

An Exegetical and Devotional Commentary

1 Timothy 2:1-7

For Personal Growth

by Avon Malone

Chapter 2 deals, to a great extent, with the public assembly. Verses 1-7 is a section which has to do with the universality of the gospel. Notice the "all's" that are mentioned: Pray "for all men"; God "would have all men to be saved"; Christ "gave himself a ransom for all" (vv. 1, 4, 6). Verses 8-15 discuss the role and responsibility of men and women in the context of the public assembly.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE GOSPEL, 2:1-7

Verse 1

This great chapter begins with the words **I exhort therefore, first of all**. The "first of all" is not to be understood as indicating some kind of order or sequence in worship, but rather as showing that the matter discussed is first or primary in importance. Paul is simply emphasizing the importance and significance of the material under discussion.

Paul uses four different terms which relate to prayer: **Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving**. *Supplications* is translated from the word *deesis*. This particular word is a general term for petition and could describe a petition made to God or man. In this context, however, it refers to petitions made to God. There is a certain intensity in this word. It involves an asking for one's needs. As a general word for petition, it can refer to addressing either God or man.

Prayers is that word which is unrestricted as to content but limited to petition to God. It translates the word *proseuche*, which is a word for prayer to God.

Intercessions translates the word *enteuxis*. This word expresses confiding access to God. Particularly in our usage, intercession can refer to prayer in behalf of another.

Thanksgivings translates *eucharistia* and simply means thanksgiving. It means to express to God our thanks as we recognize Him as the Giver of all good blessings.

It is not altogether certain that Paul in this place intends to lay stress upon the distinction between these terms, though a certain distinction can be seen. The major point of the passage is that prayers are to be made for *all* men. Early gnosticism tended to be very exclusive. The same is true of first century Judaism. But Paul makes it very clear that our concern ought to be broad, including all mankind. Our prayers ought to be for all.

One fellow prayed: "O God, bless me and my wife and my son John, his wife, us four, no more." That attitude is unlike the attitude of the Christ and unlike the attitude Paul is teaching here. Supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings are to be made for all men.

Verse 2

For kings and all that are in high place. God's child is to pray for civil authorities. The late R. C. Bell beautifully summed up our responsibilities to civil authorities in three words: *pray, pay, and obey*. It is Proverbs 21:1 which says, "The king's heart is in the hand of Jehovah as the watercourses." That is, God controls. Throughout the book of Daniel there is a recurring refrain that the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men. Therefore, Christians are to pray for kings. We ought to be praying for those in power today.

There was an old controversy among the Jews as to whether or not such prayers for Gentile kings should be made in the public assemblies of worship. Paul makes it very clear that the Christian is to pray "for all men, for kings and all that are in high place." *Kings* translates a plural form of the word *basileus*, which means a ruler or

a king.

Why should we thus pray? We are to so pray **that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity.** We are to so pray that we might lead a quiet and peaceable life. The KJV has "in all godliness and honesty." In the second century an apologist named Theophilus wrote a work called *To Autolytus*. In chapter 14 of Book III, Theophilus says, ". . . the divine word gives us instructions, in order that 'we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.'" It is interesting that he quotes from this very passage and calls it the divine word, giving us the distinct impression that he sees this letter as authentic and credible.

Verse 3

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior. This is the ultimate test. What is it that pleases God? Notice that God is referred to as our Saviour. *Saviour* translates the word *soter*. Interestingly, in these letters, as in the devotional literature of the Old Testament, the Father, as well as the Son, is referred to as Saviour (1:1; 2:3; 4:10).

Verse 4

Who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. Some would not see the two clauses as being closely related, but they are very closely related. "Come to the knowledge of the truth" becomes a kind of technical term in New Testament usage for conversion. God would have all men to be saved. Judaism was not particularly missionary-minded or concerned about all men. Early gnosticism tended toward an interest in the elite and those who would be initiated into their system. But Paul says God is concerned about all men.

Notice how this clashes with the Calvinistic idea that certain ones are predetermined to damnation, having no choice in the matter. Alongside of this passage observe 2 Peter 3:9, Titus 2:11, 12, and Hebrews 2:9. While Calvinism would say that God predetermined and predestined the damnation of certain individuals leaving them no choice, the word teaches that God would have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

Verses 5, 6

For there is one God. This phrase should be

compared with a statement of Paul in Galatians 3:20: "A mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one." We are also reminded of the language of Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah." **One mediator also between God and men.** The mediator is the one who stands in the middle of the median being equally related to both parties. Of the Godhead, of the great Trinity, only God the Son is qualified for the position of mediator, for He is one in nature with the Father (John 10:30) and yet He is made like unto His brethren in all things (Hebrews 2:17).

Himself man, Christ Jesus. Of this one mediator Paul goes on to say **who gave himself a ransom for all.** That is the redemptive price. A ransom is the price that buys back the captive, the slave, or the kidnapped person. It is related to such passages as Ephesians 1:7, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, and 1 Peter 1:18-20. We were redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb. This is our third "all."

The testimony to be borne in its own times. The preaching of the message of the redemptive sacrifice came at exactly the right time. Galatians 4:4 says that in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son. Compare this thought with 1 Peter 1:20 where Peter says the redemptive sacrifice "was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times [in the last age] for your sake." The testimony to the redemptive sacrifice came at exactly the right time, according to God's plan and purpose.

Verse 7

Whereunto I was appointed a preacher. The word *preacher* is *kerux*. This is the word for "herald," one who comes with a message not his own. Paul didn't come tentatively and timidly saying, "Here is an interesting idea or a theory. Let us kick it around at our next discussion group." He comes with a proclamation from God. The preacher is a herald coming with a proclamation from God.

And an apostle. *Apostle* is from the word *apostolos*. *Apo* and *stello* combine to mean "one sent." Here this word is used in an official sense. Paul calls himself a preacher or herald and an apostle.

Now Paul parenthetically says, **(I speak the truth, I lie not).** This is a characteristic expres-

sion with Paul. In Romans 9:1 he says, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit." Paul will frequently make this kind of affirmation, putting it both positively and negatively as he claims truthfulness in his statement.

A teacher. Here is the word *didaskalos*. Paul has called himself a preacher or herald, an apostle, and a teacher.

Of the Gentiles. The Gentiles is his primary ministry (see Galatians 2:6-9, Ephesians 3:7-10). The grace given to Paul is his apostleship and ministry to the Gentiles. He is a teacher of the Gentiles **in faith and truth** or "in faith and verity." Paul's Gentile ministry was born of faith, sustained by faith, and produced faith. His preaching was a truthful presentation which resulted in freedom for obedient Gentiles.

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