

OUR BASIC ATTITUDE OF WORSHIPING GOD

1 Timothy 2:1-15

Key Verse: 2:5

"For there is one God and one mediator between
God and men, the man Christ Jesus..."

As we know well, First and Second Timothy are pastoral epistles along with Titus. In short, these are instructions for shepherds how to take care of God's flock of sheep. In chapter one we studied that the spiritual secret of a fruitful ministry is to know God's grace deeper and deeper. At the same time, each person must know that he is a self-righteous sinner without the grace of Jesus. Most importantly, we Christians must know that there is constant battle between God's children and the children of the devil. This battle is not a battle between husband and wife. It is against the power of the darkness, the devil (Eph 6:12). In order to subdue the power of the devil we must remember

what kind of grace we received and what kinds of sinners we were. When we know the grace of Jesus, God gives us the Spirit of God. Today we want to learn another secret of spiritual victory. It is prayer. Let's learn how to pray and for whom we have to pray.

I. One mediator between God and men (1-8)

First, prayer is a spiritual battle (1). Look at verse 1. "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone." In verse 1, Paul urges Timothy to pray. What is prayer? Prayer is a spiritual battle. There are many famous people. But those who are recognized as men and women of prayer seem to be the most outstanding. When we visit many Christian houses, we see that most houses have the picture of Jesus who is praying in the garden of Gethsemane to decide whether or not to drink the cup of suffering. Someone was asked why he put up a picture of Jesus who was praying in the garden of Gethsemane. He answered, "I don't know." He also did not know why he liked the picture of praying Jesus. People like the picture of praying Jesus because they feel a holy quietness and the peace of God. When we read the four gospels, we see that Jesus did not have much

time. But Mark 1:35 says, "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." Jesus' life began with prayer and ended up with prayer on the cross. Once, Jesus taught his disciples how to pray in Matthew 6:9-13: "This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'" Matthew's gospel didn't include the final benediction: "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." The Lord's prayer includes all peoples of all nations. We must know why Jesus did not teach them philosophy or martial arts. Instead, Jesus taught hot-blooded young disciples how to pray, because prayer is the most potent weapon in the spiritual warfare in defeating the power of the devil. The earthly messianic ministry was not easy. Jesus had to heal the sick and preach the kingdom of God from early morning to late night. But Jesus gained strength through early morning prayer.

Second, prayer is total dependence on God (1). Look at verse 1 again. "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made

for everyone..." When we carefully meditate on this verse, prayer is, in essence, not making requests, but depending entirely upon God as a loyal subject waits for the order of a king. Our God is the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, so whenever we ask in prayer he will grant us the best things we need according to his wisdom. Mark 11:22-23 says, "Have faith in God...I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him." Jesus kept on saying in Mark 11:24, "Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." When we have faith we can pray. When we pray, God answers more than we asked. For example, Paul was leading the early Christians. Paul's time was very short. But it was known as a challenging power to the whole world which was evil. There was a problem. Paul became old and his successor, Timothy, was weak physically and a widowed grandma's boy and a widowed mommy's boy. To Timothy, to bear the burden of persecutions and the ill treatment of Christians was impossible. But to Paul, it was absolutely possible for Timothy to bear the burden of the early Christian church. As we know well, in the early Christian days, Judaizers persecuted Christians because Christians didn't practice ancient Jewish traditions and cultural peculiarities. Rome severely persecuted Christians because Christians seemed to challenge the immoral lives of the Romans, and they opposed emperor worship. When Timothy shepherded the Ephesian church, Nero was the Roman Emperor. Nero professed himself to be a poet and a singer. Nero, in his megalomania, had a vain glory to make a new city of Rome in the middle of which a golden palace would be built. But Nero could not destroy Roman houses, which were densely put together. And so many people were living there that all the houses looked as if they would wobble at any moment. The Emperor Nero started a fire in the central part of Rome and charged Christians with burning the houses in rebellion against the Roman Empire. Immediately Nero began to persecute Christians, and many Christians lost their lives.

The Roman Christians had no place to go. So they went to live in a graveyard of the Roman people. Romans saw graveyards, called catacombs, as sacred and they did not severely attack Christians who lived there. Christians had to overcome the difficulty of living in coal-mine-like graveyards. Their

living conditions were unbearable. They lived under constant threat. They could have complained. But they did not. Instead, they prayed. Then God gave them joy and peace and the strength to overcome the world. Look at verse 1. "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone..." Paul did not worry about their uncertain life securities. Paul did not tell them how to run away from the enemies' attack. He told them to pray.

Paul also told them to thank God for their situations. Humanly speaking, they were born in an unfavorable time. But spiritually speaking, they were born in the most glorious time. They could be pioneers of the Christian faith and they had the mission to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to the whole world. This is the basic Christian attitude to worship God. Christians are indeed glorious and noble.

Third, intercessory prayer (1-4). Look at verse 1 again. "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone..." In verse 1, Paul mentioned intercessory prayer. In verse 2, Paul urges them to practice intercessory prayer. Look at verse 2. "...for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." Paul admonishes them to pray for kings and all those in

authority who constantly persecuted them. We call this "intercessory prayer."

What is the meaning of intercessory prayer? By praying for other people we can have the peace of God and peace of mind and godliness and holiness in our souls (2b). By making intercessory prayer we can win them over to God so that they may be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (4). Christians are not selfish people but prayer servants for the glory of God (3). Let's read verses 3-4. "This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." Intercessory prayer is a prayer for God's lost children, whoever they may be. God never hears selfish prayer. God hears intercessory prayer. Those who make intercessory prayer are indeed great men in the sight of God.

Fourth, one mediator (5-7). Look at verse 5. "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus..." Thus far, no one dared to think about the power of sin and death. Before death, all people surrendered and were swallowed up. But Jesus, through his death and resurrection, opened the way to God. Thus, he became the unique mediator.

When we think about the word "mediator" we learn that a mediator is the servant of prayer. Jesus prayed in John 17:1-3 that he might glorify God through his death and that through his death many might believe and have eternal life. Jesus prayed in John 17:17 as a conclusion of his prayer for his disciples, that they would be sanctified. In short, Jesus prayed that his disciples might grow spiritually and be the holy servants of God for God's flock. Not only so, Jesus prayed for all the people of all nations. Look at John 10:16. "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." We Christians are not selfish people. We Christians worry about nothing. We Christians are small mediators who pray for the salvation of others' souls.

Paul was sure that he was appointed as a shepherd for the Gentiles (Ro 1:5). At that time, Gentile people were known as speaking animals. From the Jewish point of view, the fact that God appointed an apostle to the Gentiles was a great humiliation and severe punishment. But Paul, who knew the grace

of Jesus, was appointed as an apostle of the Gentiles. It was the wonderful grace of God. Paul brags about his appointment in verse 7, "And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle--I am telling the truth, I am not lying--and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles." Without knowing God's grace no one can be an intercessor.

II. Woman's attitude to worship God (9-15)

First, women should learn in quietness and full submission (9-11). In light of church history, without the women of the church, the church could not be maintained. Women's little by little offering and slow and steady offering covered Jesus' apostolic band's needs. When we study the Philippian church, one woman Lydia's prayer and her coworker's financial support met Paul's needs three times for worldwide evangelistic journies. These days most churches are declining because godly women's support has been long ignored. In Paul's time, there were very active Christian workers such as Lydia, Priscilla, Euodia and Syntyche (Ac 16:14,15; Ac 18:2; Php 4:2). Look at verse 11. "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission." Paul admonishes

that a woman should learn in quietness and submission. It does not necessarily mean that women were too argumentative or rebellious. It meant that when women serve churches, women must reveal God's grace through their womanly quietness and submission.

How can a woman be sweet and gentle? There is a woman who has never criticized anybody in her life. She thinks that to pray for needy persons is her lifetime mission and that to visit the needy is also her lifetime mission. She also writes one letter a day to a person who needs prayer support. There is an American folk singer who has been very popular. She has seven sons. Her husband is her manager and takes care of all the children. She always respects her husband as the number one man in the world. Because of her quietness, her popularity is growing day by day even though her singing is not getting better. Paul said women also should learn full submission. It does not necessarily mean that a woman should be like a slave to her husband, but a woman should not despise her husband.

Second, a woman should not have authority over a man (12-15). Look at verse 12. "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she

must be silent." Many crooked people insist that a woman should not teach the Bible in the church. Paul did not say that a woman should not teach the Bible in the church. What Paul meant was that women should not be too outgoing or too talkative. Paul also admonishes that a woman should not try to teach others. Rather a woman should have a learning mind to grow in her gentleness. Here Paul is saying that woman's inner beauty should be sweet and ready to listen to what others say. When Paul said a woman should not have authority over a man he urges that there must be a spiritual order. A man is the head of the family and a woman is next, the second. It is because God made it so. In the beginning God created man first and out of man created a woman. According to Paul's reasoning, woman sinned first and caused Adam to sin. So there is no reason for a woman to be too outgoing.

We praise and thank God that Jesus Christ is our mediator. He mediated between God and man through his death on the cross and through his resurrection. We thank God that we can grow much spiritually when we learn how to pray instead of thinking too much. May God help us to form a habit of prayer in any situation. May God help us to form a habit of making

intercessory prayer. May God bless you to become men and women of prayer.