

Lesson 3 – “First of All”

1 Timothy 2:1-7



“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Verses 1 & 2. The beginning of our scripture begins with the word “therefore”. As we know, this word is usually used to emphasize what was just said or to clarify it. In this case, it’s referring to the last scripture from Chapter 1 where Paul is encouraging Timothy to “*wage the good warfare*” or, in other words, stand fast in your faith, and don’t be like some who have rejected the faith.

Paul says he is “exhorting” Timothy here in verse 1. Exhort is a word that comes up a lot in scripture, so just to be sure we understand – this means to strongly urge or persuade someone to do something. Paul doesn’t want to present what he’s about to say as a command, but more like a strong suggestion for the good of an end result. What he’s referring to is prayer. He even lists four New Testament terms for prayer. They are:

Supplication	This is where personal needs are brought up (petitions)
Prayers	These are always directed to God with reverence and humility
Intercessions	Approach God with confidence and pray for the needs of others
Giving of thanks	An attitude of gratitude; praising God for all He has done

Notice that Paul first says to “*pray for all men*” (this is a generic term for men and women). He makes a point to include “*all kings and those in authority.*” This is significant and still relevant today. Why? Because they, as the “*powers that be*”, have the power to make laws and govern. The decisions they make, of course, affect us. As a society today, we are often quick to criticize our leaders for their weaknesses, and it angers us when their actions go against the word of God. That is why it is so important that we must pray for God to guide them – whether they’re believers or not, and whether we like them or not!

The last part of the scripture says we pray for our leaders so that we can lead “*quiet and peaceful*” lives “*in all godliness and reverence.*” At this point, one might think, how can we live peaceful lives in this crazy, mixed-up, world? It’s not easy; we’re surrounded by evil and corruption, that’s true, BUT ... if we have Jesus, we have everything we need. Look at what Paul said in Philippians 4:6-7:

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

If we really believe these words, then we CAN have peace, even in the worst of storms. That’s what the peace that “*surpasses all understanding*” is all about. How do we as believers survive extreme

hardships – through the peace of God. How do we keep the faith when we or someone we care about is facing a health crisis – through the peace of God. How are we able to go on with our lives after the death of a loved one – it's the peace of God. It's because of the Lord Jesus Christ and what He did for us on the cross that God protects our hearts and minds. The world can't grasp this concept – peace that surpasses understanding – what is that? But we can ... because we have the promise of it in His word.

Verses 3 & 4. God's desire is that we be saved, but He does not force that decision on us. I know we've all heard and read John 3:16-17 countless times, but look closely at what it says: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."* That *"the world through Him might be saved."* That's everyone; Christ died for the whole world! 2 Peter 3:9 also mentions that the Lord is *"not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."* He wants us all to be saved, but beyond that, He also desires us to *"come to the knowledge of the truth."* Once a person is saved, that person needs to learn how to live a spirit filled life. How? Through God's word. In other words, God wants us to grow in our knowledge of Him. That's why we have bible studies ... to get to know Him through His word. And the better we know Him, the more established we become in our faith and in our ability to stand against the false teachings that are so rampant in these last days.

Verses 5 & 6. One God and one Mediator between God and men – the Man Christ Jesus. In Deuteronomy 6:4, we read what is known as the Shema. *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one!"* This is known as the basic confession or affirmation of faith in Judaism. It expresses belief in the singularity of God, that is, in His Oneness. The first commandment God gave Moses on Mt. Sinai was: *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me."* God did not want to be seen as a god among many others, but rather THE one, true God, the ONE and ONLY living God!

One Mediator – In the Old Testament, the priests were the mediators between God and the people. They offered animal sacrifices to atone for the sins of the people. And, as we know, they were the only ones allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, where God's presence was said to be. Of course, as we all know, that all changed with Jesus' death on the cross, when the veil in the temple was torn, signifying that we no longer needed priests as mediators, but rather the Man Christ Jesus, Himself, as our Mediator. He is the only one who can offer salvation for sinners. Jesus said in John 14:6: *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

An old slogan for the store "Sears", used to say, "All roads lead to Sears." Well, all roads DO NOT lead to heaven. In spite of what Oprah and other New Agers say, the gospel truth is that He, JESUS, is the only way to salvation. It is the gospel truth because of what Jesus did for us – He gave Himself a "ransom for all" much like a ransom paid for a slave or a captive. We were captives .. captives to sin,

and His death and resurrection saved us. He paid the ultimate price for our sins so that we could be reconciled to God, our Father. Listen to the words of this Christmas carol:

Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn king
Peace on earth and mercy mild
GOD AND SINNERS RECONCILED!

Verse 7. Paul closes the chapter here by affirming that it was for this gospel message that God called him to preach and be an apostle. In Acts 9:10-18, we find the account of the disciple Ananais being told by the Lord to anoint Paul (who was still Saul at the time), after Paul had been converted by Jesus on the road to Damascus. These are the words given to Ananais, who was hesitant about even approaching Paul, since he knew of his reputation for persecuting Christians: The Lord said to him: *“Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”*

Paul knew the seriousness of speaking the truth and makes a declaration at the end of this chapter that he is speaking the truth in Christ. In Romans 1:18, he made this statement: *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.”* He fully understood the great commission that God had placed upon his shoulders, and he was always prepared to defend the truth of the word in all its’ purity and faith, for the good of man and man’s walk with God!

“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.”

