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1 TIMOTHY 2:16-3:16

Today we're going to pick up where we left off last Sunday. And we're going to see Paul cover several topics...but they all have a common denominator...and that is this: **How does a church conduct itself in order to be pleasing to the Lord?**

Apparently the church in Ephesus had gotten confused as to the proper form of **worship** and the proper form of **teaching** and the proper form of **leadership**.

We saw last week how false teachers had crept into the church at Ephesus, and apparently they had also brought with them confusion.

We need to remember that God is never the author of confusion. If confusion exists in the body of Christ, we can rest assured that it didn't come from God...it came from man.

So, let's get right into **1 Timothy 2...**

1 Timothy 2:1-7...

The first thing we see Paul address here is prayer. As a matter of fact, he addresses four kinds of prayer...**requests, prayers, petitions and thanksgivings.**

Remember Paul has already told us about Hymenaeus and Alexander and others who had become blasphemous. And it may be that Paul was saying, "Listen, folks, if you had done more praying, maybe Hymenaeus and Alexander wouldn't have blasphemed. And if you had done more praying, if they **had** blasphemed, maybe they wouldn't have been able to influence others to do the same."

I think many times folks get saved and no one comes alongside them to pray for them and disciple them and then they fall away and we say, "Well, they just weren't sincere." They may have been sincere, but they needed someone to take the time to share with them and to pray for them.

Let's look at what Paul says about prayer in **chapter 2.**

The Priority of Prayer

First of all...this doesn't mean **first of all** on the order of service in the church. This means **first of all** in our lives...

How many of us pray **first of all**? How many of us complain and whine and call our friends **first of all**? Prayer should be the **first** thing we do! **First of all!**

The Variety of Prayer

Requests (supplications) – offering a request for a heartfelt need...

Prayers – acts of praise and worship...

Petitions (intercessions) – used most commonly as we pray for others...

Thanksgiving – never underestimate the importance of gratitude and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father.

Praise is acknowledging who God is! Thanksgiving is acknowledging what God has done!

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The Objects of Prayer

“all men” – no person is outside the influence of our prayers...

We're to pray for those who are saved and those who are lost.
We're to pray for those who are near us and for those who are far away.
We're to pray for our enemies as well as our friends.

And Paul names specifically **those who are in authority over us**.

If we prayed as much for our political leaders as we criticize them, don't you think it would make a difference? I mean, it's really easy to pray for those we like...those who agree with us...those who have the same views we have...but we're also to pray for those whom we don't like and those who don't agree with us and those with whom we are diametrically opposed.

At the time Paul wrote this letter, Nero was on the throne – a godless, evil, perverted, sadistic man who delighted in burning Christians alive! (This sort of makes our complaints pale in comparison, doesn't it?) So, what was Paul telling these Christians to do? **PRAY FOR NERO!!!**

The Reasons for Prayer

Why should we pray for those in authority? Well, how best to stop Nero's persecution of Christians? For Nero to be saved! How best to stop the political deterioration of our country? Salvation for our leaders!

Remember the purpose of prayer is not to get **man's** will done in heaven, the purpose of prayer is to get **God's** will done on earth!

What is God's will?

Verse 4 tells us it's the salvation of all men!

We can pray for all men, **because we know that God is not willing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance**.

We can pray for all men, **because God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life**.

We can pray for all men, **because whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved**.

We can pray for all men, **because Jesus said, “If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me.”**

We know that it is the will of God for all men to come to salvation...but we also know that man has a will, too. So, we're to pray for that will to come in line with God's will.

So, this doesn't mean that all men without **exception** will be saved, but it does mean that all men without **distinction** can be saved! Jews, Gentiles, blacks, whites, rich, poor...the precious blood of Jesus makes it possible for all men to be saved!

The Basis of Prayer

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The only way we can have access to God is through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ! His blood opens the door. His blood paves the way. His blood washes us clean so that we can come to the Father without spot or blemish.

Well, if Jesus died for “all men,” and God is willing for “all men” to be saved, how does this Good News get out to a lost and dying world?

God calls and ordains messengers who take the Gospel to lost sinners. **Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.**

And Paul says, “I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher.” Paul wrote in the book of **Romans**,

*“How can they call upon Him in whom they have not believed?
And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall
they preach unless they are sent?”*

As we said last week, I don’t believe Paul ever got over the fact that God not only **saved** him, but also **appointed** him to be a **preacher and an apostle and a teacher!**

One more thing about prayer and we’ll move on...

The Attitude in Prayer

There are many “prayer postures” found in the Bible...

Standing with outstretched hands, kneeling, sitting, bowing, lifting the eyes, falling prostrate on the ground...but, the important thing is not so much the posture of the body as the posture of the heart!

Have you ever been so burdened about something that you simply held your hands out before God... and said something like

*“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling.”*

Have you ever, in your mind, simply lifted a person for whom you’ve been praying and just placed him or her at the foot of the Cross?

Verse 8...

Here, we see that Paul said he wanted the men in every place to pray lifting hands.

1) **holy hands**... separated, set apart...

I believe this means, if we have sin in our lives, we cannot pray effectively. David said, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me.”

2) **without wrath**...without anger...

Have you ever tried to pray when you were angry with someone? The Lord has a way of bringing that person’s face before you, doesn’t He? Have you ever had to get up off your knees and go to that person and confess your anger and ask forgiveness? (Me, too!)

3) **without dissension**...

Without wrath is internal...without dissension is external! It’s when we act out our anger.

God wants His children to pray. I believe God gives us no **higher calling** and no **higher privilege** than to intercede for others.

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It's a huge responsibility to lift up our brothers and sisters in prayer and to lift up the lost in prayer and to ask God to bring them to a point in their lives where they know they need a Savior. And, just think of the joy we'll have when we get to heaven and see folks for whom we're prayed!

We don't understand all there is about prayer, do we? We don't know why God has chosen to work through the prayers of His children. God doesn't call us to understand...He simply calls us to pray!

Verses 9-10...

Paul covers just about everything...and we mustn't forget...Paul's writings are divinely inspired, so that these aren't just Paul's words and thoughts...but they are God's Words to us!

I don't believe that **verse 9** tells that women are to dress unattractively. I believe it teaches us that we are to dress modestly and not be absorbed in what we have on.

Paul says our adornment should be our good works...in other words...the emphasis should be on who we are in Jesus Christ – what we do in His name – **not on how we look!**

Verses 11-12...

Does this mean a woman is not to teach? No, it doesn't even really mean that a woman is never to teach a man.

Let's think of some examples in Scripture...

- 1) Paul tells us in Titus that older women should teach younger women.
- 2) Paul also commends the mother and grandmother of Timothy for teaching him so well.
- 3) The book of **Acts** tells us of Priscilla and Aquila – a husband and wife who taught Apollos when they saw that his teaching wasn't quite right.

But I do believe Scripture teaches us that a woman is not to have authority over a man. A woman is not to fill the role of a pastor. God has set down His divine order...

The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the Church, and we're about to see in a few minutes the requirements for men who are in leadership positions in the church...and we'll see that these requirements are for **men**, not for **women!**

It's when we go **against** this order that trouble comes...

Many of the movements in churches today are based on **emotionalism**, and they are aimed at women. Women get caught up in this type thing and it takes their eyes off Jesus, and if her husband is weak in the faith, she leads him astray, as well. EX: women being sent to Pensacola...

The sad thing is that many men today have abdicated their position as spiritual leaders, even in some of our churches.

Women need to know their position in the church and **stay** there!
Men need to know their position in the church and **get** there!

Verses 13-14...

Paul gives two reasons why his instructions should be accepted...

- 1) The order of creation...the church should mirror God's design for men and women as exhibited in His creation.
- 2) The fall of man...Adam should have been leading his family to be obedient to God, but he didn't.

When God's order is side-stepped, there is always trouble!

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Verse 15...

There are several interpretations of this verse...

- 1) that this “preserved” or “saved” means literal salvation.
But, this is certainly not backed up in Scripture. We are saved by the blood of our Lord Jesus, not by childbirth nor by rearing our children in faith and love.
- 2) that women would be saved through the most significant birth of all, the incarnation of Christ
- 3) that the godly woman will find fulfillment in her role as wife and mother in the home.
- 4) that women are kept physically safe in childbirth.
- 5) that this word “saved” is not used evangelistically, not as salvation for the soul, but means to be preserved or saved from spiritual uselessness..

For instance, **verses 11-14** seem to limit a woman’s usefulness in the church, but God has given the Christian woman an area of ministry and no one can take her place in that ministry.

What exactly does this verse mean? I really don’t know. We’ll just have to ask when we get to heaven!

But, let me say this to those of us who have no children. As far as we know, Paul didn’t either. But, Paul made it a practice to have “spiritual children” and you can, too. There are many young (and not so young) women who need a “spiritual mother” to come along side and encourage and exhort and teach and just listen! That’s why our mentoring program is so needed!

Well, in the time we have left let’s see how far we can get into **chapter 3...**

Verses 1-7...

These verses give us the qualifications for a **pastor**. Your version may read *elder*, *overseer* or *bishop*. These words are all used interchangeably. **Let’s use pastor since this is what we call our leader.**

And I believe Paul is saying that the position of pastor is not to be taken lightly. The pastor is to be

- above reproach (blameless) – not guilty of that which he may be accused.
- temperate – vigilant, clear headed
- prudent – well-disciplined
- hospitable – willing to open their homes to others
- able to teach – How I praise God for a pastor who teaches!

...and so on...**all wrapped up in one man!**

When we look at this list we will be made aware why we need to pray for our pastor and for the others on our staff.

Wouldn’t Satan just love to trip them up in one or more of these areas? Hasn’t Satan succeeded in doing just that in many pastors and staff members?

I want to encourage you to be faithful in lifting our leaders up in prayer. Pray for the lives they lead and the examples they set!

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John MacArthur said: **“Teaching sets the nails into the mind, but example is the hammer that drives them in deep.”**

Pray for the integrity of our leaders. Integrity is living what you preach, living what you teach, whether people see you or not.

Pray for their character. Reputation is what folks think about you and character is what God knows about you.

Pray for them to walk uprightly before God...a pure and holy walk!

Notice these qualifications were not based on leadership skills, but on spiritual maturity and moral purity.

Pray against **discouragement**.

Pray against **indifference**.

Pray against **complacency**.

Pray against **compromise**.

And pray that **God will keep their feet from stumbling**.

And pray that always **they will exalt the Lord Jesus Christ in all that they say and do and think and are**.

There shouldn't ever be one day that goes by that we don't pray for our pastor and our staff.

Well, let's see what Paul has to say about deacons.

Verses 8-13...

I believe in these verses we see that deacons are to be just as spiritually mature and morally pure as pastors.

Deacons were the **servants** of the early church. They weren't chosen because of their **influence** or their **success** or their **money** or their **popularity**.

They were chosen because of their commitment to the Lord and His church, and they were to know the Word...they were to be tested...they were to be beyond reproach!

I believe we need to pray for our deacons...that God will keep them true to the qualifications of their office.

Verses 14-15...

Verse 15 is really the key verse of **1 Timothy**.

Paul is saying,

“Timothy, this letter is for the purpose of instructing you how church conduct should be carried out.”

And Paul goes on to say that this household of faith, this church of the living God is the pillar and support of the truth. The modern day church tends to get bogged down in the superficial.

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Our calling is much higher than soft ball teams, bowling, basketball teams, ceramics, aerobics...even though there is nothing wrong with these things...**but our calling is to be a pillar and support of the Truth.**

Pilate said, "*What is Truth?*" Jesus answered and said, "*I am the Truth.*" The psalmist said, "*Thy Word is Truth.*"

What does a pillar do? It holds something up, right? The church is to uphold and exalt and lift high the Lord Jesus Christ and His precious Word!

The church mustn't get sidetracked in other endeavors...no matter how noble they may be!

Paul ends this chapter with a **doxology**...*a confession of faith and a hymn of praise!*

Jesus Christ became flesh. He came down from heaven and dwelled among men.

Jesus Christ was vindicated or declared righteous or justified. Though Jesus lived for a time in a body of flesh, He did something no other man had ever done...He lived a sinless life!

Jesus Christ was beheld by angels. In fact, He was attended and ministered to by angels.

Jesus Himself gave the command to go and preach to all nations the message of salvation.

Jesus Christ is believed on by many, many people all over the world.

Jesus Christ ascended to His Father and He is preparing a place for us to come join Him and one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father!

In these six short stanzas of Paul's doxology, he summarizes the Gospel, the mystery of godliness and this is what our church is to uphold!

I know we've flown over these two chapters. We certainly haven't done them justice...but

I want to close with a story I read this past week in John MacArthur's commentary on **1 Timothy**:

There once was an old church in England. A sign on the front of the building read "**We preach Christ crucified.**"

After a time, ivy grew up and obscured the last word. The motto then read, "**We preach Christ**"

The ivy grew some more, and the motto read, "**We preach**"

Finally, ivy covered the entire sign and the church died.

This church and all true churches should preach Christ not only crucified, but Christ buried and raised and coming again.

(And they should keep the ivy away from their signs!)

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This book is full of very practical lessons and applications to our church today. Please study. Next week, we're going to see as Paul addresses those who have fallen away from the faith. What does this mean? Let's really dig this week and see if we can find out!