**Pray for Who?**

**Give Thanks for What?**

**1 Timothy 2:1-8**

Thanksgiving

11.25.2021

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Let me read to your our text again:

*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.*

You have now heard this Word of God twice today It has also been the reading appointed for Thanksgiving and been read from this lectern at least 21 times that I know of, and since I have been here – and it has been the text upon with the sermon for this day has been based seven times. And, as you read your Bible regularly, you are familiar with this text.

So, let me ask you a question, Who are you to pray for? And for what are you to give thanks?

You are to pray for all people, ***ALL*** people. Do you understand what that means? You are not just to pray for people who are sick in some way

You are not just to pray for people who have asked you to pray for them

You are not just to pray for family members, or members of our congregation

You are to pray for ***ALL*** people…

Jesus Himself gives us some very serious prescriptions in this matter, as we learn from other places of Scripture.

You are to pray for you enemies

You are to pray for those who persecute you. (Mt. 5:44)

You are to pray for those who abuse you. (Lk. 6:28)

We are to pray in thanksgiving for all people, especially the believers. (1Thess. 1:2)

We are to pray for the healing of forgiveness for one another. (James 5:16)

We are, ask Christians, to do some things that are not exactly pleasant. We are to do things which seem to go against the norm. We are called by God to be different, as we have said before, in the world – but not ***OF*** the world.

In this passage of Scripture, we are specifically told to pray for kings and all who are in high positions. We do not have kings in the United Stated, but we do have elected officials, those who govern us. What is more, there is often great divide in our political thought processes. Some of the issues that are labeled as political, are just that, some however are directly ordered by our faith. We are not going to get into that here.

What our text does tell us though, is that we are to pray for them – whether we agree with them politically or not. We are to pray for them that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. We pray that they would lead according to God’s will. We pray without prejudice. We pray that God would bless and guide them. What is more, this pray is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior.

What is also stated is that we are to pray for ***all*** in such a manner that has there eternal well-being in mind. We are to pray as God desires, that all people might be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

As this is Thanksgiving, and thanksgiving is one of the things we are to be doing, it is also good to ask, for what are we to be giving thanks? If we look at Scripture, we are to be giving thanks for all sorts of things. Throughout the Psalms we are instructed that giving thanks is how we bless God’s name. We are also to give thanks for His marvelous deeds, especially His steadfast love.

We are also supposed to give thanks for suffering for the name of Christ. (Acts 5:41; Rom. 5:3, 8:7, ) In fact, we are to share in one another’s sufferings, even as we share in one another’s joys – we do this by joining in prayer with and for one another. In fact, throughout Paul’s epistles, we are to rejoice and give thanks in our suffering for the name of Christ for it is evidence of future glory.

I know that what is asked in this text is not easy. It is hard to pray for our enemies. It is hard to pray for those with whom we do not agree. And it is surely difficult to give thanks in all things, especially our sufferings, because we’d like them to end.

How sad is it though that we, who know The One who has created us, sacrificed Himself in our own flesh to make us His own eternal children, who gives us all things in this life and the life to come, have to be reminded to take the time and seriously give thanks to God. And then, when we do sit around the table to do so, too often we are more worried about “getting it done so we can eat” than we are to take the time and seriously consider together the great things for which we are thankful.

So, for whom are we to pray? For what are we to give thanks?

Well, this is truly a national holiday to give thanks. It is not on the church calendar of any other country in the world, it is solely the holiday of the citizens of the United States. As such, it is highly appropriate that we consider this day by the words of the text, and the gathering in which we presently find ourselves.

We are gathered for the greatest Thanksgiving meal. Think about it! This is called the Eucharist. Eucharist literally means “give thanks.” It is the Greek word used in the consecration of the elements. Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the same night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks – eucharisto – He broke it, and gave it to the disciples. It is the same word in regard to the cup.

This Lord’s Supper is The Thanksgiving Meal. What is more, it is never done alone. It is called the Holy Communion because it is done by those who are gathered together in the name of Christ, the Communion of Saints – the gathering of the Holy Ones. And it is not just those whom we can see gathered around us at this particular altar that are in communion with us, but those gathered at every altar where the confession of this truth is the same as ours. And even more, with angel, archangels, and all the company of heaven we are gathered in communion with all those gathered around Christ’s table – in heaven and on earth.

That is why Christ delivered to us His table prayer. You know how it begins, “Our Father!” With Christ, we all have one Father. We are united to Christ! We are united with all who pray this prayer!

Yes, we fail miserably to pray as we ought! We fail miserably to give thanks for all things as we ought! Yes, it is plainly evident that we are, as we declared earlier, poor miserable sinners.

Thanks be to God that we are also the redeemed of God. You already heard the forgiveness Christ purchased upon the cross delivered to you – in your ears. Let us give thanks to God! Alleluia!

Thanks be to God that you are those who have been invited by Christ to His table, to dine on holy food – the very body of Christ pierced for you – His very blood shed for you – and in your eating and drinking, you receive forgiveness, His life, and salvation.

I give thanks to God for you all – that we are one in Christ for eternity! You are in my prayers, as I pray that I am in yours! Amen.