

“Prayers for Peace?”—1 Timothy 2:1-6

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Prayers for Peace?”, is 1 Timothy 2:1-6 → *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, Who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

I have heard many elderly people over the years tell me about the affects which World War II had on people by driving them to prayer. Stories abound about churches in our country being packed with people praying for peace in the midst of the destruction taking place across the ocean, along with the impending threat to our own country and freedoms. I’ve been told that people were driven to prayer, asking God to bring peace in the midst of such world turmoil.

Interestingly enough, many of these same people were sorely

disappointed when prayers for peace were called for during the Desert Storm crisis in the early 90's and the 911 event leading us into war with Afghanistan. Why were they disappointed? Because instead of the church buildings being filled with people coming to the LORD in prayer the pews still remained fairly empty. It seemed that the prayers for peace may have been there but they were not prayed on the basis of the need for the forgiveness of sins.

When you hear the call for prayers of peace what thoughts come to your mind? For many in our culture thoughts may gravitate to prayers asking to do away with wars, violence, discord, murder, shootings and the host of other behaviors which cause people to fear, live in distrust of one another and threaten our rights to the pursuit of happiness. Are our prayers for peace motivated properly? How do we understand the purpose of this “peace” for which we pray? Is it the same concept of peace as described in God’s Word? Does it fit in with His Will? These are very important questions especially for us Christians to answer. After all, we are praying to God for this “peace.” Shouldn’t He be the One Who defines what it is?

Our text commands us to pray. Biblically prayer is the primary response **of faith** as an act of submission to the LORD in worship. Verse 1 of our text tells us to offer *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings . . . for all people.*

- *Supplications* are described in the command of Philippians 4:6 → *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* It's simply bringing everything to the LORD in prayer for which we need help, guidance and so forth. The challenge is to do so while being thankful *in all circumstances* (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:17). It is an act of submissive worship where we recognize Who is Lord so that we don't fall into the sin of worry or trying to control and manipulate God, both of which are idolatry.
- *Intercessions* are prayers in which we bring the needs of others to the LORD. Such intercessions desire the LORD to be glorified by His will as revealed in the Scriptures being done in people's lives.

Notice in verse 2 of our text that we are commanded to pray specifically *for kings and all who are in high positions*—that is, our governing authorities. Why pray for them? Verse 2 continues: *that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.*

The prayers for peace called for in our culture many times focus on the desire to *lead a peaceful and quiet life* so that I can enjoy my freedoms, live how I want to live, pursue the happiness afforded me by our Declaration of Independence and enjoy life. The sad fact is that such a prayer is self-centered, self-serving and loses sight of the true Source and reason for peace in our culture. Thus, for many in our culture living

peaceably so *that we may lead a . . . godly and dignified life in every way* gets ignored because much of our concepts of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” have nothing to do with following God’s Will as revealed in His written Word—the Bible. In fact, many will even strive to provide justification for doing exactly the opposite.

God’s concept of peace goes much deeper than simply an existence of the lack of violence, war, discord and turmoil on the surface of human behavior. It goes to the depths of our hearts from which all of these flow, as Jesus says in Matthew 15:19 → *For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.* The prayers for peace must reach deeper than simply civil peace and must be based upon something more certain than our self-centered requests to God.

Our text tells us in verse 3 that it *is good, and . . . pleasing in the sight of God our Savior* when we pray specifically for our governing authorities to keep civil order in our culture. However, it is not for the privilege of living self-serving, self-indulging, self-centered, hedonistic lives. Verse 4 tells us that God’s Will is that He *desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* What does civil peace have to do with people being *saved and coming to the knowledge of the truth*? This is usually the point at which people cry out, “Separation of church and state! Don’t force your religion on me! Let’s all pray for

peace.”

The Christian would say, “Exactly! We pray for peace, a peace **which is based upon the truth**. We pray for peace on God’s terms as bound up in the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ.” Thus verses 5-6 of our text continue: *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.*

God desires us to pray for our governing authorities to perform their proper function of keeping civil obedience **so that the Gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone can be freely proclaimed to people**. In this way even the proper functioning of the governing authorities serves God’s will in Christ Jesus for all people.

Coming *to the knowledge of the truth* means that you recognize your need for peace with God **on His terms as a sinner**. It is the recognition that peace must begin in your heart first and foremost before it can be realized in your dealings with the people around you. This peace is not something you can make happen. Rather it has happened for you through *the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom* for your sinful heart and the sins which flow out of that heart. Jesus describes it as a peace which the world cannot give you (cf. John 14:27). It’s the peace which calms your troubled heart in the midst of guilt and fearful heart in

the midst of worry with the certainty that all your sins have been forgiven because Jesus took them all to the cross **for you**.

Based upon God's love expressed for us undeserving, unlovable sinners in Christ, Roman 5:1-2 says: *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

As a result of this peace we come before the LORD in prayer because through Jesus *we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* In other words, we have the privilege of lifting up true prayers for peace based upon the true Source of peace in sins forgiven, praying for this same peace through faith in Jesus Christ to extend to all people in our culture. Thus, we rejoice when sinners come to peace through faith in Christ Jesus. We pray for peace not to indulge our sinful natures in idolatry and hedonism but so we can continue living peaceful lives, *godly and dignified in every way*, seeking an environment where this Gospel of peace can be proclaimed and lived to the glory of God. Amen.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding,  
guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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