



May 21, 2017

2 Timothy 2:2 – 6

So slide over to 1 Timothy 2. I'm going to read you, real quickly, a little section out of 1 John chapter 5 but you stay in 1 Timothy 2. He says:

¹⁴This is the confidence we have with him, that if we ask anything based on his will he hears us. ¹⁵And we know that if he hears us that what we ask we know that we have the request which we've asked from him.

So the Bible's pretty clear. I pray what he wants, he honors that. Now last week we looked at the first part of a section of scripture in 1 Timothy chapter 2. Now we're going to finish that section today. But what we looked at last week was the fact that God tells us, the Bible's scripture tells us that we're to pray for those over us that are under God. So they're over us, but under him. So we bypass them, we go to him, but we pray for them. We pray for those in our life; those that we're tethered to. If you're kids are in a particular school, you pray for the principal. We pray for the governor. We pray for the president. We pray for those in authority over us. So we have this clear directive in the scripture that we're to do that. And he mentions, he talks about, in the Greek, that there's supposed to be a specificity in that prayer life; that you come to God praying specific things for these people. Things that the Bible would legitimize. For example, Proverbs says; in the multitude of counselors there is great wisdom. So we're praying that the people around, for example, Governor Abbot, that the people around him that he will listen to will give him great wisdom and that he will not singularly run this thing by himself. So we're going to pray specific requests for those over us. Now we're doing that, remember last week we looked at the fact he ordered that, the idea that our prayer to him can alter these people in a way that it affects how we live. Now we're going to see why he wants us to do that today. Now look in verse 2, chapter 2, 1 Timothy. He says:

²on behalf of kings and all those in authority over you, that a peaceful and tranquil life we might lead.

Now there's the first thing. Now we're going to walk through this text, but I want you to listen to the first thing he says. We're praying to God that these people that are over us will live in a way and make decisions in a way that we will live as quiet and as tranquil a life as we can. Now that's an interesting prayer because that's not his life. His life is hardship, it is difficulty, but what he's praying is he says, "Look I want you to pray so that in the culture you live in," now

listen to what he says, “that the culture you live in that they will allow you to live a quiet and tranquil life.” Now we know the culture he’s talking about believed two things about the Christians, three things. They were a cult. They were not a mainstream because they had all these gods, right, multiplicity of gods, but these guys were known by two things. They were atheists because they believed in only one god and they were cannibals because they, every Sunday, ate the flesh and drank the blood of their Savior in a weird little meeting. So they’re not living really a quiet and tranquil life. When they walk out people abuse them, mock them, and go after them. But and again it wasn’t, the Roman empire was just like us. There’s a difference between College Station culture and Austin culture. We don’t have any time to go there. There’s a difference between Berkeley and Texas A&M. There’s a difference across America as to how a Christian and conservative values is received. It’s the same thing in the Roman empire. But he prayed, he said, “I want you to pray that we’re able to live as easy a life as we can.” As a matter of fact, they must have prayed this, because although persecutions were kind of intermittent on the Christians by the Romans, one of the reasons that they stopped is because the regular people in the towns, when the Roman authorities would come in to persecute the Christians, the regular people said, “Man, leave them alone. They’re great, they’re kind, they’re gentle, they take care of their families, they work hard, they’re honest. There is no reason to persecute these people.” So what he asks them to pray for is exactly what was answered. Now bear that in mind because at the end of the sermon we’re coming back to that. Now listen. Now here’s what he says. I want you to pray this way. We can have a quiet and tranquil life that we might lead that life in all Godliness and most of your translations are going to say dignity. Probably the best translation of that Greek word is an attractive dignity. Now first Greek word Godly is a Greek word that means this: that I claim and attachment to a god and that I live that attachment out in my life. You can see in my life what I claim about that God. So the idea is we believe in Jesus Christ. We believe in what he stands for so our life is going to validate what we claim we stand for. And then he says:

with an attractive dignity

When I drive, and this happens probably once a year, there are these guys and ladies that show up with these 6’ cardboard pictures of children being, their life being taken away from within the womb, it’s graphic, it’s vile, I think that violates the idea of attractive dignity. Our job is to stand for Jesus with our mouth. Our job is that our live vindicates what we stand for. But we do it with an attractive dignity. This is why we do not boycott things as a Christian. It was ridiculous for us to boycott Disney because what we said to everybody at Disney was we hate you. That’s not an attractive dignity. There has to be a balance here where we are Godly, we stand for Biblical truth and we share that, but we do not do it in a way that we are a turn off to people. There is an attractive dignity. So here’s what he says. OK. He says I want you to go beyond the people that you’re under. Go over their head to God. Now there are people that don’t think God’s over their head, but you know he is. So you’re going to go over their head to God about them so that you will lead a quiet life and in that quiet life you will practice Godliness. You will claim Jesus and you will show that with your lips and your life. But you will do it in an attractive dignity. Now here we go. Watch what he says. Now if you stop it right here, OK, if we close the book up and that’s all we read, the idea is that everything’s about me, if God wants me to lead a quiet life I need to pray that so I can hunt, fish, golf, so I can do all the things, nobody’s going to bother me, I can go to the lake on Sunday when I want to, and basically I can

just do what I want to do and have a nice easy life. If you stop it there, but if you finish out what he says there is a particular purpose which we have got to re-grasp. Now before we get into this section and I have led that way, unfortunately, in years past, we have been completely backwards in what we've done as Christians. Particularly with a culture that has moved away from what we believe. So we have to do what the Bible says. Now listen, verse 3:

³This is good and acceptable before God our Savior,

And here's the thing he says. You can pray this, why, because that's what God wants. It's acceptable before him. God the Savior is up there and when I pray to him, God take the people over me and give them the kind of wisdom and the kind of counselors that will enable me to live a quiet life so my godliness can show up in attractive dignity. I can pray that because he wants that. 1 John 5 – I pray what he wants; it's enacted. So I can, now listen, because this is critical, no matter what culture I find myself in I can pray this into the culture. They were slaughtered. Nero wanted night games. So he took Christians, dipped them in oil, and lit them for his games. You can pray and change the situation. But we have to be sure that we're changing it for the right reason. Now listen:

³This is good and acceptable before God our Father, ⁴who wishes every man to be saved and come to a knowledge of truth.

Now here's God's heart beat OK. He wants every person in the Brazos Valley to be saved and come to a knowledge of truth. There is nobody anywhere he doesn't want saved. I don't know what has happened to us with some goofy theology that started to penetrate our churches. But there's a guy, a preacher in Georgia, he went to a Baptist school, Baptist college, and he preached and while at the college he did what any of us would have done that are preachers. He offered Jesus Christ and his redemptive blood. He said about five or six Baptist students, in a Baptist college, who are going to be pastors one day, came up to him and said, "What do you think you're doing?" He said, "What are you talking about?" They said, "You offered Jesus to this crowd and there may be some people here that God doesn't want to be saved." Did I misread that? Did I misread this Greek or does it say who wishes every man to be saved? Can you get any clearer than that? Can you misinterpret that? I mean a Methodist can get this. I've offended the Catholics and the Mormons. We're just going to run the whole gamut for the summer. He wants every person in the Brazos Valley to be saved. OK. What is this salvation thing? How do you get saved? I mean that is churchy word. What does that mean? Look at this this:

you come to a knowledge of the truth.

OK. Good. What truth do I need to know to be saved? Now watch what he says. Here he goes, verse 5.

⁵For there is one God,

Now there's the first thing you have to know. There's not a bunch of Gods. There's one God. Now let me explain something. That's not going to make your culture mad. You go out and say

you believe in one God they'll go "great". Because they're going to assume that Allah and Jehovah are the same god. We just call them different names but it's the same god. So they're not going to be offended when you walk out there and say, "I believe in one God." But that's the first thing we have to understand. There's not a multiple bunch of gods, therefore, just one. And if there is a God I better figure out what he wants; particularly before I die. Now one God, now watch this, here's where people get mead.

and one mediator between God and man, between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

So here's what he says. You've got one God and you also have one mediator which means what? There's only one way to this one God. Now that's what makes people mad. Because if you walk out in this community and say I believe in Jehovah nobody's going to be mad. If you go out and say I go to church Sunday; nobody's going to be mad. You go to work tomorrow and you walk into the thing and you say, "Hey! I just wanted you guys to know I think there's one God and I think the only way to that God is Jesus." They are going to be hacked at you because now you've forced them not to some generic idea. Now they've got to deal with the name that demands allegiance. One mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. You say, "Well how does he mediate? What does he do?" Look at the next phrase.

6who gave himself as a ransom for all,

Now here's what he says. He gave himself as a ransom for all. That Greek word literally is the word for a ransom payment. It's the idea that people have captured you and you can't get away. You tried. You've done everything you can, but they hold you. And they send word to your family and they say, "We need some money." I'm hoping they'll call somebody besides my family, because I'm going to be in trouble. They send word to your family, "We need this amount of money." Your family sends the money, they get the money, once they receive the money, they release and let your family member go. That is the definition of that Greek word; a ransom payment. So here it is; you and I, God wants everybody to be saved; one God, one mediator. The truth that you have to come to from the Holy Spirit, by the way, you can't come to it through me, you've got to come to it through the Holy Spirit. Well what he's going to remind you of is this, that there was a payment made that you can't make. You can go all you want to. You can church, read your Bible, you can pray, you can help little old ladies across the street, you can be a nice guy, doesn't matter. You can't make the payment and you're stuck here, you're caught. Jesus, he says, made the payment. Now what is the payment? The Bible says the wages of sin, the payment for sin is death. Which never means in the Bible that I cease to exist. It always means that I'm separated from this one God and everything he wants to do for me. I can't get there. I can't get to him and I can't have what he wants to do for me. It's lost to me because I'm caught in this net and the problem is I'm caught in my sin and I can't get it off. Now Jesus, though, came, lived a completely perfect life, at age 33 he's on the cross, what happens? Total darkness, a voice from the cross to the one God. Remember how he starts? First statement: Father forgive them. Last statement: Father in your hands I commit my spirit. But in the middle of the cross: my God, my God why have you forsaken me? There is a death, a spiritual separation on the cross from the Father to the Son which is the payment for the separation I'm in. And when the Holy Spirit shares that with me and I say, "Yes, you're right." And I surrender to that then the payment's made. You say, "Oh, he's making the payment to

Satan.” No, no, no, no, no. God never pays anything to Satan. He pays it to himself. He’s holy and he can’t just ignore what I’ve done. And so he didn’t. He put his Son on the cross who paid for my payment. He made the payment. I can’t make it. He did make it. And if I come to a knowledge of that truth, the Holy Spirit convicts me and I do, “You know you’re right, Holy Spirit, I’m sinful, he wasn’t, I need what he did.” I’m saved. Now watch this because this is imperative that we change.

the mystery in the proper time. ⁷For which I have been appointed a herald and an apostle, I’m telling you the truth, I am not lying, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Now listen to what he says. Now listen. He says this ransom payment came at the right time. What does that mean? And he alludes to why it’s the right time. He says, “It’s allowed me to become a herald of the gospel.” How in this way? When the Greek civilization conquered the world under Alexander it brought a common language everywhere; this book, this Greek, not a high Greek, this is a common Greek in the New Testament. A very common, guttural Greek, it brought it everywhere so that anybody could learn it. Romans conquered and built peace and great roads so you could walk anywhere and go to any town and find somebody who knew Greek. Paul says, “He’s called me to do that.” Now listen. Pray specifically which courage for those under God but over you. So you can lead a quiet, tranquil life where you can exhibit Godliness in your lips and your life with an attractive dignity. Why? Because God wants everybody to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth that Christ on the cross paid a ransom and the reason he died at the time he died has enabled the Gospel to blow out in the culture with maximum effectiveness. You know why you’re supposed to go home today and pray for your principal in your kid’s school? Pray for the city manager. Pray for the mayors. Pray for the governor. Pray for the president. You know why? So that the people that God wants to find his son can hear him through you in this culture. Our prayer isn’t so we can sit around and have this nice easy life. Our prayer is so we can make it easier for the Gospel to be preached. That’s it. So now it’s interesting isn’t it, and this is why we struggle, no matter what the revisionist history books say, America was founded because of this passage of scripture. Because in Europe they didn’t have an easy tranquil life. If you had a Catholic on the throne, the Protestants were in trouble. If you had a Protestant on the throne, the Catholics were in trouble. And there was this constant incredible persecution. It was horrible. So finally our ancestors got sick of it and came over to America and declared religious freedom. They said, “Look we don’t care who you are. We’re going to worship but we’re going to be free. We’re going to live a quiet tranquil life where we can bring out Godliness and the truth of a redemptive ransom payment of Jesus. That’s why we came here.” Now so this prayer we didn’t really need to pray. Because that was America until really 1960’s at which point the most important court in our land declared, “Don’t pray in our schools.” It was outlawed. Don’t bring this book into our schools. It was removed. I remember a guy saying, “If we bring the 10 Commandments in it will psychologically warp children.” You have a psychologically warped buy right there. So they were removed. Supreme Court has recently said that although that book talks about life in the womb being precious and holy and the actual forming of the creator of a particular person, that a mother can, if she chooses, to eliminate that life. In the highest court in the land has said this is wrong, the mother’s right. This book declares marriage as a man and a woman. But our Supreme Court has declared, no, no, no, no, no. There is no definition any more. Two men. Two women. Man and a woman. 55 year old man and 18 year old boy. There is no longer a

single definition of marriage. So the Supreme Court has said that this is wrong. It's wrong on marriage. It's wrong on life. It's wrong on its own importance in the lives of our children. Now we have two options. The first option which we should be able to see now has failed miserably is we will go into what we have said culture wars. We're going to go after our culture. We're going to fight. We're going to elect the right people. We're going to make sure they're in office and we're going to stop this culture. We're going to bring it back to where it was. It's truly odd because that doesn't appear to be in here. What he seems to say is nothing about the culture. What he says is we go home and we kneel and we take those people over us, under him, and we go to him and we say, not anything about the culture, "Lord let these people make the decisions that will allow us to live a quiet and tranquil life so that we can take the message of your son because you want everybody saved." And let us get that message out. Quit fighting the culture. We're going to love the culture and we're going to pray that while we live in it we will be distinct from it but we will offer it the message of one God and one Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's pray.

Father I've got to confess for me, I have for a number of years, fought the culture. Father remind me strenuously through your spirit and through this book I'm to pray I can live in a world where I can share the truth about your son as freely as can possibly be done. Let that be what we pray for and let us love people that do not know you and maybe they form our culture. We're probably the minority today, Father, but remind us we may be the minority here, but you're the majority there. And we pray to you as we live under people that are under you, remind us of all that. In Jesus Christ name.