

What Pleases God

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Date: 06 January 2008

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[0:00] Let's turn to 1 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 1. All of the Bible is our Savior's words to us.

The word of our Lord Jesus. Let's hear what He says to us from 1 Timothy 2. And I'll read the first seven verses.

I urge then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving, be made for everyone, for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men, the testimony given in its proper time. And for this purpose, I was appointed a herald and an apostle. I am telling the truth. I am not lying. I am not lying. And a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.

[1:24] May God give us understanding of His word. People are sometimes frustrated that they don't know exactly what God wants for them.

Many Christians want to know what God's will for their life is. Them specifically. They would like a word directly for them. And if you point them to the Bible as God's revealed will for them, they say, no, no, no, I want to know what His will is for me.

Exactly. In this exact situation, at this exact moment in my life, I want more specifics than what the Bible gives me. At which point we must say, Bible in hand, this is what God wants for you.

This is His will specifically for you in this situation in your life. Because in the Scriptures, we have revealed for us everything that we need to know about life and godliness.

We have everything that we need to know about God. It's not everything there is to know about God. But it's everything He's seen fit to reveal to us. In the Scriptures and creation around us as well.

[2:34] But we're focusing on the Scriptures tonight as our source of knowledge and information about God. So if we want to know who He is, we look to His word. If we want to know what He's like, we look to His word.

If we want to know what His will is for us, we look to His word. If we want to know the desires of His own heart, we look to His word. So that we might bring our desires into line with His.

Now Paul does that for Timothy in our text tonight. He tells Timothy, and he tells us, exactly what it is that God wants. What is the heart of God?

What does He want? And in light of who God is and what He wants, what does He want us to do? And that's very simply what we want to see tonight. Who God is and what does He want, first of all. And then, how then ought we to live? In light of who He is. And in light of who He wants. Now, Paul's done sort of introducing the letter in chapter 1.

[3:36] He's set the stage for us. We understand that there's false teachers in Ephesus. And there's problems that Timothy needs to be dealing with. And there's the danger of shipwrecking your faith if you're not careful, even as some have done and others might yet do.

Therefore, he says, I urge then, I urge therefore, in verse 1 of chapter 2, of first importance, and now he's going to tell Timothy what he needs to do, what he needs to know, what he needs to understand.

And the first thing that we're going to consider, we're just going to look at the first four verses tonight. I'd like to do all seven, but we don't have time, and there's so much here that we're going to divide it up. But we see, first of all, who God is and what He wants.

And we'll start down in verse 3. This is good and pleases God our Savior. He tells Timothy to make prayers, requests, intercessions for everyone, for kings and those authorities, so that we can have

peaceful, godly lives.

This is good and it pleases God our Savior. He tells us who God is. He's our Savior. He's already talked about Him in these terms. Back at the very beginning of the letter, he referred to God our Savior and Christ our hope.

[4:41] God is the Savior of mankind. He's the one who ordains salvation. He's the one who sent His Son that men might be saved. He's the one who sends His Spirit. That our hearts might be renewed and awakened. This is who God is.

And what does this God want? This is good and pleases God our Savior who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

As the Savior, His desire is the salvation of all men. That's right. You heard it here first. God wants all men to be saved. I'm not here to resolve all of your questions about how to reconcile the desire of God with the decree that God has made.

We believe firmly in the doctrine of election that God has chosen some to be saved and not everyone. But He reveals to us in His Word that He desires all men to be saved.

Now here in this context, I think the all men is actually all sorts of men. It's repeated three times. It's in verse 1. Request and prayers be made for everyone.

[5:46] That's the same word. Or same two words. All men. He wants all men to come to Himself. And Jesus Christ gave Himself as a ransom for all men. Now we know that all men will not be saved.

And in the context, again, it seems to be all types of men. Jews and Gentiles, He speaks of down in verse 7. And make prayer for all men. And then He specifies a group. Kings and those in authority. All kinds of men. But that doesn't change what's revealed to us in 2 Peter 3.9. The Lord is not slow keeping His promise. As some understand slowness. He is patient with you.

Not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. From this passage and that one in 2 Peter, it's clear that God wants all kinds of men to be saved.

And He wants all men to be saved. Though not all will be. He wants Jews and Gentiles to be saved. He wants rich and poor to be saved. Old and young.

[6:41] Americans and Mexicans. Iranians and Israelis. He wants powerful people and weak people. He wants fathers and mothers. He wants sons and daughters and brothers and sisters to be saved.

He wants, dare I say it, Ohio State fans and Michigan fans to be saved. And I know that because I know both. And I know both that are Christians. He wants all kinds of people to be saved.

And Purdue fans too. And He wants people from South Bend to be saved. And He wants people from Bremen to be saved. He wants all kinds of people to be saved.

And how unfair it is that God gets a bad reputation for being cruel and unkind to only save some people. How unfair that Reformed people are often accused of making a monster out of God by affirming the biblical truth of election.

No. God is loving and kind and wants all men to be saved. And He does save many. And men who are not saved don't have God to blame. They have only themselves and their wicked, rebellious hearts to blame.

[7:47] God wants all kinds of people to be saved. He desires for all to come to repentance. And the evidence of this desire of God's heart is all over the pages of Scripture.

And it's seen clearly in the history of redemption because He has saved all kinds of people from all walks of life. Romans 5.8 But God demonstrates His own love for us in this.

Do you want to know something about God's love? Do you want to know something about His heart? How do you know? He demonstrates it in this that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

If God doesn't want all men to be saved, why did He give us an infinitely powerful Savior? If He doesn't want all men to be saved, why did He ordain the indiscriminate proclamation of His glorious Gospel to the ends of the earth in all places and all times?

Why did He make provision for the free, offer the Gospel to be made to all men? Why does He instruct that it be made to all men? Because He wants all men to be saved.

[8:49] If that makes you squirm in your Calvinist seat, it shouldn't. John Calvin, commenting on the passage in 2 Peter 3, verse 9, So wonderful is His love towards mankind that He would have them all to be saved and is of His own self prepared to bestow salvation on the lost.

That's what God wants. He wants each one of you here tonight to come to repentance and so to be saved. That's going to have to affect our practice.

That's why we proclaim the Gospel to all men. We don't know who the elect are. We don't say, well, I think that person is elect, so I'm going to tell him about the Gospel. But I'm not sure about that one, so I'm not going to bother telling him the Gospel.

No, we proclaim it to all. We offer the Gospel freely to all and sincerely to all. And He wants all men to be saved, but He also wants all men to come to a knowledge of Himself.

Those things are parallel. And so we learn, or parallel, and we learn that in order to be saved, men must come to a knowledge of the truth. Still there in verse 4. That's what God wants.

[9:52] He wants men to know the truth and that desire is evident again in what He's done. He's given us His Son. The Word made flesh come down from heaven as the embodiment of truth. He's given us His Word, the written revelation.

He wants us to know the truth, so He gave us the truth. He inspired men to write it down. And He inspired the catechism question.

Holy men taught by the Holy Spirit are those who wrote the Bible. And He's allowed for its preservation down through the ages so that we have God's Word today. And He's allowed for the spread of it to many of the thousands of tribes and tongues and languages all over the earth.

He's allowed for its translation and its spread all over the world because He wants men to know the truth. He doesn't want just clergy, pastors to know the truth. We thank God that He sent the Reformation.

We give Martin Luther credit for the Reformation, but it's God who did it, right? And one of the great byproducts of that was the Scriptures being put into the hands of the common man. He wants people to know the truth.

[11:01] He gives us ministers to make the truth known to us, to make it plain to us. 2 Timothy 2:25 is talking about the Lord's servant. Those who oppose Him, He must gently instruct in the hope that God will grant them repentance, leading them to a knowledge of the truth.

He gives ministers that they might instruct people who oppose them so that they can come to a knowledge of the truth. That's what God wants. And so we make it our aim here to proclaim the truth.

If God wants all men to know it, then we're going to preach the truth whenever we gather to meet. We want you to hear and know the truth of His Word and come to a saving knowledge of His glorious Son, our Savior, who's the centerpiece of His truth.

God wants all kinds of men to be saved and He wants them to come to a knowledge of the truth. Is that what you want? Shouldn't we want what God wants?

Or are there some, somewhere in some corner of your mind that you have deemed unworthy? She doesn't deserve to know the truth because of the way she's treated me at school or at work.

[12:10] He doesn't deserve a chance to hear the truth because I've been wronged by Him. Or maybe it's a group of people. Politicians or world leaders are liberals so distasteful to you that you have no desire to see them come to the truth.

God wants even liberals to be saved. Maybe cruel dictators are so heinous that you don't want them to know the truth. If you have some such group of people in your mind, you've got to get rid of it because God wants all kinds of people to be saved.

We don't get to pick and choose who we think is worthy of the truth. All men need the truth. And God wants all men to have it. And so if we want what God wants, it will show in our church life. There are problems in the church. Ephesus and Paul's helping Timothy write those problems and correct them. And so as we study this book, we want to see how it applies not to us as just as individuals, but as a church, as a body of believers.

And so we should see what this has to say to us. What will a church that wants what God wants look like? If we want all men to be saved, then I suspect we'll be telling all men about Jesus.

[13:19] Jesus will preach the gospel regularly, weekly, the good news that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, that there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

Our message will never stray far from Christ because He is the center of God's Word and will be the center of what we proclaim. We'll support the spread of that gospel to the ends of the earth. All around the world, we will invite people in to hear that gospel.

We will issue the gospel call to all who cross our path. We will seek to equip God's people so that they will be enabled to go and be evangelistic in their lives.

Sharing the gospel with those around them will welcome all sorts of people through these doors, not discriminating, not showing favoritism to a certain type or group of people. Oh, we like people that are like us.

We like people that are normal, middle class, everyday, ordinary sorts of people that dress like we do and that look like we do. But we can't show that sort of favoritism because God wants all men to hear the truth.

[14 : 23] And so we will welcome all sorts of people through these doors. Children should have the gospel explained to them in terms they can understand. Adults should be challenged with the truth as well.

All races and income levels must always be welcome here. Persons of influence and persons of little significance in the eyes of the world must be able to find refuge within the walls of this church. We'll welcome those who are about the business of proclaiming the truth in other places in the world. We'll welcome missionaries so that we can hear about how other people in other parts of the world are hearing the truth and bringing back to salvation so that we can better pray for our missionaries so that we can know more fully what we're supporting and enter into their labors by our prayers and by our giving.

And so we'll seek to make known to all men, everyone who passes through these doors, the truth. And if we want what God wants, it'll show in our lives personally.

We will radiate the gospel light to our friends, co-workers, family members, schoolmates, teammates, and neighbors. We'll open our mouths and tell people about what Jesus has done for us and what He can do for them.

[15 : 41] How He has changed our lives and how He can change theirs as well. We will tell them that God wants them to be saved. We'll make sure our children know the truth and hear it regularly explained and applied to them.

We'll make sure they're under the regular faithful teaching and preaching of the Word. God wants all kinds of men to be saved and He wants them to know the truth. The question is, do you? Do you want all to know the truth?

And do you live accordingly? Well, it's just a little bit of who God is. He is the Savior and what He wants for all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

And we've already begun to consider how then ought we to live as a church and individual. But how does the passage here take and specifically apply it? We'll go back to the beginning, back to the first verses.

And one thing that we'll do if we want what God wants, says Paul, is that we'll pray for all men. That everyone there, again, is the same as the all men down in verse 4.

[16 : 43] I urge then, first of all, that request prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all men. Yep, Timothy, even pray for those false teachers in Ephesus that have caused you so much trouble.

The ones that keep you awake at night, that keep you from sleeping while you think about the problems that they've caused. I want you to think about those false teachers that have given you such an ulcer that you have stomach problems.

I don't know if this was an ulcer, but Timothy had issues. He was a timid man and he was apparently stressed by the work of the ministry. No doubt, in large part, from these people who were causing so much trouble in the church.

And so, Paul says, yeah, you have to pray for them, for all men, Timothy. And we must as well. And you notice how he multiplies words for prayer.

Four different types of prayer. I don't think he's just saying pray, pray, pray, pray. But there are distinctions in these words. Requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for everyone.

[17 : 47] Requests are something that are made upon the basis of a need. You have a need, and so you make a request. You're sick, that's the need, and so the request is, Lord, make me well. Or another need, or we're going to be going on a trip, and so there's a need for safety.

And so the request that you make in that specific situation where there's a need is for safety and for God to watch over and to keep us and to protect us. And so we are to make specific requests for all

kinds of people.

And then we are to pray. And the word prayer there is the word generally for prayer. Most commonly used in the New Testament. Speaking to God. And we pray to God because He's the one who hears and answers prayer.

And that's not profound, but that's what we do. We make requests. We bring them to our God. We intercede. That's the third word. Praying particularly on behalf of someone else. Our requests are not to be just for ourselves.

Though we're awfully good at that. And that's good. We ought to pray for ourselves. But they are to be made for other people. And isn't that the point Paul's making? Prayers be made for all men. All men includes you, but you should be praying for others as well.

[18:56] We see their need, and so we make a request on behalf of them. Their need. Interceding for them. And then Thanksgiving. We frequently find that is to be our posture in prayer in the Scriptures.

When we pray, it's to always be with Thanksgiving. Philippians 4.6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with Thanksgiving. Present your requests to God.

God wants us to acknowledge His answers to our prayers. To give Him thanks for them as we intercede on behalf of others. We're to give Him praise for who He is and for what He has done and for what He will do.

And sometimes these four elements can all be combined. My son has, when he prays, and I'm not sure how much of this is intentional or how much of it is just mixing up his words, but he combines thanksgiving and requests in this sweet prayer of faith.

He'll pray things like, thank you that you will give us a safe trip to Oma's house. And he's asking for a safe trip to Oma's house, but he's also being thankful for it in the same time.

[20:06] And Paul is wrapping all of these things up into one. We are to request. We are to pray. We are to intercede. And we are to give thanks when we pray. And when you add that up, it means that you're going to have to be specific in your prayers.

Not just generic. When we think about praying for our enemies, it's something that's hard to do already. And so, we let ourselves off the hook with the Lord, please bless my enemy. And that's very generic and it's very general and we've satisfied the need for our conscience to pray for our enemies or to pray for that group of people that we really don't like very much.

That group of people that maybe we don't think they're worthy of the knowledge of the Gospel. You know, if there's somebody that you don't think deserves the Gospel, your desires aren't the same as the Lord's, it'll often show up in your prayer life.

You don't pray for them. But we're going to have to be specific for all kinds of men. We've got to make requests and prayers and intercessions and thanksgiving on their behalf.

And so we can't get by with just, please bless so and so. and move on. We must pray carefully for them. Specific intercessory prayer on behalf of all sorts of people.

[21:21] And so, Timothy, Paul says, it's a dangerous world that we live in. There's the danger of shipwrecking your faith. And so you must pray that God would protect and keep you and the others there in Ephesus and enable you to hold on to faith and a good conscience.

And there are people that are in danger of never finding their way into the kingdom. And so, and God wants these people to be saved and so we must pray for their salvation. There's those to whom we witness who hear the truth.

Pray that it would have its effect. And then there's your enemies, Timothy. Pray for them. Pray that they would have their eyes open. That they would see the truth. Pray that you would have a heart to love them like you should. Pray that they might be brought to a knowledge of the truth.

And we must do this again as a church and as individuals. Paul tells us to pray for all kinds of people. And we gather on Wednesday nights as a church to pray for all kinds of people.

And if you're not there to pray for all kinds of people, you're missing out on part of what God has for the church and that's to pray together. And then you go into your closet alone and you pray for all kinds of people.

[22:24] You pray for your friends. You uphold them before the throne of grace. You know their needs perhaps better than any other group of people besides your family because they're your friends.

So you intercede specifically for them. And generally, this is pretty easy to do. We like to pray for our friends because they are our friends. That's our comfort zone. And that's easy to do. And that's good. And we must pray for them. But we can't stop there. All kinds of people. Enemies. Here's where it begins to get hard. We don't like enemies. They're enemies.

But we're to specifically intercede for these. It's not optional for us. Again, for the people that we shared the Gospel with. Pray that that Word would take root. Pray that they would be saved even as God desires for them to be saved.

Pray that they would have further opportunity to hear the Gospel. Pray that they would accept your invitation to come to the church and hear the Gospel preached here. Pray that they might not be lost. Pray for those people. Pray for your children.

[23 : 24] All kinds of people. Pray for your children. You want them to be saved. You want them to know the truth. You want them to have a good life. You want them to find just the right spouse and have the right job.

And you know what God wants for them. And so you've told them the truth. But we must not stop there. Pray these things for them. Pray that God would show them mercy.

Pray that their eyes would be opened. Pray that they would be kept from sin. Pray that they would hold on to a good conscience. Pray that God would prepare just the right spouse for them.

Pray that God would guide and direct their steps all the days of their life. Pray for your children. Do we too often have hopes and dreams and worries about our children, but not often enough?

Pray specifically and earnestly for them with thanksgiving to God for giving them to us. Do you pray for your spouse this way? Do you pray for your pastors this way?

[24 : 23] Do you pray specifically for your co-workers and even the ones that seem to delight in your suffering? For your peers at school? For your teammates? Do you pray for all kinds of men? We must.

God tells us to pray for all kinds of men. And now He narrows it down. He's going to pick one group out in particular for us with good reason. And so we narrow our focus.

He says, these prayers should be made for everyone. And now, especially verse 2, for kings and all those in authority that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

We're to pray for rulers and those in authority. Do you pray for George W. Bush? Yeah, he's a Christian.

He claims to be a Christian. We pray for him. Good. Do you pray for Evan Bayh? You know who he is. You pray for Richard Luger. You pray for our Supreme Court justices.

[25 : 22] How many of you could name all nine of our Supreme Court justices? We're not going to go there right now. But do you pray for them? Do you pray for Joe Donnelly? Do you pray for Mitch Daniels? Do you pray for Bill Friend?

Or Ryan Mishler? Pray for the Bremen Town Council. There's a nice picture of them on the cover of the Bremen Inquirer this week with all their names. It would be a good way to take that copy of the paper and pray for those people.

Do you pray for the mayors of your town? Do you know who they are? Do you specifically pray that God would give them wisdom and guidance to pass and enforce particular laws and appoint particular judges and make certain decisions so that they might rule in such a way that Christianity might flourish and grow in our society?

Do you pray for their salvation if they're ones that don't know the Lord? For those that do know the Lord, do you pray that they would be protected and kept from influence and pressure from the wrong sources? Brethren, I find that at least in my own heart, I often complain about our politicians and the horrible laws they pass and how liberal they are and how they're sending our country down the tubes.

That's really easy to do. But I don't find that very often I get down on my knees and make requests and pray and intercede and give thanks for them.

[26 : 40] That's hard to do. But that's what we're instructed to do. These things, these prayers are made for everyone, for kings and those in authority.

And those are two broad categories. Rulers and those in authority. It could be all sorts of people included. I've just given you some suggested names of those that are in authority over us.

Well, you say, that's all well and good, but what if so-and-so gets elected president this year? Paul didn't know about him. And he certainly didn't know about her. And you're right.

He didn't. He only knew about men like Nero that burned Christians and executed them and persecuted them and oppressed them.

That's the kind of ruler he was talking about. And let me tell you, if God wanted Paul and the Ephesians and Timothy to pray for Nero, then he wants us to pray for whoever is elected to be president in this country.

[27 : 42] Still don't believe me? Still doubt that maybe we don't need to pray for people like this? That would have been a hard pill to swallow for those Christians at Ephesus. They knew who Paul was telling them to pray for.

Paul drives it home in verse 3. This is good and pleases God our Savior. You want to know what's pleasing to God? You want to know how to please God? That's what people want to know for their lives. How can I please God?

Pray for people. All sorts of men and particularly for those in authority. That's pleasing to God. That's good. That's pleasing in His sight.

Much good will come from it. We are to pray for these people. Even those who hate us and make our lives miserable and difficult.

And then, if God wants all men to be saved, and if He wants all to come to a knowledge of Himself, we should pray that for them. But then we should also do everything in our power to live peaceful and quiet lives.

[28 : 48] And you see this train of thought here. We pray for kings and those in authority so that we may live peaceful and quiet lives. When rulers rule properly, we can have peace and quiet.

When we're free from turmoil, free from persecution, free from suffering from these rulers and authority, it will be easier for us to live quiet, peaceful lives which will make it easier for us to live in godliness and holiness which will make our witness to the world around us more effective.

If you know anything about boating, and I know just a very little bit about it, you know that it's best to do water sports on a calm, windless day when the lake is calm and smooth.

Because if you go out when it's windy, the boat's going to be fighting against the waves and your water skier or whoever's going to be dealing with the waves and it's just harder to do when there's turmoil in the water. But when it's calm and peaceful, much easier to enjoy your boating and your water sports that way.

And that's sort of how it is here. If we have peaceful and quiet lives, if there's not turmoil, if there's not persecution, if there's not suffering, it is easier to go about our business.

[30 : 03] It is easier to go about the business of living the Christian life when things are going smoothly in the society all around us. And Paul says we should pray to that end. Because when persecution and other things arise, it gets much harder.

It gets much more difficult to maintain our witness and our testimony when our lives are not quiet and peaceful. And so we are to pray for our leaders so that we might have that peace and quiet and calm and tranquility.

It was what God told those going into exile to do. Jeremiah 29, 7, and also seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile.

Pray to the Lord for it because if it prospers, you too will prosper. We're to seek the peace and well-being of the place where we live. We're to seek the well-being of our leaders by praying for them so that we might live in peace and tranquility and so live godly, respectable lives.

What helpful direction for young Timothy and for us? Paul had learned that when the governing authorities cooperate, it creates a much more conducive setting for life and for ministry.

[31 : 11] Paul had faced riots right here in Ephesus. He had had to leave Thessalonica under the cover of darkness because of trouble stood up there against him. That came from the church, but there's someone in leadership and authority.

He had to leave Berea under a protective escort. And those sorts of conditions weren't favorable for the prospering of Christianity in those places. Paul had to leave some places before he was able to see a church established there, before he was able to see things raised up like he would have liked to see there because of persecution.

He knew that when things were quiet and calm and tranquil that it was easier to minister. Now, persecution can test and try the church and can cause growth.

I mean, the church is born out of persecution. But you notice, Paul never, God never instructs anyone to pray for persecution. We're told to expect it, to be ready for it, but we're never told to pray

for it, to ask for it.

Because it's harder to live your Christian life when you're being persecuted. It's harder to minister in a context of turmoil. And so we're to pray for peace and tranquility so that we might then live these lives of godliness and respectability.

[32 : 21] And just a note here, it seems that sometimes Christians who do live in peaceful, quiet societies, like us, our level of persecution is so low it doesn't even register compared to what some people face.

We have peaceful, quiet lives in our society, whether we recognize it or not. And sometimes people in situations like that are made to feel guilty as though they are lesser Christians because they are not facing persecution.

And I think this text makes clear that that is a false guilt. That is a guilt that should not be foisted upon anyone. We're to pray for peace and tranquility and so don't feel guilty about the lack of persecution as though Christians in China or some Muslim country who regularly face persecution are somehow better Christians than we are.

We're to pray for peace and we are to pray for our persecuted brethren that they might know peace. And when persecution comes, we need to take those opportunities to grow in grace and to abound in it, but we're never told to pray for persecution rather to pray for our leaders that we might enjoy peace and so live lives of godliness and respectability.

It's in these circumstances that we're better and able to live lives that are pleasing to God and then are a faithful witness to the world around us. This is the behavior that is expected of God's people.

[33 : 44] We're God's people and so we should live godly lives to live the way He has instructed us. We're to live according to His Word. We're to live lives of dignity, respectability, lives of good reputation, the word that's here translated holiness.

We are to be holy as He is. Our religion is not to be in name only but in action. We're to live it out before a watching world so that God may be praised. And it is easier to do this, to have a consistent, visible testimony of godliness when we enjoy peace and tranquility.

And so we are to make every effort knowing who God is and what He wants. We are to make every effort to pray for these people and to live lives of peace, tranquility, godliness, and respectability because this is good and it pleases God our Savior who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

And when we do these things, our witness, more effective. We should be able to live better lives, clearer life, shining in the darkness to those around us. We should be more eager to share His Word with those around us, ready to proclaim it.

The things that we've already talked about, if we want what God wants, those things will take place more easily in a context of peace. And so how then should we live knowing who God is and what He wants?

[35 : 05] We should be people of prayer. We should be people seeking what He seeks, wanting what He wants, living lives of godliness and holiness.

And it's here in this context that we'll be able to hold on to the faith and a good conscience when life is this way that we'll be best able to avoid shipwreck of faith. And these conditions will make the most effective witnesses for His Gospel.

And so then, maybe a challenge is in order for us, or at least for me tonight. We have very peaceful, quiet lives. Much as we complain about it and wonder where it might be headed, we have a government that has protected our religious freedoms and our ability to worship.

I understand that there are laws that may put these things in danger and jeopardy, but by and large, we enjoy great peace and freedom of religion here. Given that we have it as good as we do, then why are we not further along in our lives of godliness?

Why are we not further along in our effective witness and outreach to the world around us? If God wants people to be saved, why aren't more people being saved in Bremen, Indiana because of the influence we have here?

[36 : 19] Since we do have it so good, why are we not growing by leaps and bounds? Why is that witness to the watching world so anemic? Why do our hearts, or my heart, not want more of what God wants?

Maybe we've taken the peace and tranquility for granted, and we don't pray for it anymore. We just assume that we're entitled to it. The point of peace isn't to make us lazy and complacent, to make

us thankful, and then go back to our knees and pray for more.

It's to spur us on to more effective godly living and faithful witness. God has shown us what He wants, then it's for us to live and to pray to that end, that men might be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

So, we who enjoy this relative abundance of peace and prosperity and tranquility, may God make us a people who enjoy abundance of godliness in our lives, a faithful, effective witness to the watching world.

And one last note tonight. If God wants all men to be saved, then that means He wants you to be saved tonight. And may it not be said of us that we've neglected to present the Gospel to you, to call you to repentance and faith.

[37 : 36] Because weak and frail as we are and reflecting the desires of God and our own desires, we do want what He wants. We want you to be saved. We want you to know the truth.

We want you to be one of His children so that you too can live a life of godliness and holiness, pursuing Him, loving Him. He wants you to come to a knowledge of the truth of His Son.

when you come through these doors, He wants you to listen so that you hear that truth. And He wants you to respond in repentance and faith. And that is what we want. It's a glorious Savior.

It's a marvelous thing that God has done for us. If it is our example and our testimony that has held you back and said, well, if that's what godliness does for people, then I don't want it. Then I'll seek your forgiveness for not being as good of a witness and testimony in my life as I should be.

But don't let the shortcomings of sinful men hold you back. See the glory of a good and gracious God and Savior and come running to Him and you'll find a sure refuge.

[38 : 41] You will find salvation. You will find a certain hope for your future. When you come to Him, He will receive you. He will not cast you out. God wants you to be saved. We want you to be saved.

Come and trust in the Savior tonight and you will be saved. Let's pray together. Our Father, we thank You that Your Word reveals to us Your heart, Your truth, Your desires.

We pray that You would give us grace to take them to heart. We pray that You would make us a people of prayer. We pray that You would make us a people who live lives of godliness.

We pray that You would bless our leaders. We pray for our President and our Senators and Representatives and Governor. And those in state office and local office, we pray that You would give them wisdom and guidance.

We pray that You would lay on their heart to pass laws that would promote freedom of religion in this land. That our freedoms of Christianity might not be restricted.

[39 : 42] We pray that You would give them eyes to see the needs of the land and wisdom to act accordingly. We pray for our rulers that know You, that You would give them grace to stand firm on Your truth, that You would keep them from wavering, that You would guard them from evil influences, and we pray for others that do not know You, that You would save them.

Forgive us, we pray, for not praying more to this end. We pray that You would bless our rulers and leaders so that we might have lives of tranquility and peace, so that we might have lives of godliness and respectability before all men.

We pray that You would forgive us where we have fallen short in these things, that You would strengthen us, that You would arm us for the fight. And we pray, we know Your heart, we know that You long to see men come to a knowledge of the truth.

We pray that You would draw some in this room to Yourself tonight. We pray that You would reach out to them and draw them in, open their eyes to their sin and their need of the Savior and cause them to come running to Christ.

This is Your desire, it is our desire as well. We pray that You would do it, that You would bring it to pass. And give us grace then to go from here, seeking to honor You in all that we say and do.

[40 : 57] We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.