

**Series: Body Essentials: Imperatives for Church and Leaders****Today's Message: Praying for the Lost; 1 Timothy 2:1-8**

Paul provides imperatives for Timothy to get the church in Ephesus in order. Chapter 2 begins to outline specific duties Timothy must fulfill. He begins by **urging** Timothy to **first of all** pray for the lost. Why? You must remember that the false teachers among them were spreading at least three bad ideas. First, that salvation was only for law keeping Jews and Gentiles. Second, that salvation was only for the intellectual elites. In summary, these false teachers denied the universal reach of the gospel. They had put staggering limits on the reach of the gospel. So, Paul urges Timothy to deal with the anti-evangelistic cloud that was smothering the primary work of the Church in Ephesus.

It is interesting to note that Paul begins with “evangelistic praying” as the first priority of the Church. He didn’t stress fellowship, or Bible studies, or even holiness, but rather praying for the lost. Timothy has to reestablish the priority of the gospel to the world. And as we will see, it begins with prayer! And so it does with us today!

**I) (2:1-2) The *How*, *Who*, and *What* of praying for the lost.****A) How are we to pray for the lost?**

- 1) Requests: To entreat God, acknowledging our lack of will, power, love, and energy for the task.
  - (a) Richard Baxter wrote concerning our necessity to *entreat* God for help to evangelize our neighbors: “If you have the hearts of Christians, let them yearn towards your poor ignorant, ungodly neighbor. [Or] have you hearts of rock that cannot pity men in [their lost, unregenerate state]? If their houses were on fire, you would run to help them; and wilt thou not help them when their souls are almost at the fire of hell?”
  - (i) We lack heart. We must entreat God to help and equip us to have the heart to go!
- 2) Prayer: Godward focus. Prayer for the lost has as its end the glory of God. (**See 2 Cor. 4:15**)
- 3) Intercession: Advocating for the lost; empathy, compassion for the lost. The idea is similar to a public defender assigned to represent a defendant. It is also the idea of getting in the trenches.
  - (a) Also: Romans 8:26: The Spirit intercedes; Hebrews 7:25: Our Great High Priest intercedes.
- 4) Thanksgiving: Giving thanks for the saving message of Jesus Christ and God’s grace and kindness.

**B) Who are we to pray for?**

- 1) Everyone. There is no exclusions. Timothy was reminded that the Gospel call knows no distinction between Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, nor ethnicity. Etc. (See Gal. 3:28)
- 2) Kings and all people in authority (whether we like their politics or not!)
  - (a) “The key to changing a nation is the salvation of sinners.” (MacArthur)

**C) What is the hopeful outcome of praying for the lost?**

- 1) Not only for their salvation, but as people are saved it is for the benefit of the church and humanity.

**II) (2:3-7) The reasons for praying for the lost. (Why pray for the lost?)**

- A) Six reasons given: 1) it is the right thing to do. God approves. B/C we know the agony and misery of sin and the eternal hell to follow this life, gives us the most excellent of reasons to pray for their salvation! 2) Praying for the lost is consistent with God’s desire, who “desires all men to be saved...” God knows who His elect are, but it is good that we pray “on behalf of all men.” (Ps. 145:8-9; Is.45:22; Is. 55:1; Eze. 18:23, 32) 3) praying for the lost is consistent with God, the saving God. 4) It is consistent with Person and work of Jesus Christ. He, the perfect God-man, brings God and man together! 5) Praying for the lost greatly magnifies the fullness of Christ’s atonement sacrifice: He “gave Himself as a ransom for all men.” (Mark. 10:45; John 10:17-18). He became the victim for all. That is, His sacrifice was sufficient for all, but efficacious for all who believe. 6) Praying for lost sinners is in accord with Paul’s calling to preach Christ to sinners, as well as that of all the apostles (Matt.28:18ff).

**III) (2:8) The attitude when praying for the lost.**

- A) Those who pray for the lost must pray from a pure heart. Not full of wrath or anger.

## **Notes for 1 Timothy 2:1-8.**

### **SECTION 1: (2:1-2) The *How*, *Who*, and *What* of praying for the lost.**

- Paul lists four kinds of prayer to be considered when we pray for the lost. Requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving. This should be considered a pattern to be applied when we are praying for the lost sinner. Why?
  - The NIV uses the word “requests,” which is translated elsewhere as “entreat.” As indicated above, it is a prayer acknowledging our personal lack of heart, love, will, power, etc. But it should be noted that it is also a prayer of dependence upon God to act in us. Isn’t interesting that it is as impossible for a sinner to conjure up faith as it is for a believer to work up divine empathy for lost sinners. We therefore must *entreat* God to act upon both us and the lost!
  - Prayers: to add to what is listed above, prayers as they relate to lost is an appeal to God as the Saving God who is glorified when a sinner comes to faith in Jesus Christ! Even though we know that God is glorified in the judgment of an unrepentant sinner, the Christian attitude must be *for* God’s glory in the saving of a sinner. We leave judgment up to God. Our task is to go into the world proclaim the Gospel of God’s salvation in Christ!
  - Intercession or petition: The comments in the outline are good. But I will underscore this: intercession is very personal. Intercession is to born out of a heart full of empathy, compassion and personal involvement with the lost. Can you image the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26) or the Lord Jesus, our Great High Priest (Heb. 7:25) interceding with anything other than heartfelt compassion, love, and empathy for us when He intercedes for us on our behalf? Just as He understands our suffering, we must empathize with lost sinners, understanding the depth of their misery and pain and hopelessness!
  - Thanksgiving: Don’t neglect thanking God for His Gospel and for the privilege we have as His redeemed to proclaim His message to an impossibly lost generation!

### **SECTION 2: (2:3-7) The Reasons for praying for the lost. (Why pray for the lost?)**

- Paul leads off his teaching of the essentials of the Church and leaders beginning in chapter 2. And when we read these verses, it should become apparent that Paul’s primary reason for prioritizing the church’s active role in praying for the lost is the glory of God. Everything he lists has its focal point on God and His character and nature. From reflecting God’s moral goodness toward humanity (v3), to revealing His joy in our sharing in that which pleases Him (praying for lost sinners out of deep concern) (vv3b-4). From fixing our faith firmly on the uniqueness of God (v5a) and Jesus Christ our Mediator (v5) and only Savior of the world (Acts 4:12) to the perfect atoning sacrifice for sinners (v6). From His timely testimony of salvation (v6b) to Paul’s joy and purpose as an apostle (v7), which was to testify to the glory of God revealed in Christ Jesus!
- The Church of course is for the building up of the Body of Christ in many ways. Believers find safety and some earthly retreat in the church. But the function of the church in the world is to be a beacon of hope in a lost world, proclaiming and modeling the ministry of Jesus Christ, who, indeed, came full of the Spirit, “to preach good news to the poor; to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” (Luke 4:18-19)
  - Our Church Confession of faith says concerning Evangelism: “We believe that it is the duty of the saved to witness by life and by word to the truths of the Bible; to assist in giving the gospel of Christ to all the world by praying, giving, and going in obedience to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20)

### **SECTION 3: (2:8) The attitude when praying for the lost. Full of faith with a heart of love.**