

Sermon Title: The glorious gospel is for all nations.

Reading: 1 Timothy Chapter 2: v. 1-7.

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, ⁷for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Introduction

For the benefit of our visitors today, I will give you a summary of our 1 Timothy series so far.

Paul is writing an important letter to a young Church Elder called Timothy.

He is the leader of a Church in the city of Ephesus.

The historical time line is about 63-64 A.D.

So far we have learnt the following main points.

1. Paul wanted Timothy to deal with false teaching in the Church. He identified two types of false teaching, these being “Gnosticism” and “Legalistic teaching’ based upon a wrong understanding of God’s Law, the 10 commandments.
2. Paul informed Timothy that when false teaching arises in the Church it leads to disputes and people wandering away from the true faith.
You may remember if you were here, that I gave you an illustration from my times of walking in England across a moorland called Dartmoor. If the compass was only 1degree out from the start of your journey, you would never arrive at your destination. Only a little false teaching is enough to set you off in the wrong direction.
3. We discovered what was needed to correct false teaching.
Paul told Timothy to re-focus on the true gospel and to concentrate on personal holiness. By doing these two things Timothy would be able to get the Church members focused on the things that facilitated personal growth and development in their Christian lives.
4. Last week we discovered that Paul wanted to counteract the false teaching on the Law with the correct understanding of the Law. He told us that the main purpose of the Law was to expose sin. The Law has often been called the school master that points us to Jesus.
We also discovered that there was another purpose of God’s Law.
This was to restrain evil in our society. I gave the example of Alfred the Great from England. He used the 10 commandments to shape common Law in England, and until recently most English Law has had its foundation on God’s Law and Biblical truth.
Thirdly we learnt that God’s Law helped believers to grow in grace by using it as a measure of growth in their lives.
5. It was noted that false teaching destroys the influence and effectiveness of the gospel.
6. Next, Paul told us that his conversion to Christianity was a pattern for future conversions. He told us that it all initiated with Jesus Christ. Jesus spoke to his heart first. Paul was honest about his own sin, even though he did much of his sinning in ignorance. Finally, Paul reminded us about the overflowing “GRACE” of Jesus Christ.
We saw a picture of a small waterfall flowing into a deep pool.
If you were at O.I.C. last week, you will remember that the illustration picture was taken in Israel of the river Jordan at its source.

7. Finally, Paul summarized that the Church needed protection and that false teaching had to be dealt with quickly, effectively, and lovingly.

With this background in mind we can now focus on the text for today.

Introduction

Today we are beginning a **new section in the letter.**

It starts in chapter 2: v. 1 and it continues until chapter 3: v. 13.

It will be helpful to look at the outline structure of this section before we begin.

Paul has already introduced us to the picture of a shipwreck, as an illustration for his teaching concerning false teachers. He also tells us what needs to be done.

The ship needs to be steered away from the rocks into deeper water.

The behaviour of the crew needs to be dealt with.

Already two of the crew have been dismissed. (1:20) Guidance is now needed in the appointment of new leaders to sail the boat.

This is exactly what we find in the new section.

So today we will discover how to steer the boat away from the rocks into deep water.

Depending on the translation of the Bible that you use, you will be able to discern a clear structure for our learning today. Four times in this passage Paul uses the word "ALL".

In chapter 2: v. 1 -2 we read a challenge to **Pray for all.** In v. 3-4 we learn that God wants **all to be saved.** In v.5-6 Jesus Christ died as a **ransom for all.** And in v. 7 there is a preaching to **all nations.**

So this is the outline that I will use to clearly expose what the Bible teaches in this passage.

1. The priority of prayer – v. 1-2.

In the first two verses Paul tells that prayer is a priority and he tells us how we should pray, and who we should be praying for. He introduces us to quite a variety of types of prayer. Although these prayers are similar the subtle shades of meaning enrich our understanding of prayer.

If we understand the original writings of the New Testament which were written in Greek, then this would help us to be clear about the different shades of prayer.

Briefly these Greek words inform us of 4 types of prayer.

- a) The kind of prayer that arises from a sense of need. Knowing what we are lacking, we cry to God in prayer to supply that need. (Gr: "Deesis" = to lack)
- b) The kind of prayer that is directed to God for the lost souls of men and women. It carries an element of worship and reverence. (Gr: Proseuche = Prayers)
- c) The kind of prayer that prays for other people's needs. You get involved in another person's life by praying to God on behalf of them. You feel their pain, so you cry to God for help. (Gr: "Enteuxis = to speak on behalf of somebody)
- d) The kind of prayer that prays with a spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving.

Paul has a burden for all people and these different types of prayers relate to evangelistic activity on our knees, which is of course is the real work, and jolly hard work it is too!!!

So how does Paul tell us to pray?

He tells us to pray with great variety. He wants us to have empathy with lost souls and cry to God on their behalf, with thanksgiving and reverence.

Then Paul tells us who we should be praying for.

It is perhaps surprising that we first must pray for Kings and all who are in authority.

Well Paul views God as the King of Kings, see chapter 1: v. 17.

He also views God as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in 6 v.15.

So it is not a waste of time praying for Prime Minister Abe.

We may not have voted for him, but God can still use him for his purposes.

In v. 2 Paul is concerned that believers in Jesus Christ might be able to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

At this time in history, the worst Roman Emperor, Nero was in charge and he persecuted and killed thousands of Christians.

It was no wonder that this prayer was at the top of Paul's list.

Today thousands of Christians all over the world are killed for no other reason than their faith in Jesus.

The reason it happens is that kings and rulers let it happen.

Most of it is done by radical Islam, but not all of it.

The only way that Christians can live a peaceable life today is by the protection of the laws and rulers of countries.

So we should be praying for the Japanese government every week!!!

(Slide of Abe)

Paul also wants us to pray for Church members to live godly lives.

This is important because there is nothing more damaging for the Church than when its members behave badly.

In recent years there have been reports in the Catholic Church about the abuse of young boys historically. This has not just been in the Catholic Church. There are other churches who have had this problem too.

To win the respect of outsiders, believers in Jesus need to lead godly and reverent lives.

Finally, in v.1 Paul wants us to pray for all men. This includes women too.

Neil Diamond, a Jew himself, wrote a song about a Salvation show in his Hot August Night album.

In the song he said "pack up the babies and grab the old ladies, and everyone goes, 'cause everyone knows, Brother Love's show..."

We mustn't leave anybody out of our prayers.

2. The foundation of God's Love – 2: v. 3-4.

We notice in v. 3-4 that God's love is the basis of all of our prayers. We pray because God loves all people and He wants them to be saved.

Paul says that our prayers for all people to be saved is good and acceptable in God's sight.

When we pray for people to know the love of God for themselves personally, we are praying in line with God's own heart.

In 1 Timothy there are frequent references to things that are good.

God's Law is good – 1:v.8

God's created world is good – 4:4

Godly living, demonstrated in acts of practical service is good – 5:10.

So what does God, our Saviour want?

God wants all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth.

Paul told us in Chapter 1: v.15 that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

The foundation of God's love is Jesus Christ, sent by God, to enter this world, as a baby, grow up as person who was fully human and yet fully divine.

He gave evidence of His divinity through many miracles.

He had power over nature, power over sickness and even power over death.

He was able to feed 5,000 people, using a little boy's bento box.

The evidence for this is recorded in the most reliable and accurate historical record for that period in history. That is the New Testament.

God's love can't be denied, it is available for all to read, and can be experienced through the love of true believers in Jesus Christ.

These people are God's instruments to show His love to mankind.

3. The Meaning of the death of Jesus Christ – v. 5-6.

About three years ago a young Japanese lady who came to England for a holiday homestay with some of our Christian friends, asked me a very good question.

She said Pastor Alistair, “Why did Jesus Christ have to die on the cross?”
She was very serious and she was trying to work out the Christian message in her own mind.
The answer I gave her is the same answer that I would give anybody.
These two verses provide us with that answer.

⁵ For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

In Japan, most people visit shrines and Temples to meet their personal needs.
They may be young and hoping to pass an exam for University, so they go and pray to the god of “Education” or they may want to have a baby and are finding it hard to conceive, so they pray to the god of fertility.

This was exactly the situation in Ephesus at the time that Paul wrote this letter to Timothy.

This is why Paul starts with the statement, there is “**One God**”.

When we come to realise that actually there is only one holy God in all the world, and He created everything, including us, in His own likeness, we might just ask the question, “**how do I get to know Him?**”

Paul says that it is through **one mediator**. He says that there is only one mediator between this holy creator God and mankind.

If you are a Japanese national or understand Japanese culture, you should understand the need for a mediator, or person to introduce you to somebody important, or somebody whom you would like to ask a favour.

In western society it doesn’t happen quite so much.

However, there is a saying that goes like this “It is not what you know, it is who you know, that helps you to progress in business and life.”

So in a sense every society has its people who introduce you to important people for your benefit.

Jesus Christ is the person who can introduce you to your creator God.

He is the only person.

So why do we need an introduction to this Holy Creator God?

The answer is very simple.

God created the first two people in the world. The man was called Adam and then God created a helper for Adam called Eve. She was a woman.

These two people were created to have a personal relationship with God.

Adam and Eve enjoyed friendship with God and lived in a world that was perfect in every way.

Their bodies were created to live forever, without decay or sickness.

They were provided with everything that they needed.

There was one restriction and that was not to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God said that if they did this, then they would die.

It would be both a physical and spiritual death.

It would be death to their body and death to their relationship with God.

Sadly, they were tempted by a fallen Angel called Satan, disguised as a snake, to disobey God and eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

As a result, Adam and Eve and their offspring were cursed and even the whole world was cursed.

However, God promised that one day He would send a “Saviour” to rescue mankind and judge Satan.

That rescuer came in the person of Jesus Christ, God’s only Son.

The problem was that mankind had to be punished for their sin, they were separated from a Holy God.

In order to set mankind free from this punishment, somebody had to act as a substitute, to take mankind’s punishment instead.

This is why it says in v.6 that Jesus Christ gave himself as a ransom.

A ransom is the price that is paid in order to set a person free from captivity.

If somebody is kidnaped, the kidnapers often ask for a ransom price in order to set the person free.

This is why Jesus Christ had to die on the cross. He was the ransom price that had to be paid, so that we can avoid eternal punishment and get back into a right relationship with our creator God.

The problem we have today is that people would rather believe a lie, rather than the truth. However as soon as you believe the truth and it touches your heart, you can be set free, and enjoy a relationship with your creator, because of Jesus. Finally, we come to verse 7 where Paul is telling us that he was called to preach this wonderful gospel message to the Gentiles, that is us. He wanted Timothy to continue this ministry, and God today wants us to continue that ministry too.

4. The truth of the gospel must be preached and proclaimed – v. 7.

It is wonderful when Christians feed the poor, it is wonderful when Christians visit sick people in hospital and it is wonderful when Christians get involved in relief work after an earthquake, typhoon, or natural disaster.

However, if the gospel of Jesus Christ is not preached or proclaimed in some way, through literature, or conversation, then it is a "**lost opportunity**".

I am not saying it is a complete waste of time, because people can be helped.

However, anybody can help them, but only Jesus can save their soul.

This is why we **MUST** tell them about Jesus and communicate the gospel.

The story is told of a man in New York, U.S.A.

There was a great fire in a Theatre, and sadly all of the emergency exits were locked for security purposes.

The man remembered that there was a secret staircase than went up into the flat roof above the building.

He immediately ran towards that staircase and climbed to the roof.

He was able to jump to the next roof as the buildings were so close together, like Japan.

Although he injured his leg a little, he was able to escape.

A week later the police visited him in a mental hospital. He was completely depressed. The Police officer couldn't understand why.

The Policeman said, "You were saved from certain death and 300 other people were killed, why are you so depressed and upset?"

The man looked up into the policeman's eyes, tears flowed from the recused man, and he said, "**I am depressed and upset because I only saved myself,**

I could have told everybody about the escape route, but I didn't do it."

If you are a Christian today and you know and love Jesus as your own personal saviour, you know that the escape route is only through Jesus, please tell people about Jesus.

I know some will get angry, I know some people will reject you, and I know some people might laugh, but there will be some who will want to be rescued and spend eternity in Heaven.

It is worth it for just one person, because it was worth it for Me!!!

May God help us to tell people about Jesus.

Amen.