



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Timothy 2: 1-7

“Public Prayer”

1 Timothy

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our text this evening is 1 Timothy 2: 1-7, and we'll read them, but first let's have a word of prayer. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for this time together. We thank you that we can come together and open the Scriptures to read them and then consider their meaning together. And we ask that as we do that, you bless us and teach us and give us good instruction. We pray that we would understand the meaning of the apostles' statements, which have puzzled some. And we pray that you give us clarity. And we pray that you give us the force and the clear exhortation that He gives about prayer. And we pray that you would make us increasingly a church and individuals of fervent prayer. We thank you for the instruction that He has given us. We pray that you bless us and teach us. And we pray that for the meetings that are going on at this time. We pray that you bless the young people as they meet together and that you would bless the instruction that's given and the fellowship that they have. Bless us, now, as we turn our attention to your Word. Build us up in the faith. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] 1 Timothy 2: 1-7: “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgiving, be made on behalf of all men, for kinds and all who are in authority, so that they may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and

men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissention.”

Some years ago, I was given an old book by Samuel Miller. He was one of the founders and original professors at Princeton Seminary. His book was on public prayer; that was the title of it. And I confess that my initial response was, “That doesn’t sound very interesting.” What can you say about public prayer? I thought it was a book about prayer, which did interest me. But then public prayer – I wasn’t sure that was going to be any – something I was particularly interested in. But I perused it anyway, and I found it to be very significant – very interesting book. He made the point that it’s very important to have public prayer in the meeting of the church. It has an important function. He developed that somewhat. He made the point that some men are gifted, and some men aren’t. Some men who are very good preachers, and he gave some examples of men in that day that were known as very skilled teachers and preachers – were not very good at public prayer – while others who were not particularly gifted in teaching or preaching could stand and pray very effectively. Well, I found it to be an interesting book. And I suppose I should have been interested at first glance because that is the subject that Paul takes up in 1 Timothy 2: 1-7. This is a topic that Paul thought very important, and so we should as well.

Paul has reminded Timothy of the instruction that he gave him when he left Timothy in Ephesus and Paul went on to Macedonia. And when he left him there, he gave him the instruction to correct error, to correct the false teachers that were in the church. Having done that, he now begins what has been called “the main business of the epistle,” which is about worship and order in the church. And the fact that the first topic in this subject on the church is the subject of prayer should indicate to us just how important it is. In fact, Paul indicates the importance of this subject with the introductory words, “First of all.” So this is the first subject that Paul takes up when he begins to talk about the church worship and the order of the church because

Paul knew that a vital church is a praying church. He knew what James said. At least he certainly knew the thoughts and the teachings that James put forth when he states that effective prayer can accomplish much. And so that's where Paul begins, verse 1: “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgiving, be made on behalf of all men.”

So public prayer is not simply a nice formality, a good way to begin a Sunday morning service or even a Wednesday night service. Like everything that is done regularly and becomes a part of the order of a service, it can become routine. That's the danger we face with anything that we do in a regular way. May be the right thing that we do in a regular way, but we do face the danger of it becoming somewhat routine, and that shouldn't be.

And to lay stress on the importance of prayer and cover the subject thoroughly, Paul piles up words or synonyms for prayer. He gives four words, which are not easily distinguished from one another, though commentators have made distinctions. So I'll give you the distinctions that have been made for these various words. The first word Paul lists is “entreaties,” and it has a reference to supplications or petitions in regard to a specific need. In other words, asking for help is generally the way we pray. We have needs, and we go to the Lord with our needs. We're encouraged to do that. Sometimes feel guilty about that. We feel like well, we shouldn't just take all our needs to Him constantly – go for things for ourselves, and yet, the author of Hebrews tells us to draw near to the throne of grace. We're to approach it boldly and in time of need to seek help, to seek God's grace and mercy. So that's the first one that he lists.

And then the next word is “prayers,” a more general word referring to every form of address to God, confession, thanksgiving, praise, and requests. Then he mentions “petitions” or intercession. It's used of petitioning a superior as with petitioning a king and probably petitioning on behalf of another person. And so when we go to the Lord in prayer, we are going to the ultimate King, the King of kings, and we are making petition before Him.

The fourth word is “thanksgiving,” and of course, we're to give thanks in all things. Paul will return to that in chapter 4 where the good things of this world are not to be rejected but to be received with gratitude, with

thanksgiving. He'll stress that. He writes of it elsewhere – importance of being thankful. Philippians 4:6: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything with prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” That's how we're to approach the Lord. In every thing, we're to give thanks because everything we have is a gift. Everything about our lives is a gift. Every moment of existence is a gift from Him.

You can see that at least in the implication of that from texts such as Acts 17:28. Paul tells the philosophers in Athens that it's in God that we live and move and have our existence. Then he writes in Colossians 1:17 that in Christ “all things hold together.” You hold together in Christ; he keeps you together at this very moment. You're sustained because you live within God – His omnipresence and His omnipotence. You benefit from that. We live and move and exist in Him, and Christ holds you together so we can thank Him for every moment that we have. It's all a gift from Him. So we are to be thankful. We should be giving thanks to God continually.

But our prayers are not to be made only for ourselves. In fact, mainly here it seems that they're to be made for others because Paul says, “on behalf of all men.” So we're to be praying for others. That's his exhortation in this text. The British commentator, Donald Guthrie, in his commentary on this passage writes, “The wider the subject for prayer, the larger becomes the vision of the soul that prays.”

Now I think Paul wanted the church to have a very broad, wide vision. The Lord had given a very wide, broad vision to the church from the very beginning. It's a worldwide vision. Go throughout the world, minister and preach the Gospel, and make disciples. And so, that is to be the object of our concern is to be very wide – is to be very broad. But this expression, “on behalf of all men,” calls for some comment. It has bearing upon other statements that Paul makes in the text. And if we're thinking – if we're really following what Paul is saying and not just glancing over words – we tend to do that sometimes when we read. We just read things without giving a lot of thought about what's been said.

But to read this statement that we are to make petitions; we're to pray on behalf of all men. Well, what does that mean? Does that mean we are to

pray for everyone all without exception – every single individual in the world? I forget what the exact figure is – I don’t guess there is an exact figure on the world population, but I think the last I heard was something like five billion people presently in the world. Of course, he doesn’t mean that. That’s impossible, and it doesn’t even really bear repeating. We can’t pray for everyone. And that’s not a necessary interpretation of this word “all.”

There are numerous examples in the New Testament where the word is used in a narrow, restricted sense. For example Mark 11:32, we read all or everyone considered John the Baptist to be a real prophet. Well, did Caesar consider John the Baptist to be a prophet? Did the barbarians in the force of Germany at that time think that John the Baptist was a real prophet? Obviously not. John didn’t even mean that the Jewish priests and Pharisees thought that he was a real prophet. Most of the Jewish people did. That’s his point, but it’s not all without exception. Or John 3:26, the disciples of John the Baptist come to him, and they say all were going to Jesus for baptism. Every individual in the whole world? Well, obviously not. It’s not what he meant. John’s disciples weren’t even going to him for baptism, at least not all of them.

Now there are many other examples we can give of “all” being used in a restricted sense. Words always have to be read in their context. We see that here. We can see the word in its context meaning “all without exception” in some cases, and sometimes “all without distinction” is the meaning. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Well, that’s universal. That’s true of every individual, and yet even there, we have to restrict it to not include the Lord Jesus Christ. He’s the only exception, but that is a universal term with Him as the exception.

But here, Paul is referring to all without distinction; pray for all kinds of people is the point that he’s making. Pray for all classes of men. Now that’s clear from verse 2 where Paul indicates the “all” he is referring to, “for kings and all who are in authority.” Paul was correcting a natural tendency that we have, and that is to limit the scope of our prayers, in the interest of our intercession, to those whom we know and those whom we care about. Christians have a duty to all kinds of people. And in that regard, Paul

specifies here ruling classes regardless of whether we have a preference for the ruler or not.

At the time, you remember, the man who was sitting on the throne and ruling the empire was not a particularly lovely individual. It was Nero, to whom Paul had been a prisoner. It is most likely that this time he is free, but he will again be Nero’s prisoner. But Paul’s statement includes him. The word “all” refers to all kinds of people. That means good and bad alike, all rulers. In fact, the bad ones are particularly the ones that need our prayers. We need to be praying for them. They’ve been appointed by God to govern. That’s clear from what Paul says in Romans 13:1, and so they are to be the object of our prayer.

The purpose of the prayer is given in the remainder of verse 2 and in verse 3. There are two reasons for prayer. The first is for the church’s advantage. It affects peace “so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.” The two words “tranquil” and “quiet” are synonyms, and Paul puts them together to lay stress on the importance of serenity in social affairs, peace or tranquility in civil matters. Tranquility here is not to be sought for personal pleasure. It’s not to be sought for personal prosperity, financial prosperity so that Christians can enjoy life. That’s not a bad thing in and of itself. We all desire that. It’s proper to want that. It’s not wrong, but that is not what Paul is praying about. That’s not what he’s giving instruction about here. It is so that we can prosper so that we can grow so that we can develop spiritually so that we can live “in all godliness and dignity.”

That word “dignity” means gravity. That is one of the meanings, one of the ways to translate it, and some of the commentators do translate it that way. And it suggests moral earnestness, taking life seriously. Think of that line from Longfellow, “Life is earnest! Life is real!” It’s the way life is to be lived for the Christian. It is not something to be treated trivially. We are to see it as earnest and real, and we are to apply ourselves to it.

And that is particularly to be the case in the church and the meeting of the church. The individual who comes to teach on a Sunday morning or Wednesday night, wherever the class may be, is to be very earnest about the Word of God and delivering it to the congregation. Those who listen and

those who attend are to be earnest in what they hear, and there's to be a gravity, a dignity to the way the meeting is conducted and the way we conduct our lives within the church – certainly the way we conduct our lives outside the church. Those results of godliness and dignity develop best in times of peace generally.

Of course, peace can become an occasion for self-gratification where we try to prosper in pleasure and in finance and that kind of thing. And that's when the church becomes worldly and becomes indifferent to the things of God, and then for our own good, the peace is disturbed because then we need a disruption of peace. We need difficulty in order for the church to grow. And so God sifts it, and He purifies it. He speaks of that – Peter speaks of that, I should say in 1 Peter 4:17 God deals with His people, and sometimes in a very difficult way. But peace is to be desired because there we flourish. We have the greatest opportunity to do that to study the Word of God unhindered. And so our prayers are to be for rulers, are to be for those in authority to that end so that peace would be established.

Politics is not the business of the church. I think it's to be the business of Christians, and we're to be interested in politics, but I do not believe that politics is the business of the church. And in my personal opinion, evangelical churches failed in this way in this past number of years because it's become very interested in politics and spends a great deal on that, which has become a distraction from the real mission, which is to go throughout the world and preach the Gospel, make disciples. Politics is not the business of the church, but praying for politicians is. And it has a real influence on national affairs.

It has been said, and I have read, that the decline of evangelical influence in Germany and the emergence of liberalism and radicalism, which has been so prominent in that country, paved the way for the first World War and then for what followed after that with the rise of the Third Reich. I don't know that to be true, but it makes a lot of sense to me that that would be the case. The evangelical church failed in its influence, I guess. It became weak. If it had been strong in praying for its leaders, perhaps things would not have been that way. But prayers of the church affect the welfare of many people.

That’s really incidental to the main reason that we are to be praying. It’s not so that we’ll have good government. It’s not so that we’ll have a peaceful society, and we’ll have a nice environment in which to live. That’s the concern of so many people today, and it’s a valid concern, but that’s not the ultimate reason. The ultimate reason for these things is so that in that environment, the church can develop spiritually and become strong so that it can carry out its mission.

The second reason is given in verse 3. Such prayer is pleasing to God, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior.” It’s good and acceptable because God is a God of peace, and he desires peace. But it’s also acceptable because, as I’ve said, an environment that is peaceful facilitates the spread of the Gospel, and, Paul says, “God our Savior desires all men to be saved.” Now that statement in verse 4 that “God desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” is of theological interest because it has been a proof text for unlimited atonement.

And that is the popular view of the death of Christ in evangelicalism today that Christ died for all without exception. He died for Judas as well as for Peter. He died for those who were already in Hell when he was hanging on the cross as much as He did for those who are not yet born. Christ’s death was designed to save everyone who has ever been born or ever will be born. And on the cross He died for their sins in the hope of doing just that of saving every individual.

Well after all, as we read here, Paul writes, “God desires all men to be saved.” And what else could that mean? “All” means just what it says, doesn’t it? I’ve had people say that to me somewhat heatedly, “It means what it says – all, everyone. Can’t you read? Don’t you know what the word means?” That’s kind of the idea behind the challenge. Well it’s not that simple. If He desires all men to be saved, and we can translate that wills all to be saved because it’s the word that means that – means wills. Well, then why aren’t they saved? Well, of course one would say because of unbelief. They don’t believe. And of course a person must believe to be saved. We’ve seen that, and we will continue to see that in our studies of the book of Romans on Sunday morning. That’s true. But if you study the Bible, and you study this

issue about faith, what becomes very clear – and I say very clear – is that faith is a gift. Faith is given by God. How else can a dead person believe?

And so Paul begins Ephesians 2:1-2, and then he goes down to verse 8, and it's very clear that it's all a gift. You can see it in other texts, Acts 11:18. The Jews marveled that God has granted repentance to the Gentiles. Granted means given. He gave them repentance. And Paul says the same in Philippians 1:29, “It's been granted to you not only to believe but to suffer for His namesake.” I don't know how one puts it any clearer than that. And as you study through the scriptures, it's very clear that faith is a gift. Well if He desires everyone to be saved, and you have to believe to be saved, why didn't He grant faith to everyone? And if He desires all, everyone to be saved, do you really think that man's unbelief can frustrate God?

Isaiah has a lot to say about that. Turn to Isaiah 40, a magnificent chapter. And he talks about the great things of man, and he compares man to a speck of dust on God's scale. That's what man is. In all of His glory, everything that we have, everything that we can muster – all of our strength, all of our glory, all of our glory – what does it amount to? A speck of dust as nothing on God's scale. Do you think us as individuals can frustrate God if that's what he desires that all men be saved? That either diminishes God completely or that elevates man to being equal with God, really more powerful than God.

Isaiah is very clear about man and his ability and God and His ability. And he says in Isaiah 14:27, and no one can frustrate God's plan or His will; no one can turn back His hand. If His hand is set upon saving all, then all will be saved. All without exception will be saved if that's His desire. But not all are saved, and we should conclude from that that therefore that is not God's desire to save all/everyone without exception.

Paul doesn't mean that, and I think a careful consideration of the text rules that out. It rules out the idea of unlimited atonement, which really is not unlimited and is not an atonement. The scope or the design of it is, first of all, limited to the number of people who will be born. That's not an infinite number of people. It's a limited number, and when you consider it – what are there five billion people today? Well let's say there were ten billion people

before. That’s 15 billion. Add another 10 to 25 billion people. Let’s say when all is said and done, there will be 100 billion people who have been born. That’s as nothing compared to the infinite God. That’s limited. That doesn’t say anything about the greatness of the atonement by the number of people for whom Christ died, but more importantly, that idea of the atonement is limited in its power. It doesn’t really save anyone. It is a hypothetical atonement. No one is atoned for – not really. That’s all dependent upon whether a person will believe or not. The idea is that Christ has died for everyone, paid for their sins to make them savable, and now it’s up to them to do the critical thing – accept. And if they accept, everything’s fine. And if they don’t, then the work of Christ came to nothing.

In other words, Christ’s death did not save anyone. And yet, if you read through the Scriptures, read through the New Testament, the way it is presented is an effective atonement. He accomplished what He set out to do. He actually saved those for whom He died, and He intended to save His people. You shall name Him Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins – not might save them from his sins; He will. “And if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself. I will do it,” He said. And He did it and is doing it. The question is, who are the all men?

Well, I don’t think that the death of Christ is presented here as for all without exception, as I have said. And I think that’s born out by the context. The word “all” in verse 4 should be understood in the same way it’s understood in verse 2, all kinds of people, not all without exception, but all without distinction. The death of Christ was designed to encompass all people from every rank, race, sex, nationality – human race. It’s for Jew and Gentile, male/female, slave/free. Divide the world anyway you want, Christ’s death encompasses them.

So Paul’s point is that God desires that all kinds of people be saved and that they come to understand the whole revelation of God and Jesus Christ. And because that is God’s wish or God’s will or God’s desire, it will happen, and it is happening. And Christians are to pray to that end, pray that God’s will be done. We are to pray for political leaders so that there will be peace so that the Gospel will go forth unhindered so the people will be saved upon

believing it. To support that, Paul explains in verse 5 the reason for God’s desire that all kinds of people be saved and come to know the truth, “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” There is one God; there are not many gods. There’s not a god for the Jews and a god for the Gentiles. There’s not a god for the rulers and a god for the slaves and all of that. There’s one God who loves Jews and Gentiles. His love is not restricted to one nation. It’s not restricted to one class so our prayers shouldn’t be restricted to one group of people, one class of people. Consistent with God’s relationship to mankind as its single creator is Christ’s relationship to mankind as its mediator.

Now a mediator is a go between, a middleman, I think as A.T. Robertson defined it. And Christ is that mediator; He is the middleman between God and man. That is the reason it was necessary for him to have a genuine human nature. In order to represent men as their priest and represent them as the sacrifice, in order to take their place on the cross, He had to be a man. He had to have a genuine human nature. And so He is referred to in that way as the man Christ Jesus. He is our mediator. There’s no other mediator between God and man.

We look to anyone else, any other man or an angel or something like that, then we’ve turned to an error and a lie. Christ is the only mediator. the only go between, the only one who brings us to the Father. In verse 6, Paul defines more specifically Christ’s work as mediator, “gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.” Christ is our ransomer or our redeemer. The two words are really the same. The one who has redeemed us, the one who has given Himself as a ransom is the ransomer. He’s the redeemer.

B.B. Warfield wrote an article on this, and in the article on redemption, he deals with the various meanings of the way it should be defined. But in discussing the term, he brings out the importance of this term, the importance of this term for the church, and he writes, “There is no one of the titles of Christ which is more precious to Christian hearts than the redeemer.” It gives expression not merely to our sense that we have received salvation from Him but also to our appreciation of what it cost Him to procure this salvation for

us. That’s true. We’re reminded of both in that word “redeem” or “ransom.” And “ransom” speaks of a price paid for deliverance. The price paid is that of Himself.

It Matthew 20:28, the Lord said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” In other words, to pay the price for the release of many. It’s believed that this word, “redeem” or “ransom” comes from the Greek word to loose or to release. That is the word in Greek, *lyo* (λύω). And the noun “ransom” is *lytrons* (λύτρον) so you see the connection, and the verb is *lutroo* (λυτρόω). So they seem to be related. It means to loose, to deliver, to release by the payment of a price, to ransom.

We covered this just a few weeks ago in our studies of Romans 3:24-26. I think I dealt with it much more thoroughly than I will in this hour. But that’s the origin of the word; that’s the idea of the word. And so it was used with different meanings. It was used of freeing captives of war by paying a price, a ransom price for their freedom. It came to be a very common word for money paid to purchase a slave’s freedom, and that meaning was very common in the first century.

So when Paul wrote this, or when our Lord said what He said, readers and hearers would have associated this image of freeing a slave with the word that was used, “ransom” or “redeem.” It applies to our spiritual condition. It gives it a very proper, precise kind of idea regarding our spiritual condition because we were captives; we were slaves of Satan and sin. We were shut up, as it were, under the divine judgment – could not escape that of our own – could not escape the power of Satan. The whole world lies in the evil one. We’re in his grasp apart from Christ. We’re in the power of sin, the grip of sin. We don’t have the strength or the ability to deliver ourselves. We don’t even have the desire to deliver ourselves. We would’ve stayed in that condition, and we would be in that condition today were it not for Jesus Christ and what He did. He intervened as our ransomer. He paid the price for our release with His own blood, which He shed on the cross.

That is the meaning of both the Lord’s words in Matthew 20 and Paul’s words here. In both passages, the meaning is essentially the same, but the

word here is slightly different. In Matthew 20:28, the Greek word is *lytron* (*λύτρον*), while here in 1 Timothy 2:6, it's *antilytron* (*ἀντίλυτρον*). So there's a word, a prefix to that, a preposition that has been added to the word “ransom,” which is significant because that preposition “anti” means instead of or in place of.

Now, you're familiar with it. I'm sure you've been here long enough. Most of you, you've heard the word “type” and “antitype.” The type of Christ is the sacrifice, the Passover lamb. That's a type of Christ. Well, Christ is the antitype. He's the fulfillment of the type. He's the one that replaced the type. He's the one, the instead of, the one who's instead of the type. That's the idea here of substitution. And he puts that to the beginning of this word to give this idea of ransom by substitution, ransom instead of us. And it's followed by another preposition that indicates substitution, the word “for,” which has the idea of on behalf of. It's another word for substitution – not as strong as that word “anti,” but it is another word for that.

So Christ gave himself in death as a sacrifice in place of and on behalf of all. He died in their place and bore their sins as their substitute. He paid the ransom, and the ransom he paid was Himself. So He's both the ransomer and the ransom price. That's why, as Warfield stated, the church is so fond of these titles, “redeemer” or “ransomer.” It recalls for us the great price that He paid for our salvation. It was costly, but most importantly, it was effective. It actually accomplished salvation. That's what Christ did on the cross. He did not provide salvation. Now we can say that, but that word probably doesn't go far enough. He not only provided it, he accomplished it. Redemption was accomplished at Calvary. Christ bought his people with His own blood. The payment was made, and souls were secured on Calvary.

Charles Hodge wrote in his *Systematic Theology* – that's the third Princeton theologian I've quoted tonight. They're good men. But Hodge wrote, “No one pays a ransom with the certainty of the deliverance of those from whom it was paid. It is not a ransom unless it actually redeems.” In other words, no one pays a ransom unless it's going to be accomplished. You don't pay a ransom that's not going to be successful. The ransom price is paid because in paying it, those for whom it's paid are going to be delivered when the payment is made.

So Christ paid the price, the ransom price, with the full knowledge that in paying that, He would free, deliver, loose, redeem the people for whom He paid it. And because He paid it, all will go free. That really leaves us with two options about

the death of Christ. If Christ died for all without exception, then all will be saved. Now that's universalism. If it's for all without exception, and we understand the nature of this payment that He made, the nature of the ransom that it secures the release of those for whom it's paid. No one pays the ransom and waits to see if it's going to happen. The ransom is paid with the intention of that accomplishing the release. So if it's for all without exception, then it must be accomplished; all must be saved. And yet that's universalism, and we know that's not true. The Bible's very clear that not all are going to Heaven. Multitudes do not.

So we can dismiss that, and the “all” must be all without distinction, all kinds of people, all God's elect “from every tribe and tongue and people and nation,” as John puts it in Revelation 5:9. Some/out of, he says. Not all but some out of every tribe, tongue, people, nation were redeemed, were purchased by Christ. But of course, if objection arises, we must believe. So can it not be that He died for everyone; He paid for everyone's sins, but it hinges on this act of belief? That's what determines it. And if we don't believe, well then, we aren't redeemed. And yet, isn't unbelief a sin? And if He died for all our sins, did He not die for the sin of unbelief? So if He died for the sin of unbelief, He bore the full weight of God's wrath against sin, how can that sin be paid for by the one for whom He died? Well it can't be.

It takes you back to universalism. If He died for every sin of all for whom He died, then we must, by the nature of the case, restrict this to all His elect, all without distinction. He paid for their unbelief, and that's what guarantees that they will believe. That's what secures faith for all those for whom Christ died. It's not all without exception but all without distinction, and I think that's clear from the context where Paul urges prayer for all men, for all kinds of people even for kings and governors even for the bad ones like Nero. We're not to show favoritism for one group over another in our prayers. Christ did not show favoritism of one group over another in his atonement. He died for the Gentile as well as the Jew, for the free as well as the slave. He died for all kinds of people. We're to pray for all kinds of people.

Well just a few minutes left. Let me finish up the text. He goes on to state that this price that was paid, this ransom that was paid on the cross stands as a “testimony given at the proper time,” which means Christ's death is a kind of testimony. It proves the love of God for mankind. He paid this price to redeem His

people, and it was given at the right time. Perhaps that means something similar to what Paul wrote in Galatians 4:4, “in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,” and the right time, He sent His Son. At the right time, He made this testimony. It was the right time, in one sense, because it was a time when all was lost. No better time than that. He sent His Son.

And Paul writes that he was appointed a preacher and an apostle as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. Following his conversion, the Lord told Ananias, “He is a chosen instrument of mine to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.” Well that’s his concern for kings, for Gentiles. He doesn’t mention the sons of Israel here, but he had a great burden for Israel. We see that throughout the book of Romans. Paul had not appointed himself to this position. He’d not sent himself on this mission. He was on the opposite mission when Christ saved him and appointed him to that, and he makes that point. He says I’m not lying about this, “I’m appointed a preacher and an apostle. I am not lying.”

Now you wonder why would he tell that to Timothy? Timothy knew that he was an apostle, that he’d been appointed a preacher, and all of that. It probably wasn’t for Timothy’s sake but for the congregation’s sake. This was a semi-private public letter, and it would have been read to the congregation in Ephesus, and that was a place that had some disturbance going on. There were factions there. Some false teachers had gained some loyalties, and what Paul is saying is, “Remember, I’m an apostle, and I’ve been appointed. And I’m not lying. It’s true.” So what he has to say is to be listened to. So they are to follow his instruction about all the things in this letter and here in this context, follow his instruction about praying publicly and for all kinds of people. Well his mission was worldwide. He’s appointed by Christ to herald the good news to Gentiles, he says, also the Jews. But they could share in that; they had a part in that ministry, and they had a part in it by praying, being earnest in that.

And that’s what we can all do and we all are to do. We are to take our part in praying, and we can pray with great confidence. Some would think, “Well, this hinders evangelism. This hinders prayer if it’s true that God has saved these people, saved this multitude on the cross. If He’s done it all, all of God’s work, what’s the point of praying? If it’s not really contingent in the sense that nothing’s been settled, why pray? Leave it. It’s the way it’s going to be.” That’s not the case. The means toward the end is evangelism and prayer, and we have the confidence that God has

settled the issue. And we're praying that His will be done, and it will be done, but we're to pray for it. We're to be earnest in that, earnest in our prayer and earnest in our evangelism knowing that our prayers will be successful, and our evangelism will be successful. And we can join in the work of the apostle and do that. Well that's the encouragement. That's what we should do. Perhaps we'll do that in the minutes that follow before the hour's up. Well, may God bless us with the heart to do that with the heart that the apostle had for the lost throughout the world and desire to be earnest in our prayer life in that regard. So let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we thank you for your gift of life in your Son. We have a redeemer in Him, a ransom, one who paid the price, and what a price He paid with His own blood on our behalf. And He did it all. We praise you, Father. The triune God is the Savior of the world. You chose a people for yourself and a vast number. You sent your Son to purchase them, and the spirit of God applies that work to us. It's not our own work. We believe by your grace, and we're redeemed by your grace. And we praise you and thank you for it. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.