**I’M PRAYING FOR YOU (#3)**

***Praying For All Men***

If I was a prophet or the son of a prophet I would likely predict that among the most neglected commands among God’s people is found in I Timothy 2:1. It reads,

*​“Therefore, I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.”*

To prove my prediction, let me ask you this, when was the last time you actually went before God’s throne and prayed for “***all men***.” I don’t mean the time-worn utterance I heard growing up, “… and we pray for people the world over.” I mean that we are praying for the Great Commission to be fulfilled so that God’s will and purpose on earth be realized. And what is His will and purpose?

*“For 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.”* (I Tim. 2:4)

*“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”* (2 Pet. 3:9)

Paul wasn’t asking us to pray for “*all men*” just to bring blessings of comfort upon them, but to open the world for the gospel to reach every soul for whom Jesus died. Our Lord “*gave His life a ransom for* ***many***” (Matt. 20:28), or, as Paul clarified it in our text in I Timothy 2, *“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for* ***all****”* (vs. 6). God’s wrath will one day be poured out on all who have not obeyed the gospel (2 Thess. 1:6-7). So, our daily prayers should be focused on the fact that “*He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the* ***whole world***!” (I Jn. 2:2). Christ’s death served to appease (propitiate) God’s wrath on behalf of every human on earth! Surely that is worth daily praying about.

Think of it from this viewpoint. If you were Noah, Shem, Ham or Japheth and knew for certain that God’s promise of a worldwide flood was coming to sweep every soul into eternity, including your wife’s parents, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents (and, in that day of living for centuries, great-great-great grandparents), would you not pray for hearts to be opened and God’s merciful longsuffering be extended? The sounds they must have heard as they were in that ark of safety, knowing their friends and loved ones were perishing, must have given them nightmares for the entire year they were afloat. I can only imagine the tears they shed for the lost world they left behind.

Who is on your prayer list?

We all have our loved ones in our hearts and in our intercessory prayers. We want God’s blessings to be upon everyone we personally know and love. That is as natural as breathing.

We all hopefully have our church family on our prayer list. The preacher(s). The shepherds of the flock. The deacons who serve us. And all those on our hearts who are sick or in sorrow or are weak in faith. Certainly we are praying for those who have fallen away from us and have “*returned to the weak and beggarly elements*” (Gal. 4:9), and have wandered back into the world’s pig pen and have returned to the dog’s vomit (2 Pet. 2:20-22). Our hearts long for renewed fellowship with those we have known and ate bread with at the Lord’s table.

Perhaps we also remember from time to time to pray *“for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence”* (I Tim. 2:2). We desperately want “*peace on earth, good will toward men*” so we can have that “*quiet and peaceable life*” while on earth. Our President, our Congress, our Supreme Court are mentioned before God’s throne so that we can pursue our Christian walk without threats from our government. Our state and local leaders are also brought before the Lord so that we can continue to enjoy “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” that our Constitution guarantees.

We live from day to day in this mass of humanity we call planet earth. The world’s population clock says that today – March 25, 2021 – there are now at 10:05 am **7,854,558,171** people in the world. Since January 1st the world’s population has grown by over 18,566,440 souls. China (1,443,408,372), India (1,390,074,114) and America (332,433,801) are the three most populated nations in the world. Rounding out the top 10 are Indonesia (275,672,912), Pakistan (224,126,919), Brazil (213,675,792), Nigeria (210,027,775), Bangladesh (165,907,397), Russia (145,980,189), Mexico (129,939,259). There are 195 countries represented in the United Nations, thus there are 185 nations we have not even counted to get us to that nearly *EIGHT BILLION* number.

When Paul told us to “*pray for all men*,” he was saying to not only pray for God to be merciful and longsuffering toward these billions of people, but to ask God to “*open a door for the word*” (Col. 4:2) that could be entered by men and women who have a heart to “*become all things to all men that I might be all means save some*” (I Cor. 9:22). It was a prayer to fulfill the heart of God as seen in John 3:16-17. Read it, carefully, prayerfully, as if for the very first time, so that you will be motivated to pray it from your heart of love for 7,854,558,171 souls:

*16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

Will you join me today in bowing the knee, and lifting the voice, to pray “*for all men*?” Then join me in asking God to use us as His “*instruments of righteousness*” (Rom. 6:13) and do as this hymn by Will Houghton in 1936 so beautifully said it:

**Lead me to some soul today, O teach me Lord just what to say; Friends of mine are lost in sin,  
and cannot find the way. Few there are who seem to care, and few there are who pray;   
Melt my heart and fill my life, give me one soul today.**

* Rick