

**Prayers for All: Embracing God's Saving Desire**

**Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!**

It was the dawn of a new republic: On April 30, 1789, George Washington ascended the balcony of Federal Hall in New York City, his hand upon the Bible as he swore the presidential oath. In his inaugural address, he called upon the Almighty, urging citizens to offer fervent prayers for the nation's leaders, that divine favor might guide them toward justice and peace. This wasn't mere ceremony; it mirrored a sacred directive from Scripture, one that resonates through centuries right up to our gathering today.

Our text from 1 Timothy 2 unveils this profound truth: God calls His people to pray for all, rooted in His desire for their salvation through the one mediator, Jesus Christ. This saving will of God not only fuels our prayers but orders our worship, drawing us into lives of quiet godliness where Christ's redemptive work shines brightest. Today we walk through Paul's words to Timothy, allowing the Spirit to illuminate our hearts and minds with powerful truths.

Paul begins with an urgent plea: *"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"* (vv. 1-2). Notice the breadth—prayers for all people, not just the faithful or the friendly. Supplications for needs, intercessions stepping in on behalf of others, thanksgivings even amid trials. And specifically for kings, those wielding authority in government and society.

Why such emphasis? In Paul's day, Roman Caesars claimed divinity, demanding worship. Yet he instructs prayer for them, that believers might live peacefully, pursuing godliness without hindrance. Recall Daniel in Babylon, a captive exile serving pagan kings like Nebuchadnezzar. Despite the furnace threats and lion's den, Daniel prayed three times daily, facing Jerusalem, interceding for his people and even for the rulers who held them captive. His faithfulness led to decrees honoring God, opening doors for truth in hostile lands. So too, our prayers for

leaders—presidents, governors, judges—aren't endorsements of policies but pleas for conditions where the church can flourish, where the gospel runs free. In a world of political storms, these prayers anchor us, reminding us our true citizenship is in heaven.

Paul continues, *"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"* (vv. 3-4). Here beats the heart of the passage: God's saving desire. He doesn't delight in judgment but longs for every soul to know His truth. This isn't a vague wish; it's the sovereign God's will, inviting all to repentance. And what is this truth? *"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time"* (vv. 5-6).

Delve deeper with the Greek: "Mediator" is translated from the Greek word "mesitēs," signifying one who stands between parties to reconcile them. Like an arbitrator in today's word only more. In ancient disputes, a mesitēs bridged divides, forging peace. Jesus, fully God and fully man, is our sole mesitēs—He alone spans the chasm sin created, reconciling us to the Father. No other path, no other name. And His work? He "gave himself as a ransom," which is translated from "antilutron," a price paid to free captives. In Roman slave markets, an antilutron redeemed the enslaved. Christ paid with His blood, not silver, ransoming us from sin's bondage—for all, at the appointed time.

Paul affirms his role: *"For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth"* (v. 7). The apostle to the nations underscores this universal scope. God's desire embraces every tribe, every ruler, every wanderer. Feel the weight: The Creator yearns for your neighbor, your adversary, even the tyrant. This truth stirs the soul—amid division, Christ's ransom unites, His mediation heals.

Flowing from this gospel core, Paul turns to worship conduct: *"I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling"* (v. 8). Men, lead in prayer, hands raised in surrender, hearts free from wrath. No fisticuffs in the fellowship; peace reflects the Prince of Peace. Think of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863, where amid cannon fire and fallen comrades, Union General George Meade paused for prayer, seeking divine guidance without bitterness

toward foes. His composure steadied troops, mirroring how holy prayer calms the church's storms.

Paul also addresses the role of women in the church: *"likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works"* (vv. 9-10). Adornment isn't forbidden finery but the beauty of character. In Ephesus, where temple prostitutes flaunted excess, Paul calls for modesty that points to Christ, not self. Good works—acts of mercy, hospitality—become the true jewels. In the fourth century, Monica was the mother of who we now know as the great church theologian St. Augustine. He was one of the greatest influences on our own Martin Luther. Amid a pagan husband's abuse and her son's waywardness, Monica adorned her life with persistent prayer and kindness, leading Augustine to faith. Her quiet godliness illuminated the path to salvation.

Paul presses on: *"Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet"* (vv. 11-12). In the assembly, women learn in submission, not assuming authoritative teaching over men. This isn't silencing voices but ordering roles for the sake of harmony. Grounded in creation: *"For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor"* (vv. 13-14). The order was established in Eden—Adam first, then Eve as helper. Deception struck Eve, yet Adam bore responsibility. Sin disrupted everything, but God's design endures.

Then comes the promise: *"Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control"* (v. 15). Paul doesn't mean women are saved by having babies just to keep humanity going. He means women (and men) are saved through the bearing of the Christ-child Jesus by the Virgin Mary—the seed promised in Genesis 3:15, born of woman, crushing the serpent. Women, like men, are saved by grace through faith, expressed in godly living. Roles reflect redemption, not restriction.

Paul's words here to Timothy weave prayer, gospel, and order into a fabric of God's saving purpose. We pray for all because God desires their rescue through Christ's

mediation and ransom. Men lead in holy prayer, women in modest works, all submitting to creation's design. In chaotic times, this brings peace.

And what powerful work does Jesus perform? He is our eternal mediator. His ransom paid for our release once and for all. He transforms hearts, turning persecutors into preachers, rebels into the redeemed. In us, He fosters faith, love, holiness—quiet lives echoing His dignity. Through Him, prayers ascend, salvation descends, and the church stands as a beacon. Let this truth grip your soul: Christ ransoms, reconciles, renews. Amen.

**The peace of God guard your hearts and minds as you believe and trust in Him.**

Pastor Ron Breight      Christ Lutheran Church   Forest Hills, Pennsylvania

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