**THE PLACE, POWER, AND PURPOSE OF PRAYER**

**TEXT**: I Timothy 2:1-4

**THESIS**: To demonstrate the place of prayer in the believer’s (and the church’s) life and its power and purpose.

**INTRO**.:

**A.** God is not a Calvinist. God is sovereign (supreme in rank, power, and authority). God is not rigid. God is sovereign. God is not a conformist. God is sovereign. God hears and answers prayer. God is sovereign. God saves the unlikely and the unlovely. God is sovereign.

**ILLUS**.: All doctrinal and theological systems and pre-conceived concepts about God must be subservient to the Scriptures teaching about the nature and character of God.

**B.** Paul’s general subject is “order in the church.” He has spoken of the danger and discipline of false teachers. Now he opens chapter two with an earnest exhortation concerning prayer and a marvelous declaration concerning God’s will. v.4

**TRANS**.: Concepts are transmitted via words. Words have meaning and God’s words are unambiguous, simple, and profound. Paul sets forth the will of God concerning “The Place, Power and Purpose of Prayer.”

**I. THE PRIORITY OF PRAYER: v.1a “first of all…”**

**A.** The Duty: “I exhort therefore…”

**1.** Both privately and publicly the church must put first what God wants first.

**2.** God responds to the supplications of the saints.

**ILLUS**.: As someone put it: “No prayer – no power; little prayer – little power; more prayer – more power; much prayer – much power!” This axiom explains the powerlessness of most believers and churches today.

**a.** God in His sovereignty, has tied Himself to our prayers.

**b.** It isn’t that He needs us or our prayers, but that we need Him and His power.

**II. THE VARIETY OF PRAYER: v.1b**

**A.** The Details:

1. “Supplications” – praying for a supply of something you or others need.
2. “Prayers” – lists of items asked for; prayer is asking!
3. “Intercessions” – prayers on behalf of those who are unable to get their prayers answered, or who don’t see the great need of prayer. (May even be prayers for or against someone)

*Romans 11:2-3 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.*

*Galatians 5:12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.*

4. “Giving of thanks” – is to accompany all three types of requests (Thanksgiving completes the circle – of blessings that come from God return to Him in the form of expressed gratitude).

**ILLUS**.: The Calvinist doesn’t need to pray – everything has already been predetermined from eternity past…nothing can or will change, it is all a part of the “Divine Decree” – down to the minutest detail – so why bother to pray?!

**III. THE SOCIETY OF PRAYER: vv.1c, 2a**

**A.** “For ALL men…”

**NOTE**: Our prayers are to be for “all men” – those we know and those we don’t. Paul was not worried that believers would pray too much, too long or for too many people. After Samuel the prophet/priest called down thunder and rain against Israel for their sin, he cried “God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you…” 1 Sam. 12:23

**B.** “For Kings…”

1. Godless and greedy Nero was on the throne at this time!

2. Even if we do not respect our leaders as men, we must respect their authority and the office.

3. There is a suggestion here that our lives will be better off and we will live peaceably when we pray for leaders in government.

**C.** “For all…in authority…”

**1.** Presidents, senators, congressmen, justices, judges, state legislators, local representatives, police, the, down to the appointed commissioners, et.al. where we live.

**2.** Prayer is international in scope, cosmopolitan in extent and patriotic in nature.

**ILLUS**.: Praying for “world peace” through the WCC, RCC, Popes, Presidents, politicians and religionists, makes good press but is NOT what is enjoined here! World peace is a joke for at least the next 7 years! There are three more “world wars” scheduled on God’s prophetic calendar (see Rev. chapters 6,19,20)! If you want to pray for peace then heed Jeremiah (29:7) and the Psalmist: “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee…” Ps. 122:6 The peace of Israel is the key to world peace.

**IV. THE PROPRIETY OF PRAYER: vv. 2-4**

**A.** Proper Because It Influences Leadership: v.2a

**B.** Proper Because It Promotes Peacefulness: v.2b

**1.** Not to end social injustices, promote racial and civil harmony or justice for oppressed minorities, etc.

**2.** But so the Christian can live unobstructed in the proclamation of the Gospel.

**ILLUS**.: Christians who contribute to social upheaval and participate in social unrest and disturbance may be sincere but are not godly! Paul never participated in marches against Rome, Caesar, etc. His prescription was prayer. The “fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace…” These qualities are irreconcilable with commotion and chaos.

a. “Godliness” is godlikeness.

b. “Honesty” demands total integrity and consistency.

**C.** Proper Because It Is Agreeable With God: v.3

**1.** Believers pray in order to please God (prayer manifests trust in God and that pleases Him).

**2.** Believers pray not to get man’s will done in heaven, but to get God’s will done on earth.

**D.** Proper Because It Is God’s Will Unto Salvation: v.4

**1.** This verse does not teach universal salvation, but that God would be pleased if all would be saved.

**ILLUS**.: The Calvinist who teaches God’s will is His “decree” which secures the thing willed has a hard time with this verse. He emphasizes God’s sovereignty apart from man’s responsibility.

*Acts 7:51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.*

*John 5:40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*

Someone said the “whosoever wills” are God’s elect and the “whosoever won’ts are not. All who WILL may come!

🔹The Scriptures teach that the Church as a Body was chosen before the foundation of the world and that every person who receives Christ is predestined to be conformed to Christ’s image.

🔹The next verse (v.5) doesn’t say Christ is the Mediator between God and the “elect” – He is the Door through which any unsaved sinner must pass to get to God.

**2.** The words “all men” are the same class of people we are told to pray for in v.1.

a. If everything is already decided under the “decree of God” then prayer is futile.

b. If only certain people can “come to the knowledge of the truth” witnessing and prayer are exercises in futility and become “vain jangling.”

**CONCL**.: There is to be a prominent PLACE for prayer in the believer’s life (“first of all…” – priority); there is genuine POWER in prayer which affects God’s dealing with men and there is PURPOSE in prayer which permits believers to live in peace and which serves to secure other’s salvation. Anything less makes man an automaton and God a Dictator without feeling or compassion.