

Dear Fellow Redeemed by the blood of God's own Son,

Prayer is popular in the world. Some may say, "All people pray!" But Paul says, "Pray for all." Paul is not addressing all the people in the world, but those who are the most necessary for the welfare of the world – Christians.

Do we understand and appreciate how necessary the prayers of Christians are to the welfare of the world and our own nation? Do you know that our prayers as Christians are more necessary for the good of everyone than governments, social programs, science, and standing armies, or even food, shelter and clothing?

The world laughs at such a strong statement, for it does not recognize God, much less His believing children. But Almighty God in heaven, the Ruler of the universe, hears our prayers because of Jesus, Who promises: **"Whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you."** (John 16:23) And James writes: **"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."** (James 5:16)

In His Sermon on the Mount Jesus calls His believing disciples the **"salt"** or preservative of the world, and the **"light"** of the world because of the saving gospel we preach, the love we live according to it, as well as the prayers we pray. Yet how often do we pray for those outside of our families, for people in the world we have never met? How much longer would our prayers be if we took the time to mention those whom we know are in great spiritual and physical need in this world? And what about prayers for our country?

"PRAY FOR ALL!" SAYS PAUL!

I.

"First of all," Paul mentions four kinds of prayer to show how important prayer is in our Christian lives. The word **"supplications"** means that we come to Him as beggars, humbly expressing our need. The word, **"prayers"** emphasizes the fact that we are coming to the great King of heaven and earth, Who is powerful, while we are powerless. **"Intercessions"** are requests to God for the needs of others.

Finally, **"giving of thanks."** For no matter how troubled our circumstances may be at any given time, as Christians we know deep within

that we enjoy great and undeserved blessings always. Our prayers should never be without some expression of gratefulness to our God for all His blessings. (Phil. 4:6, Col. 4:2)

Now notice: Paul says that all of these prayerful approaches to God are to be made **“for all men”** – on behalf of all people. The prayers of Christians all over the earth are effective for every person on earth! No one is to be left out. We are even to pray for those who **“spitefully use us and persecute us,”** as Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:44).

Roman emperors, like the horrible Nero were already persecuting Christians! But Paul says: “Make your prayers for ALL men, not only privately and individually, but publicly.”

II.

Our prayers are to be patriotic too! We are to pray especially for **“kings and all who are in authority.”** This is the first and the best work we can do for our country. We all know that our own nation is drowning in a sea of moral, religious, political, and economic confusion. It has always been easy to complain and point fingers at the president and other leaders in high places. We can all wring our hands and shake our heads. But we Christians need to fold our hands and bow our heads in prayer to the only true God.

We should pray often for our president, the congress, our judges and police officers – all who are in authority, because their decisions affect millions of people! So much depends upon the character of our leaders and their decisions.

But notice the reason Paul gives for such prayer: **“so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”** Our God, Who **“ordains the powers that be”** (Rom. 13:1ff.), can also move them to do what is wise and right in His eyes, so that Christians may live in peace and serve Him and their fellowmen by sharing the gospel, confessing Christ, and showing love to all.

However, when the decisions of those in authority lead to lawlessness, immorality, and the persecution of the Christian faith, what happens? Many thousands of weak and young Christians pull back from the public confession and practice of their faith. Wherever this happens, all the people suffer for lack of the saving message, the love, and the faithful service of these Christians. How can we overstate the importance of confessing,

praying Christians for the welfare of every nation?

Nor should we fail to pray often for our president and all who are in authority that they may be converted to Christ and moved by our God to rule justly and wisely. Nothing could be more patriotic! For this reason our day school children do not only say the pledge of allegiance; they regularly say a prayer for their country.

III.

Why are we to pray for all people and all who are in authority? Paul says: **because "this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior Who" Himself "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge (Gr. = "understanding) of the truth."** (V. 3-4) We are not to pray for all because Paul says so, but intelligently and gladly because this is God's saving will for all people.

Should we pray for the Muslims, even the terrorists among them, that they may all come to the saving knowledge and understanding of the truth? Someone told me years ago that since the Muslims form the majority of the religious people in the world, they couldn't be so far from God that He would condemn them for not believing in Jesus.

But the Christian faith is both inclusive and exclusive. On the one hand, 2Cor. 5:19 tells us that **"God was in Christ reconciling the WORLD unto Himself,"** and Paul says that **"God our Savior, wants ALL men to be saved,"** through the understanding of the truth which is in Christ. On the other hand, Jesus tells us in John 14: **"I AM The Way, The Truth, and The Live, NO ONE comes unto the Father buy by Me."** Therefore, salvation before God is both inclusive of all, but exclusive of those who reject the truth of Christ.

There is only **"one God"** Who **"made from one blood every nation of men,"** as Acts 17 tells us. And there is only **"one Mediator between God and men,"** as Paul says in our text. This One Mediator is **"The Man Christ Jesus."** There is no mention of his class, color or nationality, as if God desired to save only a certain segment of the world. The whole human race was bound in the power of darkness and bound for hell until the eternal Son of God became true Man – God's "go-between" for the salvation of sinners.

By His own perfect life, suffering, and death, this God-Man gave Himself for the salvation of ALL people. But if Christ gave Himself as a

ransom for ALL, then God desires the salvation of ALL, and He desires that we pray for ALL.

The majority of the Jews in Timothy's neighborhood preached that God intended only to save THEM and those who kept the Law of Moses. Timothy also had to deal with a religious group called "Gnostics," who taught that Christ's mission was to give heavenly knowledge for salvation ONLY to those who were regarded as worthy to hear it.

To this very day every false religion among men excludes from salvation all those whose works don't measure up to a certain standard. Our great Savior God wants us to declare to the whole world that His salvation is a gift to mankind, free to ALL; and that He wants ALL people to come to understand and receive this Truth through faith in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, let us pray for ALL people. Who will pray for the world, for our president and those in authority, if we Christians do not? What a privilege is ours! What a great responsibility! God help us to ask His help for ALL. Amen.