

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The portion of Scripture before us today is found in St. Paul's first letter written to Timothy the second chapter beginning at the first verse:

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, ⁷ for which I was 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. ⁸ I desire therefore that the

men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;

And now may the words of my mouth and meditations of our hearts be pleasing and acceptable to You, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

God wants all people saved. God does not want one of His children to go to hell. God has done everything for us in order that we would have redemption from the penalty of our sin. God has given us life. God has given us His holy Law. God has given us His Son. And still people walk away from this.

Consider the example of Peter. Peter was a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. Peter knew all the Jesus had done and Peter had been privy to what Jesus was going to do. Yet when the time came for Jesus Christ to be punished and die... Peter denied knowing His Savior. Peter denied Christ because he feared for his own life. Though God, through Jesus, had provided

everything for Peter, Peter abandoned God, he had abandoned Jesus.

Dear friends, God does love you. God has paid a great price for each and every one of us: His own Son. I pray that today we are able to truly reflect on the notion and on the truth that Jesus Christ is *a ransom for all men*.

Friends, we are all sinners. There is not one of us who is perfect. There is not one of us who is sinless. There is not one of us who is even close to what God demands. And for that sin that we commit, we get further and further entrenched in Satan's kingdom.

When we sin against God, we are taking ourselves out of His hand, out of His control, and allowing ourselves to be put squarely in Satan's control. Think about it, when we do not listen to God we are abandoning him. When your child does not listen to you, do you congratulate them on a job well done? When you do not listen to your parents do you think that you deserve a pat on the back? When you ignore instructions at work or in school, do you

suppose that you should be given a raise or a passing grade? Instead, when we do not listen, we are showing those in charge of us that their word is not very important to us. When we fail to comply with what a superior has said, it is as if we are telling that superior that we do not need them and they are meaningless to us.

And this is exactly what we do with God when we sin. When we sin and break God's Law, we are telling God that we don't need Him. When we break His Law it is as if we are telling Him that we know better than He does. When we break God's Law we are turning our backs on God. And in so doing, we are also acting as a judge of God's holy Law. When we do not do as God would have us do, we are judging the very Law that God has set before us.

I know God says that I shouldn't steal, but obviously God isn't fulfilling my needs. I know that God says I shouldn't cheat on my spouse, but obviously He never had the enjoyment and excitement of an affair. I know God says that I should honor my father and my mother, but have you ever met them? I know God says...

but honestly I don't care what God says. God made the Law without my help, therefore why should I have to follow it? And we judge the Law. Just as James (4:11-12) tells us in his letter, "But if you judge the law; you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?"

And who are we? We are sinners. We are unrepentant people. We are ungodly. We are... not how God created us. God created us so that, as our text says, we would "come to the knowledge of the truth." But as we judge God and His Law, are we really coming to a knowledge of the truth? When we tell God that His Law isn't good enough, are we truly following Him? When we try to amend or change God's Law, are we being Christian?

God would have us all come to a knowledge of the Law... but so often we will not allow that. As Johann Gerhard says, "Rather, such special blessings have been named this way and distinguished from the general blessings as many people through their own fault exclude

themselves from the fellowship of such blessings by their unrepentance and unbelief; even though God the Lord on His part would gladly and willingly grant them these and impart blessings on them if they only would not prevent this on their own. For, God the Lord wants all men to be saved and have them come to the knowledge of truth." And notice, it is not merely a knowledge that God wants us to have... God wants all men to be saved. But saved from what?

Saved from our arrogance in believing that we know better than God. Saved from our disobedience in thinking that the Law of God should not apply to us. Saved from the camp of Satan, where our Old Adam continually draws us as we live in sin more and more.

But God wants all men to be saved. God does not want one person to not have salvation. Salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus who lived a perfect life, always trusting God, always depending only on God, always loving God. And in return for this perfect life, Jesus received the death of the worst of sinners. Jesus

was hung on a cross. To make Him stay they drove railroad spikes through His hands and His feet. And Jesus died. After He was dead, just to make sure, they rammed a spear through His side and blood poured out. Jesus had given up His life as a ransom for each and every one of us. Then they buried Him in a sinners tomb. However, three days later He rose from the dead. When He rose He proclaimed the victory that He had won over death, hell, and Satan.

With His rising from the dead, Jesus declared that His perfect life and innocent death was appeasing to God, and a ransom for all people. For as Paul put it in the text, “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 what Jesus Christ did and in this we have faith.

Without the faith that God gives us, we are no different than an unbeliever. Sure Jesus died for us... but it means nothing to us. Without faith, we have no heaven waiting for us. Without faith, we have no redemption. But through faith

in Jesus Christ, we have heaven waiting for us. We have the love of God showered down upon us. We have Jesus’ righteousness applied to us. And this faith is strengthened through the means of Grace: baptism, which washes away our sin; the Word of God, which proclaims forgiveness and redemption; the Lord’s Supper, which gives us the assurance as from Christ Himself that His body and blood were given and shed for us... for the forgiveness of all our sins.

And with this knowledge of all that Jesus has done for us, now it is our turn. It is not our turn to earn heaven, that is done; it is our turn to show forth the love of God that only Christians can do.

Paul, in our text, exhorts us to ‘pray, supplicate, intercede, and give thanks’ to God for everything that He has done for us. But in particular, we are to pray, intercede, supplicate, and give thanks... for our fellow man. We start with those in authority, so that our lives may be quiet and peaceful. We pray regardless of our political affiliation. We pray regardless of

policies. We pray for all in authority. We pray for our neighbors who know Christ and for those neighbors who do not know Christ. We pray for the continued perseverance of all Christians regardless of their circumstances. We pray for our families: parents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, children, nieces, nephews, God-children. We pray for the world of unbelievers, that they too might hear the Good News and that God would welcome them into His heaven.

Paul wants each and every one of us to pray... constantly. And when we pray we pray only to God. We do not pray to another person, we do not pray to another thing, we do not pray to the sun and moon... we pray to God. As Paul tells us, "there is ONE MEDIATOR... Jesus Christ." We do not pray to another, because there is no other.

Dear friends in Christ, we are not perfect children. Many times we judge God, we put Him on trial, and we act as if we deserve that highest seat in heaven. When we do that, we find ourselves squarely in Satan's corner...

However, when we know the wrong that we have committed. When we recognize that God is right. When we know that God loved us and gave His Son as a ransom for us... then we are back in God's corner.

Friends, God loves you. He wants you to know that. He wants you to understand that all He has done is for your benefit. God has given you life, He has given you shelter, He has given you friends and family... but most importantly He has given you a ransom from all your sin, Jesus Christ, the lamb without spot or blemish.

Thank God for all that He has done. Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, and His love endures forever. Amen.