MUST PRAY WITH HOLY HANDS — VERSE 8

1 Timothy 2:8 "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

Paul says men pray every where. Then verse 9 turns specifically to women, so men here most naturally refers to males. Paul is giving the men an instruction about prayer.

Then he says lifting up holy hands. Raising hands in prayer is biblical. He is talking about actually lifting the hands.

But Scripture also gives us other prayer postures.

Daniel 6:10 "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

Acts 20:36 "And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all."

Daniel knelt. Paul knelt. Raised hands are biblical, and kneeling is biblical. The Bible does not show us that every prayer has to be made with raised hands.

But Paul does give us one word we cannot miss: holy.

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God cares about the man praying, not only the position of his hands. Isaiah 1:15 gives the negative example: people could spread forth their hands while living wickedly, and God rejected the outward religious act.

Then Paul says without wrath. Do not come before God while feeding personal hatred toward somebody else. Acts 7:60 gives us Stephen praying concerning the men who were killing him. Matthew 5:44 commands prayer for enemies.

Your enemy can be in your prayers instead of living only in your anger.

Then Paul says without doubting. James 1:5-8 connects prayer with asking in faith instead of wavering. Believing prayer means you trust God. It does not mean you control God.

First John 5:14-15 connects confidence in prayer with the will of God. You can pray with complete confidence in God while still leaving the answer in His hands.

Men, pray. Pray everywhere. Keep your life clean before God. Deal with wrath. Believe God when you pray.

CONCLUSION

The passage begins with all men and keeps that broad concern in front of us. Pray for all men. Pray for kings and people in authority. God will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Then Paul brings us to Christ. There is one God. There is one mediator between God and men. Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. That truth has to be preached.

So who have you stopped praying for? Who have you already decided probably will never get saved? Who have you written off because of politics, background, nationality, reputation, neighborhood, or the way they treated you?

Pray for them. Give them the truth. Point them to the one mediator, the man Christ Jesus.

And men, when you pray, come before God with holy hands, without wrath and without doubting.

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