

September 19, 2010

“Aiming for Salvation”

Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Graphic: worship, prayer

Key Verses: 2:3 – This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Theme: Prayer has enormous power in the outside world. As Christians, our desire is for salvation for everyone through faith in Jesus Christ, as primarily expressed in prayer and worship. The aim of worship is salvation, primarily, and vocation following.

1) Introduction

- a) Worship...what’s the point? Why do we worship? (ask the congregation to respond – use handheld mic)
- b) Those are all good reasons to worship, and worthy, for sure...
- c) But what’s the aim of worship? As human beings, on a journey of faith, what is the ultimate outcome of our life of worship?
- d) And we’re reminded that worship is more than just Sunday morning gathering time, which I’ll admit is the highest form of corporate worship this side of heaven. Yet, worship is so much more...
- e) Quotes about worship...
 - i) A.W. Tozer -
"Without worship, we go about miserable."
 - ii) Manley Beasley -
"A glimpse of God will save you. To gaze at Him will sanctify you."
 - iii) Richard Foster - "As worship begins in holy expectancy, it ends in holy obedience. Holy obedience saves worship from becoming an opiate, an escape from the pressing needs of modern life."
 - iv) Graham Kendrick -
"Worship is first and foremost for His benefit, not ours, though it is marvelous to discover that in giving Him pleasure, we ourselves enter

into what can become our richest and most wholesome experience in life." p.58 "A Heart For Worship" by Lamar Boschman

v) Jack Hayford -

"Worship changes the worshiper into the image of the One worshiped"

- f) Worship is about praising God! Worship is about giving God glory!
- g) Great! BUT, as these quotes alluded to, there's something more to it... What's in it for me? Why should I come here on Sunday? Why should I worship with my whole life? Why should I desire to pray and praise the God who is apparently worthy of my praise? And...if the angels and saints are worshipping God 24/7/365, then what difference does it make in MY life and the lives of my friends?
- h) The answer is basic and it's foundational...it's because the aim of a life of prayer and worship - that worships the God who gave us Jesus Christ - is salvation and sanctification. And even though the reasons we worship have to do with praising and all-deserving God, God also desires for us in response – the aim of worship – to have personal salvation and transformation into the image of his Son. That goes for me and you and all the people who are not sitting in this room.
- i) We turn, again, this morning to the book of 1 Timothy, chapter 2, starting in verse 1.
- j) Pray...

2) Scripture

a) Read verses 2:1-2

- i) First of all...primarily... as an initial thing to do... WITH URGENCY, Timothy...PRAY! says Paul.
- ii) Prayer is one of the highest and most Spirit-filled ways to worship. Churches need to have healthy amounts of prayer in corporate worship. In addition, copious amounts of prayers should be found in committee meetings and fellowship gatherings. In addition, prayer should be evident in the lives of the faithful people in the congregation – in private prayer times at home, in the car, at work...with spouses and children and parents and families.

- iii) THOSE are the churches that get used most often by God to make a difference in the world for the sake of the kingdom. THOSE are the churches that feel called to send huge sums of money to Haiti, along with human resources and gifts. The praying church is intentional in community outreach and meeting the needs of the poor. The praying church is the church that experiences the fullness of the gospel in worship, discipleship, and mission.
- iv) Paul was urgent in his request for Timothy to lead the people in prayer. And prayer is so important to the worshipping life of the church that Paul even breaks prayers down into four categories...
- (1) Supplications – this is prayer for personal need...it’s a humble petition for one’s personal life. “God, make me whole inside.” “Jesus, heal my brokenness and pain.” Or maybe something as simple as, “Lord, show me more of you today.”
 - (2) Paul tells Timothy to lift up prayers – here the word means an entreaty for beneficial outcomes... “God, protect our kids on the way to school, in school, and on their way home.” Or, “Father, give us this day our daily bread.”
 - (3) The third type of prayer...intercession. This is interposing or pleading for the needs of others. This can be the most POWERFUL form of prayer, because even though we sometimes don’t like to pray for ourselves, we LOVE to pray for others. “God, heal my wife of her cancer.” “Lord, break him from the bondage of that addiction.” This is fervent prayer for someone else who is in need.
 - (4) Finally, Paul instructs Timothy to always give thanks for the blessings that God has given us. Sometimes, we’re really quick to pray the first three and not as quick to pray the last one. When we’re in need, it’s easy to ask God to move or do something...but then we lose sight of the prayer, and sometimes the situation doesn’t turn out the way WE THINK it should... We forget to go back over the list and thank God for the ways He obviously answered prayers...
- v) Paul goes on to URGE that those prayers – those supplications, entreaties, intercessions, and thanksgivings – be prayed FOR EVERYONE. Not only should we lift up the full range of prayer, but that the full range should be prayed by and for EVERYONE.

- vi) The Greek word refers to EVERY HUMAN BEING. Not just the Christians. Not just the pagans. Not those in church or those in Africa. EVERYONE. You. Me. The person next to you and your neighbor who doesn't want to talk about YOUR religion.
- vii) And I love that Paul, in verse 2, specifically mentions that we should be praying for kings and all who are in high positions...
- viii) Now, there are probably many reasons why Paul would want us to be praying for government leaders, for rulers, for those in civic leadership positions.
- ix) First of all, they were a pain in Paul's neck. They were leery of the Christians...they didn't want any unrest. So Paul prays that they would leave them alone. Kind of like the teenager's prayer that the parents would pretend not to notice them at the game or at the mall, right?
- x) "Lord, just keep them over there and we'll stay over here and we'll just keep quiet..."
- xi) The other reason that Paul wanted Timothy to be praying for the leaders is that whenever there is harmony in the government, things seem better in the rest of the state.
- xii) We just came through a primary election this week...and the voting was held right at our church, as some of you know. Some people might get uncomfortable coming into the church, especially to vote. But the fact that it was here was both pragmatic, due to handicap parking, etc., and proves that the government (at least in Panama) is basically in harmony with the church.
- xiii) So we should pray for everyone, especially for kings and all those in high position...(1) to leave us alone and let us do our thing, and (2) for the sake of the harmony of the world.
- xiv) And that, Paul says, leads to lives that are quiet and peaceable, full of godliness and dignity...lives that are holy, able to focus on the aim of our worship and prayer, and that's salvation and sanctification.
- xv) Is it like that all the time? Hardly, but as Paul goes on to say in verse 3...

b) Read verses 2:3-7

- i) God made the ultimate sacrifice by sending Jesus Christ to the earth to die on the cross for our salvation from sin and death.
- ii) He didn't do that for some people...he didn't do that to trick us into loving him more. He did that so that everyone (underline that in your Bible) could be saved and know the truth about the God of the Universe. He did that so that you could be saved. So that I could be saved.
- iii) So that the kings and all the people in high position could be saved. So that those in LOW positions could be saved. Even the chief of all sinner, Paul, could be saved.
- iv) This is not a universalist theological statement from Paul that everyone is saved...this is Paul's way of putting an ultimately high value on salvation that comes when people trust in Jesus Christ as their savior.
- v) And so, Paul, now, is telling Timothy that just as salvation was offered to the chief of all sinners, it's offered to all those who trust Jesus Christ, the mediator between God and humans...
- vi) And that is available to all, no matter how sinful and broken...
- vii) It was for that message...given in God's perfect timing, that Paul was appointed to be in the position that he found himself, now offering this wisdom to Timothy...

3) Application

- a) At 7am on Wednesday morning this week, a group of youth and adults will gather at the Panama School to do something profound in the name of Jesus.
- b) All of our talk about prayer, salvation, and worship is great, but if we are unable or unwilling to put into practice the very things that we are challenged by Paul to do, then we are wasting our time.
- c) On Wednesday, a student-led prayer event called See You At The Pole will be held at school campuses all over the world, including Panama. Simply, this is a chance for the youth of our schools to be praying about and for their classmates, teachers, staff, administrators, communities, and world.
- d) This event is taking seriously the urgent call by Paul to lift up supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings to God...for student and adult leaders...for everyone.

- e) This year's theme is REVEAL – which is the student's plea for God to reveal himself more and more in our schools, in our communities, in our families, and in our lives.
- f) I would add to that our churches.
- g) God desires to reveal himself to us and that everyone be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.
- h) God desires that NONE would be lost and that NONE would turn away from the salvation offered through the cross of Christ.
- i) Sadly, though, we know that people are lost and hurting.
- j) We know that not everyone responds positively to the Gospel...either because they have heard it before and have rejected it, or they have not yet heard it in a way they understand.
- k) What our response?
- l) First, accept salvation for yourself. The one question I asked earlier is, "What's in it for me?" This is not a purely selfish question...this is our motivation to accept the freedom from the sin that binds us.
- m) Next, understand that that same salvation that freed you is available to everyone else in the entire world.
- n) That's why Paul urges us to pray for EVERYONE...this gift that you received is also available to others.
- o) Lastly, pray with and for others, worship God through everything you do in order to give glory to God and show others God's love and grace.

4) Conclusion

- a) As our youth gather, remember to pray for them. They are gathered together to lift up prayers for the people they love. That all should come to salvation.
- b) If worship breaks out...it's only natural.
- c) If the Holy Spirit is invited, God will surely move through that place on Wednesday.

- d) Be thankful for your salvation and knowledge of the truth...and pray that others will come to the same, maybe even through worship here in this church.
- e) Next Sunday, ask any of the youth who were at the Pole to tell you about their experience.
- f) This is all right and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior...
- g) Let's pray...