

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-7

INTRODUCTION

Last week: 1 Tim 1:18-20 - Paul's charge to Timothy.

This week: 1 Tim 2:1-7 - **A call to prayer & concern for a lost world** - wants them to be outward looking - got to be a priority: "First of all..." (2:1). This exhortation not unrelated to problems within church - they were becoming obsessed with own little world through distracting false teaching (1:3-4), so Paul wants to renew their focus back onto needs of wider world, to break this inward looking ethos of their minds. How does he do it? Gets them praying about world around them and he links this to God's own desires & concerns for world. Key word: "all" - appears in v1,2,4,6. Must be clear what it means.

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| i) What does 'all people' mean? | ii) What should we pray for? |
| iii) What does God desire? | iv) On what basis do we go to outsiders? |

1. WHAT DOES "ALL PEOPLE" MEAN?

Means same thing throughout passage, but we tend to think final 'all' is less than first 'all'! v1 tells us to pray for **all people**. v4 tells us God desires **all people** to be saved. v5 tells us Jesus died as a ransom for **all**. Are these statements true for 'all people'? It seems to contradict other truths we believe:

- i) Bible teaches God has an elect he has chosen (Rom 9:6-23, Eph 1:5-6,11) does he desire those he has not chosen to be saved? In light of election does God desire 'all people' to be saved?
- ii) Bible teaches Jesus died for the elect, his church as an effective sacrifice (John 10:11,18; Eph 5:25), how can it also be a ransom for all? Does v6 contradict doctrine of limited atonement?

Possible solution: make 'all' = **all sorts / types of people**. i.e. not just Jews or ourselves but others as well. Attractive idea, seems to be consistent with theology but takes punch out of this passage, as it means we are never fully persuaded that we can really pray for salvation of someone individually.

Better solution: remember his purpose in writing - don't try and answer questions Paul is not dealing with here! He is emphasising that God has provided a way of salvation that can be offered to all mankind - to every single person in world, on basis of that there is a saviour who has paid a ransom.

Summary: 'All people' does mean **all people**, but don't draw conclusions the passage does not.

2. WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?

Q1. What should our priorities in prayer be according to v1-3? We should have a missionary concern in our prayer life as a church - not just be concerned with us in here - but should be praying for out there too! 3 aspects to it: i) 'all people' ii) 'kings and those in authority' iii) 'peaceful & quiet life...' - all related. Great desire should be to see kingdom of God extended - need to be praying for others.

Specifically we need to be praying for kings & influential - because their actions have a big impact on world - its peace & stability. Why? Make it easier for us to be godly & fulfil our responsibilities - v2

Apply: We must take this more seriously than we do. When did you last pray for Bush & Blair?

Last Friday (7 Feb) President Bush specifically asked people to pray for him - we of all people should. Notice different words he uses for prayer: v1 - all closely related, showing different sides of same thing: prayer - making requests, bring them before God, doing it boldly - always with thanksgiving. God wants us to pray in this way: v3 - pleases him, fits in with desires & purposes for world:

3. WHAT DOES GOD DESIRE?

Q2. What is God's attitude towards outsiders according to v4-6? God desires people to be saved.

That is why God wants us to pray in way outlined in v1-3 - God is concerned for and loves lost. Yes - he is 'God **our** Saviour' - but we must not attempt to monopolise him - he wants others too. Objection: "Surely God is only concerned about elect, and he hates everybody else?" Answer: God has two ways of willing. There is secret, sovereign will of what happens and also a teaching and desiring that a different state of affairs come to pass. Difference between God's secret will & his revealed will. Greatest example: cross - God planned something to come to pass, which involved great sin, while at same time that sin is totally disapproved of by God. Mystery but true - Acts 2:23. We must distinguish between what God would like to see happen and what he actually wills to happen. Let Bible speak. In terms of the lost: God would like to see them all saved - he wants us to pray to that end - that is what this passage is teaching. Other passages tell us he doesn't actually will all to be saved - but that is not what should be in our mind when we are praying, or evangelising or we will become small minded This passage actually raises more questions than answers, but it gives **powerful reasons to pray!**

4. ON WHAT BASIS DO WE GO TO OUTSIDERS?

v5-6 - fact there is one God of whole earth and God's provision of one mediator between God & man. God is not just 'our God' - he is, but he is the only God. No-one has an right to worship any other God - we must not be guilty of having a view of God that is too small - a selfish view of God. All will stand before God, all can come through one mediator. Christ and gospel are not restricted - neither are we to restrict the gospel's appeal or application in our thinking, praying or preaching. There is only **one** way of salvation, but there is **one** - there is a mediator to bring sinners to God - Jesus Christ. He is an effective mediator because he gave himself - he paid ransom price for sin - to open the life gate. It is on basis of the gospel of Jesus Christ we go to outsiders. Gospel itself includes a mandate to 'go'. Q3. What was Paul's attitude towards outsiders according to v7? The universal appeal of the gospel underlines Paul's appointment to go to 'outsiders' - to Gentiles, to unreached. Apply: We about us? **CONCLUSION:** Does our prayer, concern for lost, evangelism & missionary interest match what is expected of us by these verses? Are we still focused upon being a life saving station?

Questions for 1 Timothy 2:8-15

Wednesday 26 February 03

1. Who should be taking the lead when a church gathers for prayer?
2. How prominent is it appropriate for women to be in the life of the church?
3. What are the reasons that Paul gives as to why women should not be exercising authority in church?