

AN EXHORTATION TO PRAYER

Scripture Reading: 1 Timothy 2:1

"I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (1 Timothy 2:1). We are living in a world today that is constantly in a state of turmoil and shows no signs of getting any better. No doubt but that in Paul's day, the people looked at things in much the same way; and yet the apostle exhorts them to prayer. Certainly our nation today and our leadership is in need of prayer. Because of our President's stand and actions there have been some who have stated, "I have a hard time praying for our President." Our prayers are to be focused on the Word of God and the will of God, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (v. 3).

We note in our context that there is no one beyond the scope of God's grace and provision through Christ, "Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." In the last part of verse 2, we read of the conditions that are favorable for us to live for the Lord and to reach out to the lost, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

May we, by God's grace, buy up the time and reach out to our world today through prayer. Our Lord may soon come; and until that time, we need to be serving Him.

Floyd Baker

Notes:

VOCATION OR VACATION?

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 4:1

In today's text, Paul pleads with the saints to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1). Unfortunately, many believers view the Christian life as more of a "vacation" than a "vocation"! The word "vocation" means our calling. Just as people who have a career often refer to it as their calling or vocation, so the believer in Christ has a calling, or vocation, to live up to.

What is our calling? In Ephesians 1:4, Paul says we were "chosen in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world that we should be *holy and without blame before him....*" Our calling is a calling to holiness. This is why Paul begins the second section of this epistle with the practical exhortation to walk according to our beliefs. Walking in accordance with our calling includes many things:

- 1) Walking in unity as the body of Christ— 4:3-16,
- 2) Walking as a new man in Christ— 4:17-29,
- 3) Walking according to the Holy Spirit— 4:30-5:20,
- 4) Walking as a Spirit-filled family— 5:21-6:4,
- 5) Walking as Spirit-filled servants and masters— 6:5-9,
- 6) Walking in the whole armor of God— 6:10-17,
- 7) Walking as ambassadors of the mystery— 6:18-20.

As you can see, our calling as Christians affects every area of life. Can others tell that you are saved by watching your life? It should show in everything you do!

Joel Finck

Notes:

WHY IS GOD GENTLE WITH US?

Scripture Reading: II Corinthians 10:1

"Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ..." Why doesn't the Apostle command them? Why doesn't he exercise his authority over them? Why doesn't Paul threaten them according to the "righteous judgment of God" who will take vengeance with flaming fire? It may seem strange to us to see the method that our Lord Jesus and His servant Paul use when dealing with normal sinners. Of course, there are severe warnings and judgments against false teachers and hardened, deliberate sinners. But normal, weak sinners are shown amazing grace and kindness from all of the Lord's true representatives! "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men... in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth..." (II Timothy 2:24-26). Here we have the key! The Lord wants us to speak the *TRUTH* in *LOVE*! This means we give people the truth of God with the right attitude. Both are necessary to do the work of God and obtain a reward for acceptable service.

If you can only keep one element of this formula, by all means keep the *TRUTH*. It—the *TRUTH*—will bless and edify others even though you will lose your reward. It will be far better for you if you do not offend people by having a bad attitude! Let us think about the pattern which the Lord and His Apostles used and commanded followers to use. As Paul puts it, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:9). Gentleness and meekness with others will accomplish much more than you think! Try it today!

John McKay

Notes:

TRUTH UNDER FIRE

Scripture Reading: Romans 16:17

As faithful saints of God and members of the church which is the Body of Christ, of which He is the head, we are inerrantly responsible to preserve, defend and disseminate the unadulterated Word of Truth. Paul, our apostle, has issued firm warning against our being deterred from our spiritual responsibility. He has clearly revealed to us the ministry of reconciliation which we are to preach and teach. Paul is fully aware of the detractors and false teachers who are ever at hand to try our faith by spreading lies and false doctrines. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (II Timothy 3:13).

The importance of discerning and expounding the "rightly divided Word of truth" is repeatedly stressed throughout the epistles of the apostle Paul. Referring to his exclusive message as revealed to him by the risen Lord, Paul writes to the Galatian church these very profound words of warning: "There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, *let him be accursed*" (Galatians 1:7b, 8). And when instructing young pastor Timothy, the apostle wrote, "The things that thou hast heard *of me* among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). Further along in the same letter we read: "Thou hast fully known my doctrine....Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, *knowing of whom thou hast learned them*" (II Timothy 3:10a, 14).

"Mark them which cause divisions... and avoid them!"

Robert E. Hanna

Notes:

LIVE FOR CHRIST

Scripture Reading: Romans 12:1

Romans 12:1 presents a challenge that most Christians have never fully appreciated. In this Scripture, Paul begs the members of the Body of Christ to present their bodies a "LIVING SACRIFICE." How can this be when all the sacrifices in the Old Testament were to be put to death; then placed upon the altar? Here, Paul asks for living sacrifices. What is Paul asking the saint to do? It seems clear to me that Paul is not asking anyone to DIE FOR CHRIST; he is asking us TO LIVE FOR CHRIST. The admonition in this passage is to die to self and to personal ambitions and to give ourselves to God to live our lives for His glory, doing His will here on the earth. If we stop to think, our hands are the only physical hands Christ has to do His work here on earth. Our mouths are the only physical mouths Christ has to speak His truth here on earth. We are to allow Christ to live His life in and through us.

Another aspect of this verse that we cannot deny is that God will never ask anything of His saints that is not "REASONABLE." It is most "REASONABLE" that if Christ died for us, we should be willing to live for Him.

Christ died for us, but He never asks any of His saints to die for Him. He only asks us to LIVE FOR CHRIST.

Marvin Duncan

Notes: