

The Need for Prayer – Part 4

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Paul instructs the church through Timothy to seek the humility of prayer
2. aim – to cause us to pray for and lead godly and submissive lives as we seek the salvation of all
3. passage – 1 Timothy 2:1-15

b. outline

1. The Need for Prayer in Godly Living (1 Timothy 2:1-3)
2. The Need for Prayer in Evangelism (1 Timothy 2:4-7)
3. The Need for Prayer in Submissiveness (1 Timothy 2:8-15)

c. opening

1. the **first imperative** of the letter
 - a. the things that Paul would have Timothy to do as *the means* to combat the false teachings in the church and to reestablish a sound footing in both orthodoxy and orthopraxy
 - b. **Paul is concerned that the church not only be a praying people, but a people praying for opportunity to preach the gospel of the mediatorial and ransoming work of Christ to every social class in every situation afforded them**
 1. **IOW:** the church is to be focused on prayer, *not for comfort*, but for the opportunity to express the great truth of Christ's work of atonement to everyone around them
 - c. **(then, in v. 8)** Paul turns his attention *back* to this issue of prayer, and adds a sense of **submissiveness** into this imperative
 1. note the **intentionality** here: Paul has been concerned (so far in **chap. 2**) that the church be prepared to preach the gospel to every class of people around them (**i.e.** kings, etc.)
 2. however, to do so, the church needs to be sure that every class *inside the church* recognizes its own specific areas of difficulty *in preparation for that outward work*
 3. **IOW:** one of the *main reasons* why the church fails to properly evangelize outside of its own social class is because it still harbors class issues internally, in this case: **gender issues**
 4. **BTW:** could it be that one of the reasons why the *modern* church struggles with dealing with the various classes of peoples in the world is because it doesn't have a good sense of how to deal with various real differences *inside* the church? (**see below**)
 - d. **(first, in v. 7)** Paul completes the thought of the first paragraph, and then transitions to the next paragraph, in which he will continue the details of the imperative in **v. 1**
 1. *"for this I was appointed"* = for *"this"*, the message of the gospel outlined in **vv. 5-6**
 - a. Paul was *"appointed"* to this role – the *implication* is that he was appointed by Jesus himself
 1. which Paul directly states in other places in his preaching and teaching
 2. **e.g.** before King Agrippa in **Acts 26:14-18** (**note: preaching the gospel before a king**)
 2. *"a preacher and apostle"* = a *herald* of the message; a *special messenger*; one sent on a *mission* to proclaim a specific message on behalf of another
 - a. **the parenthetical note:** why would Paul write *these* words to Timothy, his good friend?
 1. wouldn't Timothy already know that Paul was an apostle appointed by Jesus?
 2. why would Paul *assume* Timothy could conclude that Paul was lying about this?
 3. **answer:** the phrase is *not* to be read as though Paul is trying to *convince* Timothy – rather, it should be read as a *strong reminder* to Timothy of what Timothy already knows
 4. **IOW:** Timothy, *you know* that I am telling the truth ... and here's why this is important ...
 3. *"a teacher of the Gentiles ..."* = a messenger to those *outside* of mainstream Judaism
 - a. the *specific* calling of Jesus upon Paul was to preach this gospel to non-Jews – to an **entirely different social class** than Paul was familiar with and comfortable with
 4. so, two (2) significant conclusions flow from this statement:
 - a. **(in conclusion) Paul himself was appointed by Christ to bring this gospel message to people outside of his own social class, thus the church is to be a praying church seeking opportunity to do the same**
 - b. **(in transition) Paul establishes his authority (by way of reminder) to speak into the life of the church regarding situations in which the people are failing to properly align themselves for these opportunities**

III. The Need for Prayer in Submissiveness (1 Timothy 2:8-15)

Content

a. seven (7) general oversights from this paragraph

1. it is clear that Paul is addressing *gender specific* issues in this paragraph
 - a. the reference to “men” in v. 8 is *probably* not “people in general,” but to the male gender, given the very *clear* picture of Paul referencing the female gender (“women”) in the rest
 - b. **IOW:** there is a *dichotomy* between the sexes here, and Paul addresses each in its own turn
2. it is clear that Paul has much more to say here to women than he does to men
 - a. (in this case) quite the opposite of his approach to the sexes in **Ephesians 5:22ff**
3. it is clear that Paul considered gender issues to be problematic in the church at Ephesus
 - a. the *forcefulness* of Paul’s approach (e.g. vv. 11-12) strongly suggests that *this* was a particular problem at Ephesus, and *could* be linked to the issue of heterodoxy outlined in **chap. 1**
4. it is true that what Paul lays out here is very difficult to incorporate into the church *today*, given the social, cultural, and theological issues surrounding his instructions
 - a. **IOW:** it becomes difficult (for many) to accept Paul here, given the state of 21st C. gender issues
 - b. e.g. the rise of **radical egalitarianism** in the culture has invaded the thinking-processes of the modern church, such that some ideas presented here seem almost “offensive” to women today
 1. the idea that men and women are so *utterly equal* that no differences between them are allowed to be entertained, *even those differences that are essential to human flourishing* (reproduction)
 2. the “bounce-back” effect is *transgenderism* encroaching upon the world of *feminism*
5. it is clear that Paul will base his arguments on certain *Scriptural realities*, not on his own “opinions”
 - a. sure, he says “*I do not permit ...*” (v. 12), but this permission is not based on an *opinion* he holds
 - b. the argument he makes is based on his understanding of the **creation order** in **Genesis 1-3**
6. it is clear that what Paul taught here is essential to the life of the church, *in any age*
 - a. all of what Paul teaches here is essential to the first imperative (as we will see)
 - b. **i.e.** how men and women deal with their *gender specific* issues in the church will be directly related to how successful they will be in praying for and seeking out opportunities to preach the gospel
 - c. **hint:** the issue (for both men and women) is **submissiveness** – placing oneself under the influence or leadership of another(s) in order to properly carry out one’s duties therein
7. so, it is imperative that we *embrace* Paul here, otherwise we *cast doubt* upon so much else
 - a. **the instructions (commands) that Paul gives here flow from his position as an apostle – it is impossible to reject these words due to cultural considerations without also being forced to reject other aspects of his teachings that may be culturally influenced as well**
 1. **e.g.** do we reject his concept of *elders*, as given in the *very next chapter*? many do, because the issue of eldership is profoundly affected by the American experience
 2. **e.g.** do we reject his concept of *justification by faith alone*, given that our *experience* (very often) is a social pressure to “do good,” which must imply the same when it comes to religion

b. the issues regarding the prayers of men (v. 8)

1. “*the men should pray*” = the importance of *men* involved in this first imperative
 - a. “*in every place*” = in every situation; in every circumstance – home, church, and every other place where Christian prayer is to be found
 - b. **interpretation #1:** the simple statement that *men should be praying* – that men should not shirk this duty as a part of their life of following Jesus in obedience and submission
 1. **because, by definition, prayer is both an act of obedience and of submission**
 2. **IOW:** Paul considered it a healthy *masculinity* for men to be on their knees before God
 - c. **interpretation #2:** the larger concept that *men should be the ones leading in prayer* – that men are to be the ones taking the lead in the church and in the home in prayer (**me!**)
 1. **because, by definition, it is God who has established men to be in such leadership**
2. “*lifting holy hands*” = appealing to God on the basis of a life of holiness
 - a. **note:** this is *not* Paul establishing some sort of “charismatic” form of prayer (waving our hands)
 - b. lifting hands is the idea of *appealing* to God (**i.e.** in supplications, intercessions; **see 2:1**) – reaching out to God in a *symbolic* (rather than *literal*) way; appealing to him in a “real” way
 - c. but, lifting *holy* hands is reaching out to God *from a life that is in pursuit of holiness*
 1. just as coming to God with an “empty” hand of faith (**i.e.** one without self-righteousness)

3. “without anger or quarrelling” = in a state of *true fellowship* with other Christ-following men
 - a. **note:** this is the issue in the life of the men in the church at Ephesus that needed to be addressed
 - b. it is the “natural” inclination of men to pursue **power**, even in small environments or one-on-one
 1. we like to “brag” about our *successes*, our *triumphs*, what we *know*, where we’ve *been*, *who* we know, what we *have*, etc. – to “one-up” others, even to the point where we find ourselves “on the outs” with another man because he made a “power play” over us (**i.e.** men who hold grudges due to perceived slights in any area of *power* or *control* or *disagreement*)
 2. we love to “debate” our opinions, even rising to the point of “*quarrelling*” with others over who’s right and who’s clearly an “idiot” (**e.g.** sports)
 - c. **Paul believes that the *proper* relationship between the *men* of the church is that they are mutually uplifting to one another, which is to say: they are submissive to one another**
 1. this becomes the *basis* for how and why they *pray together* and *work together* for the advancement of the gospel – Paul “*desires*” that the men of the church have a mutual relationship that does not hinder their ability to lead the prayer life of the church