Evangelistic Praying, Part 3
1 Timothy 2:5-8
54-13

I invite you to open your Bible to 1 Timothy chapter 2, 1 Timothy chapter 2. The first eight verses have to do with evangelistic praying, praying for the unsaved. This is a great responsibility for the church, a serious calling which the Lord has committed to us.

I want you to keep in mind that as Paul is writing to Timothy, Timothy is in Ephesus. He has been left there by Paul after his first Roman imprisonment for the purpose of setting things right in the church. That great Ephesian church which Paul himself had pastored for three years, that great church which was so solid and so strong, born in a marvelous moving of the mighty Spirit of God had begun to drift. They had fallen into false doctrine. They had fallen into sin and ungodliness and many things needed correction in the church. And Paul has left Timothy there to do that. He then writes him this epistle to outline very carefully those things most needful of his attention and effort.

And as chapter 2 opens up, Paul begins to give him specific instruction in regard to the things in the Ephesian church that need to be dealt with. The first subject in the first eight verses is this matter of praying for all men to be saved. Apparently in the Ephesian church there had developed certain theology that said not all men could be saved. There's no reason to pray for all men, there is perhaps no reason to even proclaim to all men. Salvation had for them become an exclusive kind of gift belonging only to perhaps some special lawkeeping Jews or some elite mystical Gentiles who had attained a certain level of inside knowledge of the things of God. Whatever the specifics may have been, they had developed a doctrine of exclusivity in regard to salvation and were no longer interested in fulfilling the great commission. Their preaching no doubt effectively demonstrated this and so did their praying, or better, their lack of it.

And so, in verses 1 to 8, Paul gives Timothy the instruction that God wants all men to be saved, not just a few elite Jews and Gentiles, but that salvation is provided for all men. And he must communicate that to the church in such a way as to mandate them to understand that.

Now we're very much aware over the last couple of weeks of the importance of this matter of praying for the lost. We are also very much aware of the great commission of going into all the world and making disciples of all nations. And this fits in perfectly with that. If you've been raised in the church like I have, you have on many occasions heard missionary speakers say, "I know you cannot go to the field, but even while you're home you can at least pray." And we have through the years prayed for the evangelism of missionaries and preachers and teachers all over the world. And this is a call for us to renew that commitment to evangelistic praying.

And so as we go back to the text, do I need to remind you that the heart of it is at the end of verse 1?

It says there that we are to offer supplication, prayer, intercession and giving of thanks are to be made for all men. And that's the heart of this passage. The idea of "all men." Verse 2 says all that are in authority. Verse 4 says God will have all men to be saved. And verse 6 says Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. The idea here then clearly is an affirmation that we are to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to all men and we are to support that taking with prayer. It is a call to evangelistic prayer, an essential element in the fulfillment of the great commission.

Now as you know, if you've been with us, there are five elements in this passage that call us to evangelistic prayer...the nature, the scope, the benefit, the reason and the attitude connected to such praying. We've already discussed the nature of evangelistic prayer, back at verse 1. Do you remember it? Those four words describing facets of prayer, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks instructed us as to the nature of evangelistic praying.

Secondly, we looked at the scope of evangelistic praying at the end of verse 1, it is for all men. No limitation, includingverse 2 saysall that are in authority. All men at all levels of human society who are without the Lord are to be the objects of our prayers, most particularly those who are leaders over us.

Then we noted last time the benefit of such praying at the end of verse 2, the result being that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all godliness and moral earnestness. When the church maintains its integrity and stays within the realm of spiritual life, it will be to a society a benediction and a blessing rather than a threat and it will find that it will enjoy more tranquility which will prosper the speeding of the gospel. And that is the word that Paul is instructing Timothy and us as well. Conditions of peace and rest, the absence of strife and anxiety benefit the church in the work of evangelism. And so the church then should be known in society as those people who seek to make friends out of those that are unsaved, who pray for their salvation both people and leaders alike. We desire to live lives of godliness and lives of moral integrity. We desire to pursue the things of God, to proclaim the gospel of salvation in the most effective way and we can do that if we are no threat to the disruption of national life, social life, political life, things that are beyond the purview of the life of the church. So we seek to contribute to peace that we may be accepted as those who love the souls of men and thus find a hearing with those around us. And being not a threat to society but a benediction as God answers our prayers and many are saved we find the tranquility that allows us the freedom of ministry we would so desire.

Now that brings us to the fourth point where we left off last time, the reason for evangelistic praying. Why are we to do this? Yes, we understand we are to do it. Yes, we understand we are to do it for all men. Yes, we are to do it in order that we might receive a side effect benefit ourselves. But coming to verse 3 and going all the way through verse 7 we find the lists...the list rather, a list of the elements within the reason for evangelistic prayer. Now I want you to understand that this is a theological portion. It is rich. It is at sometimes profound but at the same time very clear and very binding to our conscience.

First of all, we are to be engaged in praying for the lost regularly because it is morally right. It is beneficial and it is good. Verse 3, "For this...that is praying for all men's salvation...is good." It is good for them. That's the idea. It is beneficial to them. It is excellent for them. It brings them into the knowledge of God. It brings them by God's grace in response to our prayers to salvation. None of us would disagree with that. We would all agree that salvation would be of great benefit to any man or any woman. We would all agree that it would be excellent for anyone to know the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is precisely the point. It is good, it is beneficial.

Secondly we saw last time, we are to pray for the lost because it is consistent with God's will. Verse 3 says it is acceptable, that is God receives it with delight. He applauds it. He welcomes it. "Because He is God our Savior who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." He wants all men saved from sin, rescued from judgment and He wants them all to come to the knowledge of the saving truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. So God heartily receives this because this is reflective of His desire. His will is that men be saved, that all men be saved. And we noted that that will expressed there is the desire of God's heart. He desires men to be saved. He desires all men to be saved.

Now let me extrapolate a little bit on that because I know there are people who question that doctrine. To come at it another way, we would all agree without equivocation that God does not desire people to sin. Could we agree with that? We do not believe that God desires people to do evil, to sin, to be disobedient, to be unholy, to fail to give Him glory. No, we would all agree with that. In fact the spectrum of evangelical theology would agree to that. We desire...we know God desires men not to sin. We do not for a moment advocate anything different than that. So turn the table a bit, we would all agree then that God desires all men to be holy. No one would argue that. God desires all men to be righteous. God desires all men to be sinless. God desires all men to give Him glory and give Him honor and give Him respect. God desires all men to be obedient. I mean, He commands men over and over and over and over to be obedient. He calls for righteousness. He calls for holiness. He calls for sinlessness. He calls for everyone on the face of the earth to give Him honor and give Him glory. He calls for all men everywhere to repent. Nobody debates that. We all know God wants men to be holy.

Therefore, we conclude that people sin though God does not want them to. That's obvious. People are unholy though God does not want them that way. People do not give God glory though God does not want them not to give Him glory. Then why is it such a hard thing for some people to realize that people also go to hell though God does not want them to? God wants all men to be saved. That is the desire of God.

And so, we remember then what we saw last week. We are to pray for all men because it is beneficial to all men to be saved. Would we all agree with that? It's not beneficial to go to hell without Christ. It is beneficial to be saved. And secondly, it is consistent with the holy will of God who wants all men saved and knowing the truth of Christ.

Now thirdly, and here we get into a profound argument on the part of Paul, the third element in his reason for evangelistic praying is that it is reflective of God's nature as one God. It is reflective of God's nature as one God...notice verse 5, "For there is one God...or, For God is one." There's only one God. God is one. I mean, contrary to the popular dribble that you hear all the time, oh everybody has his God and it really doesn't matter what your God is as long as you're sincere. There's one God for the Moslems and one God for the Buddhists and one God for the Jews, one God for the Christians, and in India there's 50 gods for everybody. Every temple has its reigning deity, its presiding deity. And there are millions upon millions of deities and idols and gods all over the world designed by men. But the Scripture here says that that's not true, as it says in 1 Corinthians 8, an idol is zero, an idol is nothing. If you want to spend your life worshiping nothing, that's your privilege. But that's folly. God is one. There's only one God. In Isaiah 44:6 God said it as clearly as it could be said, "I am the first and I am the last and beside Me there's no other." That covers the ground.

And that's why you see Mark 12:29 to 31 says, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one therefore you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength." Why? You can give all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, all your strength to God because there's nobody else to give it to. There's only one. So you love that one God with all the capacity you have to love and worship.

Now this unity of God, the Lord our God is one, the shima of Deuteronomy 6 is the central truth in all the Old Testament scripture as over against the polytheism of the nations surrounding Israel, many gods, many gods, Israel stood for one God. Now this is Paul's point. There's only one God. What do you mean by that? What he means is if there were many gods then there would be many ways of salvation, right? And isn't that what the people in the world teach today? Sure. I mean, the world says, "Well, there's a God for these people and these people and as long as you're sincere, it's going to be okay. Every God has his way, every God has his means of salvation." So if there are many gods, then there are many ways of salvation. And if that's true, there's no need for evangelism, right? You don't need evangelism, everybody's got their own way, leave them alone. They'll come home wagging their tails behind them. It will all work out in the end.

But, Paul says since there is only one God and one Savior God, then that one God stands in the same relationship to all men in relationship to Salvation. If there is one God and that one God is the Savior and that one God desires all men to be saved, then He is the God of all in whom all must believe if all are to be saved, therefore we must pray for all. Since the God of all men wants all men to be saved, prayer for all men is consistent with His nature. The foundation then, beloved, of the universality of the gospel is bound up in the oneness of God. Listen to Romans 3 as Paul begins to delineate the gospel in verse 29, he said, "Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the nations? Yes, of the nations also seeing He is one God." There's only one God. Therefore all men must come to the same God, therefore all men must hear the same way and therefore we must pray for all men. There's only one God. And it is the unity of God that justifies the universal scope of evangelism.

In 1 Corinthians 8:4 I alluded to this a moment ago, it says an idol is nothing in the world because there is no other God but one. And then verse 6, there is but one God the Father of whom are all things and we in Him. There's only one God. Now listen. That one God who stands in the same relationship to all men is the only God, is the only Savior God. If men are to be saved, they're going to be saved by that one God and they're going to be saved through relationship with that one God. And since that one God desires that all men come to salvation, we are then to pray for all men. No one, no nation, no group, no religious group, no religion is outside the necessity of coming to the only God who can save.

So, we are to pray evangelistically because it is beneficial, because it is consistent with God's will, it is reflective of God's nature. Fourthly, it is consistent with the person of Christ. Not only with the person of God with His nature but with Christ. Notice verse 5 again. There is not only one God, but there is one mediator between God and men, and the Greek text says "man...no article...man Christ Jesus." A better way to translate that to get the intent of the Greek would be, "There is one God and one mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus Himself man."

Now here we find the consistency with the person of Christ. How many mediators are there? One. So we can't say, "Well, there are lots of ways to heaven," like the Bahai people say, lots of doors, you can go this way, that way, you can follow this leader, that leader, this leader. No, there's only one. And we're back to the same thing. One God, one mediator, one way of salvation, therefore we pray

for the whole world. God wants the whole world saved and the only way they can be saved is through that one mediator to that one God.

In Job chapter 9 we are introduced to the concept of a mediator as Job cries out in the midst of his distress. And he says in verse 32 in wanting to communicate with God, he says, "For He is not a man as I am that I should answer Him and we should come together in judgment." He says I don't know how to get to God, He's not a man, I can't just communicate with Him. We can't sit down and work this thing out.

And then in verse 33, "Neither is there any mediator between us." He uses the word "daysman" which is a word for an arbiter or an umpire or a mediator. There's no mediator between us, listen to this, that might lay his hand on both of us. And here was Job in the middle of his distress crying out, "Where is somebody who can put his hand on God and his hand on me and bring us together?" Well, that cry is answered in Christ, isn't it? Christ is that mesites, that mediator, that go between, that one who intervenes between two for the purpose of restoring peace and friendship or of ratifying a covenant, making a promise, forming a compact. And there's only one mediator. Listen to that, only one. There aren't any levels of deities that you have to climb through as the pregnostic people were probably teaching in Ephesus. There aren't a lot of intermediary gods, subgods, they called them "aons." You don't go through the veneration of angels and you don't go to God through saints, somebody in saints, somebody in Mary, there is only one mediator, just one that is the daysman who puts His hand on both God and man and brings them together and it is Christ Jesus, man Himself...or Himself man. And the word for man here is the word anthropos, we get anthropology from it. It is the generic word for man. Aner is the word for "male." And we'll see that in a little while when we get to verse 8. But here is the generic word. He became man. He was God always, He became man. He is the perfect God man. As such He takes God and man and brings them together. And so Christ Jesus is that mediator.

In Hebrews 8:6 it tells us that He is a mediator. He is a surpassing mediator. The text says He has obtained a more excellent ministry. He is the mediator of a better covenant which was established on better promises. In chapter 9 of Hebrews and verse 15 it says He is the mediator of a new covenant. In chapter 12 verse 24, again the mediator of the new covenant. So He is the one who takes God and man, restores peace and friendship, ratifies a covenant, forms a compact and builds a relationship between God and man. He's taken His stand between the offended God and the offending sinner and He has mediated to bring them together.

How many mediators are there? Only one...only one who can bring man and God together. Therefore, listen carefully, therefore Jesus Christ stands in relation to all men in the same ultimate position. If there's only one God, He's the only one who can save. If there's only one mediator, He's the only one who can bring you to that saving God. Therefore all men in order to come to salvation must come through Christ to God. And that is why Acts 4:12 says "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." There's only one. So what Paul is saying is, "Look, Timothy, we pray for all men because God wants all men to be saved and God is the only one who can do it and Christ is the only mediator through which they can come to that salvation." All men have the same Savior God and the same mediator and thus we must pray for the salvation of all men because apart from Christ they are damned eternally. Do you understand that? That's why this is such a serious issue. I am amazed how readily we pray for physical problems and how hesitantly we pray for salvation. And physical problems are not really the significant issue.

Fifthly, in looking at the reasons why we are to pray evangelistically, it is not only consistent with the person of Christ, but it is the intention of the atoning work of Christ. Go back again to verse 6. Speaking of Christ Jesus who was man as well as God and brought God and man together, it says, "Who gave..." and that word is loaded with content. He gave. John 10:18, Jesus said, "No man takes My life from Me, I...what?...I lay it down by Myself," voluntarily. Who gave...and what did He give? Himself, not a portion of Himself, not something He possessed, not something He owned, not something He really didn't need, He gave everything. That's the totality of it. Christ Jesus voluntarily gave totally Himself as a ransom for all.

Now the word "ransom" here is just loaded with meaning. It is not the simple word for ransom, which is lutron, it is antilutron and there's a huper preposition connected with it in the phrase. And it just fills up the meaning. It's not a simple word for ransom where somebody's kidnapped, you go pay a ransom, you get him back. It is the idea of a substitutionary ransom. You put yourself there and free that person by your own enslavement. It is as if a father was receiving a note about a kidnapped child and the note demanded that he go and become the kidnapped person for the freedom of his beloved child. Christ becomes the victim that we might be set free. So it is more than the simple word "ransom" which means the priced pay for the release of a slave. It is the idea of an exchange. Christ exchanged His life for our lives. He died our death. He bore our sin. He took our place. He gave Himself totally as a substitutionary payment for our sin.

For whom did He do this? He was a ransom for all. Would you just circle that? That's the point here. Did Christ die for a few? He died for all. That's what it says. And that's Paul's key idea. He is not here, by the way, intending to give a complex treatment on the theology of the atonement. He is not here trying to emphasize all that could be said about the substitutionary ransom of Jesus Christ. His point here is the "all." What he wants you to understand is that Christ who is the one mediator came to do a work on the cross in behalf of man and God that would provide a ransom for all men.

And finally, the last element in the reason for evangelistic praying...and we could say so much more about what has been said...but the last element comes in verse 7. And it is this, we are to pray for all men to be saved because this fits Paul's own divine commission. And Paul brings himself in. This is really an interesting statement. "For this...for what?...for the salvation of all men...For this, because Christ is mediator, because God is Savior, because Christ died as a ransom for all and proved it when He came at the right time and because of this and for this, I am ordained a preacher and an apostle."

In other words, he's saying what in the world am I doing if this thing isn't for everybody? The word "preacher" is from the verb form kerusso, it has to do with a herald, a proclaimer, a public speaker. In those days they didn't watch television, didn't read books, didn't have newspapers. Basically if you had an announcement, you went into the city square and you made your announcement. It was the time of hot communication. It was a time when you verbalized. The herald went around and made all the announcements the people needed to have and communication was out in the open and people preached in the open and they taught in the open and philosophers spoke in the open and opinions were given in the open and Paul became one of those openair preachers, one of those public heralds proclaiming the gospel of Christ. And what he is saying is, why I was ordained by God to go out and publicly proclaim a gospel that if limited belies my very calling. And then I was called not only to be a herald but an apostle. And the word there is...has reference to one being sent as a messenger. Here I am an apostle to the nations, here I am a messenger from city to city and nation

to nation, publicly heralding the gospel of Christ, what am I doing if this isn't applicable to everybody?

He says, "I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not." You know that I've been called as a herald to publicly proclaim. You know I've been called as a messenger to extend the truth of saving grace as far and wide as God allows me. As a herald I speak publicly. As a missionary I reach all I can reach. And you know this is the truth and I'm not lying. You know that's my calling, he's saying. You know that's my ordination. And there may be a little bit of rebuttal in his saying that because there might be some in the church that would sort of take issue with the strength of his conclusions here and he reminds them that he's speaking the truth.

And then he says in the end of verse 7, "Also I am a teacher of the nations in faith, "that is THE faith, content and verity, that is sincerity of heart. I'm one who teaches with right content and a right heart of sincerity. And I'm a teacher of the nations. The word "the nations" is key, you ought to underline that. That's the key idea. I've been sent to the nations, to the nations of the world. And I'm supposed to publicly proclaim to all of these people that Jesus saves and that Christ is a ransom for all and call them to salvation. How can I do that if that's not true? There's an integrity problem here, he says. I mean, I've been ordained for this. In fulfilling the great commission, Mark 16:15, to preach the gospel to every creature. Paul says with the faith, the content and a sincere heart, I go out to speak the truth.

And, beloved, I really believe this is a powerful, powerful statement on the mission responsibility of the church for the world. We are called to world missions. Why? Because it is the will of God that all men be saved. Why? Because there's only one God for them all and there's only one mediator for them all who died for them all. And we are called as preachers and missionaries to reach them all. And how could we ever believe for a moment that we were saying something that isn't true if He did not die for all and if God did not will that all be saved? Then we ought to say that. But we can't because we know better. And so there is a powerful argument for the universal proclamation of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

And in conclusion, after giving all those other elements, he gives us lastly the attitude of evangelistic praying. What is to be the attitude? Now I want you to notice carefully verse 8, there is a "therefore" there which ties it in. And then there's a change of subject in verse 9 with the words "in like manner." That's where the subject changes. That same word appears later on in chapter 3 verse 8 and in chapter 8 verse 11 where the subject changes each time. But the subject hasn't changed in verse 8. It's a therefore built on the first seven verses.

Here's the attitude. Here we come to the practical application. All right, we've all been made aware that we're to pray for the lost. We all know why we're to do that. All right, therefore "I will that men pray in every place lifting up holy hands without wrath and dissension."

Now this tells us about the attitude with which we are to pray. But before we look to that attitude, I want you to notice he says "I will," and he uses not the word thelo which is the will of desire used back in verse 4 where it says God will have all men to be saved. That was the will of desire. This is boulomai, the will of mental purpose. It's almost like I demand, or I command, or I purpose that this should happen, or I lay this down as an absolute. Paul is now in a commanding mode. Therefore because of what we have just seen, this tremendous, tremendous statement about why we are to pray for the lost, I'm telling you the men are to pray in every place.

Now would you please notice that where it says "men," it is to andros(?), the plural of aner which is man, not in the generic sense but man in the male sense as opposed to gune which is the female. So he is saying men as males, that is to say in the life of the church when the church comes together and it is time to pray for the lost, the men are to do the praying. Now this is the emphasis. It is very clearly used here. That is to say Paul selects his terms carefully. I will that the men, or the males, pray. Now in the Jewish synagogue in the Old Testament time, only men were permitted to pray. The stress here leads one to believe that this was carried into the church in terms of the leadership of the church being as we know in Scripture belonging to the men in the public worship. And apparently in Ephesus this was being tested by some women who were usurping the male role. We'll find that, by the way, next week in verses 9 to 15. And that will be a real barn burner, so hold on to your seat for next week.

But nonetheless, it is God's pattern for the life of the church that men are those who lead in the public worship. And in this situation he is affirming that. He says I demand of you not just a simple wish of my heart, but I lay this down...boulomai as a demand...that the men do the praying. The men do the praying. The term "everywhere" in the Authorized is actually "in every place." Most interesting. Most interesting. That little phrase is used four times by Paul, "in every place." Here, 1 Corinthians 1:2, and 1 Thessalonians 1:8, in all four places refers to the official assembly of the church. It became a little colloquial expression for the assembling of the church. And what he is saying is that when the church comes together in its duly recognized and official assembly, I demand that the men do the praying. And the word here for pray is habitually pray. It is to be the common practice that this prayer go on in behalf of the unsaved people and that it be carried by the men.

Now I don't want to make women upset by saying this. I have to deal with what the Scripture says. And we'll get to the balancing aspects next time. But you need to know what God's Word says. And people will say, "Well, wait a minute, pastor. First Corinthians 11:5 and following says that if women pray and prophesy, they should do so with their head covered in a demonstration of modesty and humility and submission, therefore 1 Corinthians 11:5 indicates that women can preach or proclaim and they can pray. Is that not so?" The answer is yes. First Corinthians 11 says a woman should if she does prophesy or proclaim God's truth, if she does pray she is to do so with a role of submission being made manifest. And when a woman prays or prophesies in that Corinthian culture with her head uncovered, sort of showing off her freedom, she violates the standard of God. Now, yeah, I agree with that. How could you not agree with it? It's in the Scripture. The point you have to realize is that's 1 Corinthians 11. You go on a few chapters, you come to 1 Corinthians 14 and in 1 Corinthians 14 about verse 35 it says, "Let the women keep silence in the churches." All you have to do is compare the two. Women can pray and women can proclaim the Word but not in the duly constituted assembly of the church in its official worship. That's obvious and it's confirmed right here, verse 11, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection and I do not allow them to teach or usurp authority over the men but be in silence." All the time? Twentyfour hours a day life long? Of course not. Of course not.

What he is saying here is when the church comes together in its duly constituted worship. And the key little phrase is that little phrase "in every place." The point is, when the church comes together under the leadership of men which is obvious, he'll describe the qualifications of those leaders in chapter 3 and they can't be anything but men, and so we look at the men, they are the leaders. And he says when they come together for assembly, these are the men who are to rise to pray in the normal fashion of the church.

You say, "Well, where can a woman proclaim?" A woman can proclaim the Word of God in...with her friends. She can proclaim as the Psalms say a great host are the women who publish the good news. She can teach in many, many environments. But not in the official assembly of the church when it comes together in every place for the purpose of worship and leadership and teaching. That is for the men to do the leading. And that's what the Scripture delineates very clearly. That's why 1 Corinthians 14 says the women are to be silent in the churches and it's affirmed here as well.

So, when the church meets the men do the praying. And that is a strong statement made here. It never was that unpopular, frankly, until more recent years when the church has decided to jump on the women's liberation bandwagon. And there's really no necessity for that. And by the way, the fact that God has set leadership in the church and those who are to submit in the role of men and women shouldn't threaten anybody because we're equal spiritually before God, Galatians 3:28. And I don't know why anybody should be more upset about that then they would be about the fact that I've been called by God to preach and all the rest of you men have been called by God to listen to me. Does that mean that I'm elevating myself and you're all secondclass citizens and you ought to all demand that you should preach just like I do so every day we have someone else up here? Of course...we wouldn't even think of such a thing. The point is you have to have authority and submission in all dimensions of life and the fact that women are rebelling against this is reflective of the unbiblical nature of our society. And it's a sad thing when the church finds itself in the midst of the milieu of that kind of chaos. Women who can pray and lead people in the understanding of the Word of God in a home Bible study, in a fellowship group, in a prayer meeting, in a class situation where there's no taking the role of authority over a man can find the fulfillment that God would have them have as they lead other women, as they lead children, as they share in prayer with men in a fellowship group or whatever it might be.

Last Wednesday night we met in little groups and prayed together, men and women. We had a wonderful time. That is not threatening. We shared things out of the Word of God together. But when the church comes together in its assembly officially, the men come to lead in prayer to pray for the lost. And I want you to know that I'm committed in my heart that when we meet together we're going to have the men come and pray for the lost as I did this morning, as we did in the first service, as we will have tonight another one of our men coming to pray for the salvation of a certain nation of people in the world.

Now I want you to notice the attitude, and we'll wrap it up very briefly. The attitude with which you pray, lifting up holy hands without wrath and dissension. Now what does this mean, lifting up holy hands? Does this mean...this? With the hands in the air and swaying? Or this...? What? I've seen all of that.

You know, people...it's amazing...well, it says "lift up holy hands." That's right. You know the question I always want to ask those people? If I took 50 hands and just stuck them through a curtain, could you pick out the holy hands? You know what a holy hand looks like? Is this a holy hand? He's not talking about physical hands. What is a holy hand? It was customary in that time for the Jews to turn their hands as they prayed even in the Old Testament, you can look in the Old Testament, 1 Kings 8:22, Nehemiah 8:6, Psalm 63:4, I think also Psalm 134:2, Psalm 141:2 and also in Isaiah 1:15, you'll see illustrations of them lifting the hands to the Lord. The hands are one thing and the arms are something else. But there's nothing wrong with that. We have a customary posture for prayer, we bow our heads and close our eyes. They didn't do that. That's right, that's not biblical. I don't know

where that came from. I think its probably started maybe...well certainly since New Testament times and maybe not very long ago. And it's okay, whatever the custom might be, that's nice. It doesn't really matter.

The point here is not that when you pray you've got to have your hands in the air, the point here is that the one who prays must have holy hands. What does that mean? The hand is the symbol of the activities of life. Most of the things you do in life involve your hands. And the point is whoever prays ought to be the kind of person who is living a holy life. That's the point. There are no such thing as holy hands in themselves. Purity of hands is simply a way to express the idea of purity of life.

So, who are the men who are to pray? Those who have clean hands. What does that mean? They've washed them with soap? No, clean hands in the sense of pure living and a pure heart, as Psalm 24 says. So clean hands and a pure heart of Psalm 24, or here you have the same thing, holy hands and without wrath and dissension. The "without wrath and dissension" refer to the inner attitude...not anger, not dissenting against God or men. That is pure hearted with a loving heart.

By the way, the word "holy" here is not the word hagios which is the normal word for holy, it's hosios which means the opposite of polluted, unpolluted, unstained by evil. So when those men stand up to pray who are to pray for the lost, they're to be men whose lives are holy and men whose hearts are pure. Wonderful...that's the attitude...that's the attitude.

Well, the greatest model of evangelistic praying is the Lord Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 53:12 it says this, "He made intercession for the transgressors," isn't that wonderful? Jesus prayed for sinners. What did He pray? That they would be saved. When did He do that? On the cross, "Father...what?...forgive them." What did He mean by that? Save them, pardon them, lead them to repentance. You say, "Did God answer His prayer?" Did He? On the day of Pentecost how many were saved? Three thousand...within a few weeks five thousand more...in a few chapters the church exceeded 20 thousand people. Did the prayer get answered? It did. Jesus prayed for transgressors. His prayer was, "Father, forgive them," and the Father did forgive them in response to the prayer of His Son. He's our pattern and He's our model.

Do we pray for the lost like that? John Knox prayed, "Give me Scotland or I die." And history tells us that very few times in all the annals of man has one single individual so changed an entire nation as John Knox was used by God to change Scotland to the salvation of souls. Charles Godel(?) once asked, "If you were to open your desk and take out your daily diary, would there be in it any record of nights of anguish and prayer for lost men such as would be found in the diary of the Son of God?"

And David Brainerd that marvelous missionary to the Indians along the Delaware River who died so very young, once wrote, "I care not where I live or what hardships I go through so that I can but gain souls to Christ. While I am asleep, I dream of those things. As soon as I awake, the first thing I think of is this great work and all my desire is the conversion of sinners. And all my hope for that is in God."

George Whitfield cried out, "O Lord, give me souls or take my soul."

Is that our attitude? That's where evangelism begins, beloved, it begins in your prayer life and in the prayer life of the church when it comes together to worship. We need to covenant in our own hearts

to pray personally and I commit to you the promise that we shall play publicly for the lost, that God shall be pleased with our obedience and the salvation of souls. Let's pray together.

Thank You, Lord, for this word. O how rich we are. We know what You want. You have told us so clearly. Now, Lord, give us the strength of Your Spirit to be obedient to what You've asked.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org

COPYRIGHT (C) 2016 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).