The Epistle of First Timothy

Chapter 2

We have started a study into, what are called, the ‘Pastoral Epistles’, beginning with the first Epistle to Timothy, a disciple of the Apostle Paul (for want of a better title). These letters are personal, and challenging and with Timothy, this first one, is a charge for Timothy to stay a while in Ephesus, and help get the Church organized, finalize doctrine, and encourage the people through troubling times. What we must remember, is initially, Paul, established a ministry there, but ran afoul of certain folks, was whipped, jailed and eventually forced to move his ministry elsewhere, but the Ephesian ministry took root, and many churches throughout Asia minor were established through the Ephesian ministry, as we saw in Colossae, Philippi, Hierapolis and probably other Churches in the region.

One of the things scholars have taken notice of, in studying these letters, is Church government and leadership, as Timothy will be setting up leadership programs and establishing Church organization. There has to be some form of organization in these churches, or the body of believers’ dissolves into theological chaos, as folks tend to want to rewrite Scripture to suit their situations. In today’s Church there are four basic forms of Church government, that today’s churches are somewhat divided into:

1] Episcopal; where there is a top layer, or as in the Roman Catholic Church the Pope, with the college of Cardinals. Or in Episcopal: the Bishop and the House of Bishops, Church of England is pretty much the same, except they have at the top the Archbishop. There are other denominations that fall within this category. The people of the congregations have little say, there is some, but the upper echelon of Biblical experts pretty much sets the ‘Canon’ and speaks for the people.

2] Presbyterian; where a representative form of government is elected from the local churches as Elders and deacons, who in turn select members from the elders which will form Presbyteries, and ideally, as representatives, the Presbyteries represent the people at the General Assembly. However Scriptural doctrine is still held by the teaching elders and by doctrine set forth by the General Assembly or whatever ruling body is included in the denomination. So the power structure is from congregational representatives, to Presbytery, to Synod (in some cases) and General Assembly

3] Congregational; We find this in the Congregational and Baptist Churches, where the people or ekklesia make all the decisions and are in control except for Biblical interpretation and teaching which is left to the Pastors and whatever organizations they set up.

4] Connexionalism: Not really sure what this one does, but I found it in my study and will look more closely into it. Apparently, the Methodists fit into this category. Led by Bishops, and meet in conferences, as a rule.

These are just very wide generalizations and vary from Church to Church, denomination to denomination; however, as Paul writes, scholars pull from the writings what they want to hear and understand, and set doctrine accordingly. Is there a right one or wrong one? No! As long as the Gospel of Jesus Christ is taught, and the Salvation through the Atoning Sacrifice is taught, Church governing is up to what one wants to fit into as far as I am concerned.

Now to today’s lesson; After all Paul started out with regarding his charge to Timothy for the Ephesian ministry, I suppose this, then, will begin as a reminder that above all things, we should be in prayer to God. To be in direct communication with God regarding all things. We know from history, both general history of the period and area this takes place and Biblical history, this whole region from Rome through Asia Minor clear down to Egypt, there is constant upheaval, as countries chafe under Roman rule, and secondly there are severe undercurrents of one belief against another, mostly the known world including Judaism, against a new and growing sect, first called the ‘Way” and we know it as Christianity. The Christians living in and around Ephesus, as well as Christians throughout the Roman Empire are facing the same problem and Paul will direct Timothy on just how to handle this issue.

A] 1 Timothy 2: 1 through 7; (read)

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

After exhorting Timothy to unify the doctrinal positions of the leaders there, and begin the move toward unity among the believers, and there is a lot of division as outside influences come to bear, as well as inside folks not quite up on their information regarding what Christianity is about.

Paul comes to the point of prayer. What IS prayer? It is OUR special time of communicating with God Himself, whether aloud or to ourselves, we will individually, call out to God in bad times, good times and those times in-between, and we also will corporately, come together in prayer. God does want to hear our voices and our hearts as we approach the throne. We are, after all, His Children adopted by Grace through the atoning death and then resurrection of our Savior Jesus, and as we parents’ long to hear from our children, so Our Father in Heaven longs to hear from His children.

So, after his introduction, Paul “exhorts” the Greek: Parakalo: to come along side and impel or urge. A very strong verb of action. To offer: ‘supplications’ or specialized requests, as opposed to generalized ‘prayers’ and intercessions as well, intercession meaning praying for or on behalf of another’s need, and finally, giving of thanks. All of this directed to God on all men’s behalf. We are to pray for ALL men (and women) this is what we, as Christians should be doing, as a witness of our care for all those around us that they see Jesus in us.

2]--”*for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”*

This leads us right to Paul’s time where we pray for all, and keep a low profile, not giving the authorities any reason to charge us with anything, no matter how tiny an incident. Folks, in that time, who professed Christ, needed to fly under the radar for safety sake, because Nero or any of those berserk emperors would have them arrested on any pretext. But even today, we pray for those in authority, that they make wise decisions regarding their office and trust in God to give them the wisdom to accomplish their tasks.

3] “*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our savior,--”*

So, it is God who would wish us to be so bold to pray for those who would rule over us. Can you pray for your enemies? And how did they become your enemies? Or how did they become your adversary in the first place? How do we allow enmity to build up between folks? How do we allow despot rulers to take their place over man? Frankly, because we let them, don’t we? Because friends we cannot be bothered to stand pat on our beliefs, and do not pray for that wisdom from the Father in heaven, and we then develop the ‘let John do it,’ attitude.

4]--”*Who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.”*

God loves His creation and longs for His human creation to respond positively to Him, and what this passage says, that in praying as intercessor for all men, great and small, we are acting as witness and praying for God to soften men’s hearts that they ALL would come to the throne asking for forgiveness, and seeking salvation. This is what God wants, that all of His human creation should repent from their sin and come to the knowledge of who they really are, and who God is. This is the ‘TRUTH’! Such patience! Thereby God has given us that responsibility to be that witness to the world.

5] “*For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,--”*

This is the reason that all men must pray, and supplicate and ask for intercession, the word ‘for’ Paul points to this is the point. There is one God, as opposed to the teaching of many Gentile religions of the time, and Paul is showing Timothy that the heretics at that time also called the crucified Jesus merely a phantom or ghost, and Paul is explaining that this one mediator was Jesus the man, who gave His life for the ransom of many, also as opposed to the Pharisees who claimed that title of mediator for themselves. This Jesus is our only mediator before the Father. And this is that ‘due time’. That time where His sacrifice and resultant salvation is preached and it is this salvation for the many that is being made known.

6]--”*for which I am appointed a preacher and an Apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ, and not lying, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.”*

Frankly, friends, Paul chafes under the adverse scrutiny from heathen leaders and the Judiazers who strive to denigrate the messenger and then deny the message. This is what Paul is facing and why he repeats, what Timothy should already know. He was ‘appointed’, well who appointed him? Jesus of course, on the Road to Damascus, and then had hands laid on him by others for this ministry. He was appointed preacher or herald (keryx) (Gr)or announcer, as well as Apostle. Paul adds here in opposition to the adversarial commentaries; I AM NOT LYING! I speak the truth of Christ, in a way to encourage Timothy, “we are in the right, not them!!” And again refuting the Judiazers, that this is his ministry, it is to the Gentiles. It is to them he now brings this message. So what Paul is saying to Timothy is to affirm his truth as opposed to the opponents of Christianity.

C] 1 Timothy 2: 8 through 15; (read)

1] “*I desire therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;--”*

Notice, that Paul is not making this a commandment, or even an order, but it is his ‘desire’ that men, wherever they are become a praying group, not leaving it up to the Priests, Pharisees, or other leaders, but all who believe are to be constantly in prayer. At the beginning of this chapter we are urged, pushed, exhorted to pray for all leaders and subjects. What has happened? Are all praying today, are all in communication with God? Sadly, in my case, only when I can find the time, how about you?

Praying everywhere, in the public places, lifting up holy hands. This was a Jewish custom, but the idea of lifting up hands that are set apart. We are a set apart people, therefore the hands are a part of us, so are we praying with holy hands, undefiled? And then, where is the heart? Do we harbor anger and malice? How is our emotional state as we approach the throne? Can I come to the throne with my problems and issues and leave them there in FAITH? Or do I take them back in DOUBT!

2]--”*In like manner also, that women adorn themselves with modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,--”*

In that society which was Greek influenced as well as Roman, women were very style conscious and paraded around in heavy perfumes, costly gems, and bright stylish clothing, just to show off, and in many societies today we see the same thing. So, women, what is more important to you? That others notice you and how much you can flaunt? When you come into the assembly of believers, where is your focus? That you come to Honor God, or to find honor for yourself?

3]--”*but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.”*

Paul is addressing the plight of women of that era, and their habits. But also he is addressing women in prayer with their husbands This means that ALL should come together in prayer and this means both women and men. And they are to come together with the intent to commune with the Father in heaven and no other motives.

4] “*Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.”*

Now we come to the controversial parts. Ready? Women in that day, depending on the society they grew up in, were either more in subjugation in the Hebrew society, or more overt and had more control in many Gentile societies. In many Gentile religions the women held the power in temple worship as sex workers, Paul was exercising a prerogative, of where women belonged in the societies he knew, in that it might seem brazen from the Gentile point of view, to see a woman in authority over men.

5] “*I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man, but to be in silence.”*

So here is that point of view Paul exerts over the roles of men and women in the Church, Paul still is a Pharisee, regardless of what he does now, and understanding the mores of the various societies in that day in age, Paul then bases his rules on what Gentile women have become.

6] “*For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and fell into transgression.”*

Paul now full mode in the Pharisaic tradition, explains Adam was first and Eve second, and that should be the way of things. And He explains Eve was the one who sinned, not Adam, but we all know they sinned together, although Eve was the first to be tempted and sinned first. He is simply trying to put the Gentile women into God’s context as he, Paul, sees it from his Pharisaic learning.

7] “*Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self control.*

You know I am sucking wind here, right?

Again, continuing with the Pharisaic understanding and understanding the roles God made men and women for, Paul plows right on. GOD DID MAKE MEN AND WOMEN different for a reason, and the two should NEVER be crossed nor confused. Men are built PHYSICALLY different from women, and that should tell the story. We should be honoring the difference. God created women for a specific purpose, and men were to be a part of that purpose, that that purpose was and is to further the species.

Therefore, according to Paul, women should understand their position in society. Remember without women, there would be no children, and the human race would disappear. So each is as important as the other, and that is the way it must be.