

Reflection for September 21, 2025 - Eventually the News is Going to Get Out Inspired by 1 Timothy 2:1-7 (The Message Bible)

I chose The Message interpretation for this morning's scripture that Janet read, because of its simplified language. The Message often offers a more contemporary explanation for our present-day context. In particular today, I appreciated the second verse, ***"Pray especially for rulers and their governments to rule well, so we can be quietly about our business of living simply, in humble contemplation."*** The NSRV Updated Version which we normally read from says, ***"² for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity."*** Yesterday's Kings (in all but a few instances), are today's Presidents, Governors, Prime Minister's and the like.

In either case, the author of this scripture (perhaps Paul but uncertain), advises us to pray for leaders to make decisions so that we may live peacefully.

Immediately I thought, Amen to that. Here is a scripture that succinctly puts into context what we want most; for our world leaders to get off their ego trips, their obsession for power, their quest for personal wealth, their mania in the pursuit of fundamentalist religious doctrine. I quite often include these hopes in our community prayers. God, would you please help us convince the powerbrokers of our time that in your world, we are one people, one community, one family of origin. These are important prayers, for as it has been for centuries, the human quest for peaceful living, kingdom living as Jesus called it, continues to be thwarted.

Thus, I had planned to focus my reflection today on the evil that permeates our societies and how that is anti-Christian and in fact anti-God in any interpretation of scripture, any understanding of what it is to be held in Holy Love.

However, moving through this short but poignant scripture another theme is revealed.

"⁷ He (God) wants not only us but everyone saved, you know, everyone to get to know the truth we've learned: that there's one God and only one, and one Priest-Mediator between God and us—Jesus"

The turmoil in the early Christian Church in Ephesus over doctrine caused factions. The author hopes to bring everyone back to the cornerstone of their faith, to re-unite them—there was one God and one Jesus. God's love was universal, and Jesus' teachings were grounded in that premise.

We try as best we can to follow that same doctrine today. We know one truly ubiquitous source of love in the creator, and we live a life that emulates that of Christ. In that we pray often and earnestly. We offer prayers for the hungry and unhoused. Prayers for the abused and forgotten. Prayers for those in war torn regions and we pray for peace. We pray for the unfortunate who have experienced natural disasters. We pray for those we know who have been devastated by grief. But the scripture asks if we pray for everyone? And I'm not sure I always do that.

Reflecting on this passage from Timothy, William Matthews says, ***"In a world of mean-spirited, us-them, simplistic right-wrong thinking, our flock needs reminding that "everyone" for whom we pray is worthy of God's help and blessing and, likewise, our prayers for them are decidedly worth our breath."***

We need to pray for everyone in the hope that even those we might call badly misguided might be "set free," that they might come to know God.

I wondered if anyone prays for Kim John-un, the N Korean dictator and his quest for regional domination by nuclear armament? We pray for Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his country, but do we pray

¹ Homiletical, p 1

for Mr. Putin? I doubt many of you are praying for President Trump or Benjamin Netanyahu. We pray for peace and healing, and we pray for the victims of violence and war. But do we pray for the instigators, those responsible? Typically, we abhor them.

We pray they make decisions to honour and protect people rather than to oppress and abuse them. We pray for regime change; we even pray for victory of one force over another in the hope that peace may come. But this scripture says don't forget we need to pray for everyone. That means those we dislike, those that incense us, those we wish might fall from grace. This feels unrealistic and unfathomable. It seems to me an exceedingly difficult task.

Yesterday I caught a glimpse of President Trump's visit to the UK, and I said to Lenore, "I'm sure glad I am not a world leader because I could not stand to look that man in the face let alone shake his hand." I just don't think I could do that. That would be like shaking hands with evil itself. I couldn't stand to be in the same room with him. Pray for him? You have to be joking! God what are you asking of me? To pray for those who are instruments of harm seems so countercultural. And it feels if anything contrary to my faith.

But the author of 1 Timothy says, God wants not only us, but everyone saved, God wants everyone to know the truth we've learned. And if we do that, the truth will eventually get out. What truth is that?

A couple of days ago a ministry friend of mine and I were chatting about this theme. I was expressing my difficulty in the universal call that is asked of us, pray for everyone, that all may know the joy offered by the new kin-dom. And I asked her what was that truth that was eventually going to get out?

Sometime after our talk she replied saying, as we look to Jesus, God's voice of peace, hope justice and love in our world, **"It's not about believing in him, It is about believing him."** I had to read that over several times before I really understood what she was getting at.

My personal belief in Jesus the person, Jesus who walked the earth, the Jesus who taught of God's universal love, is not as important as what he taught. We wouldn't know Jesus today if we met him on the street or he knocked on our door. But we know what he said. Believe the message; that there is room for all, that all God's children have equal status, that we need reconciliation not retribution for errors made, that coercion and oppression are not a part of the kin-dom. We believe in the truth of Jesus' message, the fundamental tenet that we are to love one another as Jesus loved all those he met, ate with, and worshipped with. He would find love too for his accusers and his betrayers.

"Forgive them Father for they do not know what they are doing," were his last words before he died. (Luke 23:34)

In believing him, believing Jesus, we also believe in the power of prayer. Prayer can affect change. Prayer can hold up the grief stricken. Prayer can envelope the hopeless and desperate in a cocoon of light and warmth. And if we believe Jesus, we must believe also that prayer can even affect change in the minds and souls of those who are cruel, are driven by greed and ego, who manipulate through corruption and brutality, who believe themselves to be superior.

Is that a very naïve dream? Are we foolish to think that our speaking of a universal God of Love can be heard by everyone? Is it irrational to believe as Jesus did, that every heart was capable of holding that love?

We have to believe that eventually the news will get out. We can't lose that hope. And so, we will continue to pray for it, and also that we may be a part of that reality through the lives we live, and the prayers we offer to all that might receive them. Thanks for listening this morning, Amen