

# 1 Timothy – The Household of God

*This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare (1 Timothy 1:18 ESV)*

*I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, <sup>15</sup> if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:14-15 ESV)*

## **The Gospel is for All People**

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**1 Timothy 2:1-7**

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### **Introduction:**

Good morning! Please open up your Bibles to 1 Timothy 2:1 as we continue our series in 1 Timothy.

When I was younger, from about age 9-15 I played ice hockey. And I remember vividly in my last few years, playing on a team that had an ‘in’ crowd. A bunch of the team went to the same school. They had the same classes, teachers, and they went to the same parties. So if you weren’t in that group, it was really hard to feel like you were part of the team.

But the point is that there was a distinct group who ruled the team. And it was very easy to feel left out no matter how much you contributed on the ice. Did they do it on purpose? Who knows. But it had an effect. That’s what happens when those who are on the inside become so insular that they lose sight of those on the outside. And then they begin to *restrict* the good things they have to only those on the inside.

That’s what was happening in Ephesus on a far more *significant* scale. It wasn’t about some people feeling left out from the cool kids. No, these opponents had begun to *restrict* the Gospel to only a select group. There was certain criteria that had to be met in order for you to qualify for the good news of Jesus Christ. This was a HORRIFIC belief that had to be stopped dead in its

tracks. Earlier in this letter Paul had given us some of the sweetest words we could ever hear. He said:

<sup>15</sup> Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**—of whom I am the worst. (1 Timothy 1:15 ESV)

Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And there's no distinction. There's no race, culture, ethnicity or nationality that could stand in the way of the free and saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

That is the truth which transforms lives, families, cities and entire nations. The apostle Paul believed that. He believed that if the Church was functioning as it was made to, proclaiming the good news to everyone, it could *transform* the city of Ephesus. From a city that loved its idols to a city that worshipped the living God. Jew or gentile, king or peasant, slave or free, man or woman, God desires all people to hear and believe the Gospel. That is what Paul believed. This is what Timothy believed. And this is what you and I must believe.

With these things in mind, hear now from the holy, inspired, inerrant, living and all active word to us today. 1 Timothy 2:1-7:

<sup>1</sup> First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. <sup>7</sup> For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. (2 Timothy 2:1-7 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Now some of you right off the top saw that important word 'then.' Whenever you see the word, therefore, or then, you know you have to look back to see what came before.

In this case, Paul is continuing his charge to Timothy to set things right in Ephesus he gave him back in 1 Timothy 1:18:

<sup>18</sup> This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, <sup>19</sup> holding faith and a good conscience. (1 Timothy 1:18-19 ESV)

Timothy's charge was to preach to the Church the awesome scope of God's grace. The truth that God desires all people to hear the Gospel and believe! The Gospel, the *good news* is for all people. For all groups of people. No matter their status in their community. Jews, gentiles, rich, poor, kings or beggars, drug dealers, and law-abiding citizens. That was the message.

### Expanding our View of Grace

So in order to help these Ephesians again see the awesome scope of God's grace, to see how it extends to ALL PEOPLE, Paul charges Timothy to have the Church do four things. And hear me now, these are JUST as important for Redeemer City Church today.

The first way we expand our view of Grace is to:

#### 1. Widen the scope of our prayers

Paul says to Timothy:

<sup>1</sup> First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings **be made for all people**, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in high positions (1 Timothy 2:1-2a ESV)

Paul begins this new section in his letter by emphasizing the need for the Church to be in prayer for all people. And notice the beginning of the sentence:

<sup>1</sup> **First of all** (1 Timothy 2:1 ESV)

First off, before we move on, Paul says we have to get this right. The Gospel is for ALL PEOPLE so we have to PRAY FOR ALL PEOPLE. Not just our loved ones, not just for the local and global church, but for ALL PEOPLE. Those inside and those *outside* the Church. Evidently, the church in Ephesus needed to be reminded of this. William Mounce comments on these verses:

The Ephesian church's habit of not praying for all people was symptomatic of the more significant issue of the leader's selective theology.<sup>1</sup>

The false teachers in Ephesus had abandoned the message of the FREE Gospel OFFERED TO ALL. Instead their prayers were only being offered for a select group of people. That wasn't right back in Paul's day, and we know it's not right in ours.

In our Sunday gatherings, small groups, and in our individual prayer lives we have to be a people who pray not only for our families, neighbours, co-workers, but for the poor beggar that we drive by every morning.

And then Paul adds that we should be praying:

**for kings and all who are in high positions** (1 Timothy 2:2 ESV)

It's one thing to pray for our neighbours or coworkers, for some that is a hard task in itself, but Paul goes further and challenges the Church to be a people who pray for their *rulers*. In line with this prayer, Paul also reminded the Church in Rome:

<sup>1</sup> Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. (Romans 13:1 ESV)

And a few verses later Paul adds:

<sup>7</sup> Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. (Romans 13:7 ESV)

Remember, Paul wrote these words to the Church who would suffer persecution at the hands of the GOVERNMENT. John Calvin comments on these verses:

He expressly mentions kings and other magistrates because, more than all others, **they might be hated by Christians**. All the magistrates who existed at that time were so many sworn enemies of Christ; and therefore this thought might occur to them, that they ought not to pray for those who devoted all their power and all their wealth to fight against the kingdom of Christ, the extension of which is above all things desirable.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles – World Biblical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 78.

<sup>2</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of the Apostle Paul to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, (digital version).

Paul knew that this task would be hard for many of the Ephesian Church, but his command is clear: PRAY FOR YOUR LEADERS. Pray for your local government. pray for your provincial and federal governments. The Gospel is for all, so widen the scope of your prayers!

That was Paul's first charge.

And secondly, Paul urges that the Church:

## **2. Live with an aim to witness**

Look with me to verse 2 again. Paul says to pray for all people and:

for kings and all who are in high positions, **that** we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.<sup>3</sup> This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior (1 Timothy 2:2-3a ESV)

Paul says we should be praying for their salvation and also for their favour! That we can live in a peaceful, quiet, godly and dignified way. One commentator helps us here:

In contrast to the opponents who are bringing disrepute on the church, **the church is to pursue a lifestyle** characterized by tranquility, calmness, reverence, and dignity.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly, the lifestyle of these false teachers was NOT in line with the Gospel. Instead of adorning it, they were spoiling it with their lifestyle. This should never be the case.

Instead, God's Word to us is to pray that our leaders would rule in *such a way* that we can go to Church freely, preach the Gospel in our homes, communities and workplaces. That our leaders and laws would make it, dare I say, *easy* to live as Christians without fear of persecution. *Easy* to feel bold to share our faith.

We should be praying TO THE END, that our Christian witness would make Christ and His Gospel attractive to the lost men and women we rub shoulders with everyday! Paul says live with an aim to witness. Because if you are living that way, if you remember this, then your view of Grace will only grow and grow.

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<sup>3</sup> William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles – World Biblical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 82.

Sometimes we forget how much the world is watching us don't we? Probably just like you, I have had so many conversations about the church's response to the pandemic with coworkers and family. And conversations about some of the awful failings of church leaders. The world is watching. They are listening to us.

Rather than being known for always being up in arms about something, we should be aiming to live lives that put all the attention on Christ. Rather than being known for constantly shaking our fists at the government, complaining about taxes and restrictions, we should be trying to live lives that make it impossible for anybody to bring a charge against us.

Do you think that's impossible? It isn't. Do you remember the prophet Daniel's example as he was in exile? Jealous of his success and favour, men rose up who tried to take him down. They watched him closely. They watched him in all he did TRYING to find fault with him so they could take him down. But what happened? His enemies could find NO FAULT with him at all EXCEPT that He loved and served the God of Israel.

<sup>5</sup> Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God." (Daniel 6:5 ESV)

Imagine if that was the only accusation people could have of the Church?

That's probably a big challenge for you. I know it is for me.

It's hard for people living with the affluence that we do in North America. We have so much and when someone would threaten our cozy lifestyle, we recoil and lash out. There's a saying in sports, it's hard for an athlete with 50 million in the bank to get up at 4am every morning and train hard like they were broke. And isn't that true of us sometimes? It's hard when we have so many earthly treasures. It's hard when we have grown accustomed to a certain lifestyle to give up our rights and our coziness.

But Paul right sizes our situation. He says, the goal of your life is to PROCLAIM GOD'S GLORY. Your life is not your own, so live in such a way that would proclaim the glory of God in all you do. As you get up and go to work, as you pay your taxes, as you submit to regulations

that you might not wholly agree with. Raise your kids to do the same. Because as Paul reminds us:

This is good, and it is **pleasing in the sight of God our Savior**. (1 Timothy 2:3 ESV)

And Paul goes on to remind the Church that as we widen our prayers and live in such a way as to *adorn* the Gospel, we must:

### 3. Marvel at God's incomprehensible love

That's how we widen our view of Grace. That's how we make sure that we never fall into the awful sin of withholding the Gospel from certain people. We marvel at God's great love. Look with me to verse 3:

This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> **who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth**. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. (1 Timothy 2:3-6 ESV)

It is good to pray for all people, to live as good citizens in our communities BECAUSE, God desires that all people to hear the Gospel and be saved! Hallelujah! We are reminded here of the AWESOME scope of God's love. Far from being only for the select few, it is a love that extends to all people. And because of that the Gospel MUST be proclaimed to all!

This should be a transformative verse for every Christian because it reminds us of the tender, loving, merciful and gracious heart of God towards sinners. Where we would be tempted to be stingy, God is willing to extend His love to all, *even* to His enemies. God's heart is tender and soft towards this broken world.

Think about how often God demonstrated His love and patience towards the Israelites. Time and time again they walked right into rebellion. Time and time again they refused to stay on the straight and narrow path and ventured into sin. Whether it was straight up doubt as they refused to believe God would provide for them in the wilderness. Or as they refused to wait for Moses to

come down the mountain and made golden cows to worship instead. Or think about how many times they chose to pay tribute to their neighbouring nations instead of pray for deliverance to God. Yet did He give up on his people? Never. Even when he pronounced judgement upon them sending them into exile He always planned to redeem them. God never let his steadfast love depart from His people. In Hosea we hear God declare about his stubborn and sinful people:

**My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender.** <sup>9</sup> I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath. (Hosea 11:8b-9 ESV)

Our God is One who *delights* to see sinners turn to Him in repentance, trusting in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That's OUR God. Paul said to Timothy, make sure that the Church NEVER forgets this! Because oh how we miss the mark when we forget the awesome grace of God toward sinners! When we restrict it to only a select few!

We could stop there and be both challenged and encouraged but Paul goes further and explains the significance of Christ' saving work. Not only is God's love greater than we could ever imagine, but He also *demonstrated* it in a way greater way than we could ever fathom. Look with me to verse 5:

<sup>5</sup> For there is one God, and there is one **mediator** between God and men, the **man** Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a **ransom** for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. (1 Timothy 2:5-6 ESV)

First off, Paul emphasizes the *office* of Christ as our mediator. A mediator is someone who goes in between two parties. And Paul says, there's ONLY ONE. Only One Man who could stand in the gap between a Holy God and sinful man. Paul says that's JESUS! Just like Moses did with the people of Israel, Jesus has become our representative with God. He's the go between.

And how did he do that? He took on our human flesh. That's the incarnation. That's what we celebrate every Christmas. Christ *truly* became a man. While retaining His *divinity*, He took on our *humanity*. Then He lived as a man. And not just any man. But THE PERFECT man. Where Adam had fallen into sin, where I had fallen into sin, Jesus never did. And more than not sinning, He fulfilled, in a positive sense, ALL that the righteous and good Law pointed to. ALL the good

things we should have done and didn't do, Jesus did. Every second of Jesus' life was in obedience to God the Father.

And it's through His righteous life, death, resurrection, that He is our *ransom*. In other words, Jesus is the *price* that was paid in order for you and I to be forgiven. His perfect life was traded for yours and mine. That's how we were purchased for God. Everlasting life came through the DEATH of the Son of God. As the apostle Peter says:

<sup>18</sup> knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> **but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.** (1 Peter 1:18-19 ESV)

The price for you and I to be rescued was GREAT. God looked upon the perfect One Jesus, His very Son and laid on Him yours and my sin. And in exchange, we received Jesus' righteousness. THAT'S how we were ransomed. THAT'S how we are saved. And Paul says, marvel in this again and again, and your view of Grace will grow.

And lastly:

#### 4. Preach the Truth indiscriminately

Preach the truth and preach it to *everyone*. Look with me to verses 5-7:

<sup>5</sup> For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. <sup>7</sup> **For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.** (2 Timothy 2:5-7 ESV)

Judging by Paul's words, these opponents were refusing to preach the message of Christ to gentiles. But Paul is adamant, Christ was the ransom for ALL. Not just the select few. Not just Jews. Not just some gentiles. But ALL people.

And THIS is why he was appointed. To proclaim the good news of salvation to all people. This is the task that God had given him and by extension the whole Church. And friends, I think we need to hear the implicit warning in the text.

Woe to us if we refuse to preach the Gospel. Woe to us if we refuse to offer it to certain people. Woe to us if we don't pray for opportunities to proclaim it to those of us around us. Woe to us if we don't pray and support Gospel work across the nations. Woe to us if our hearts stay calloused to sinners being dragged to hell each and every day.

BECAUSE if God longs to see all people hearing and believing in the Gospel, as we read in our text, how could we be a people who are quiet in proclaiming this truth? For Paul this was his life's goal! His mission was to see men and women, boys and girls hearing about Christ, turning from their sin, and living lives that proclaimed the glory of Christ. And this should be our goal just the same. Jesus taught us:

<sup>14</sup> “**You** are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16 ESV)

Our lives should be the catalyst's for men and women coming to faith in the Gospel! Amen? And the good news of the Gospel is for *all* people. For your families, neighbours, co-workers, leaders, the rich and poor, Canadian, American, Chinese, African, Indian. Because as Paul reminds us:

This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> **who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.** (1 Timothy 2:3-4 ESV)

Thanks be to God.

## One Question

Now as we come to a close this morning, I want to leave you with one question:

## 1. Do you really believe this?

Do you really believe in the scandalous and awesome scope of God's love? Do you really believe that God desires all people to be saved? James tells us:

<sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. (James 1:22-24 ESV)

And again:

<sup>17</sup> So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (James 2:17 ESV)

Believing the right things isn't enough. Believing **MUST** lead to action. Believing **MUST** lead to transformation.

If we truly believe this, then it has to change the way we **PRAY**. We ought to be a people who pray for the lost around us with zeal and tears! Are we praying for our lost family with urgency? Are we praying for our lost neighbours by name that their hearts would be softened? Are we praying for our leaders that they would be saved and that the Church would have favour? Are we praying for our mission partners across the globe as though we **TRULY** believed God desires to save the nations?

And if we truly believe this, then it has to change the way we **LIVE**. Are our lives displaying the saving work of Christ as we go about our day? Are our lives signposts for what God can do when sinners turn to Him? Does the way we spend our time reflect that we believe salvation is truly offered to all people? Do we live as such good and faithful citizens that our leaders are happy we live in their cities?

And if we truly believe this, then it will change our **WORSHIP**. If we truly believe in the good news of the Gospel, in the sufficiency of Christ to wash away our sins, and the in great love of

God which is offered to all, then this will transform us. It will cause us to live with this prayer constantly on our minds:

“Our Father in heaven, **hallowed be your name.** <sup>10</sup> **Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.** (Matthew 6:9-10 ESV)

I know for certain that if our hearts are gripped by these truths more and more, day by day, then our hearts will cling less to the world and more to the riches found in Christ. Our prayers, habits and desires will be more focused on how we can further know the love of God and proclaim it to others. Do you believe that? I do.

The Gospel is the good news. And it is for ALL PEOPLE. Let's be a people who never forget this and never stop proclaiming this. For the glory of God, and for the good of ALL PEOPLE. This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.