

September 21, 2025

1st Timothy 2:1-15:

“Prayer, Peace, and God’s Good Order”

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Prayer, Peace, and God's Good Order

1st Timothy 2:1-15

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

When I first looked at today's lessons, I'll admit, my eyes went straight past the Epistle and landed on the Old Testament and Gospel readings. I thought to myself, "Give me anything but the elephant in the room of Paul's words about men and women." In fact, I even considered tricking Pastor Bill or Pastor Brock into taking the pulpit this week!

And I know what some of you thought when the lesson was read: "This is going to be interesting." And you're right! This is one of those passages that sounds very different in our modern ears than it might have in Paul's day. But here's the thing: we don't skip the hard texts. We don't run away from them. God gave us His whole Word for our good. Even when it feels uncomfortable at first, if we listen carefully, we'll see that what He gives here is not meant to diminish anyone, but to show the beauty of prayer, His peace, His order, and above all His desire to save all people through Jesus Christ, the one Mediator, the ransom for all.

I. Elephant in The Room

But it's best with anything that may raise eyebrows to address it before we can really get to the heart of what the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, is communicating to us. Parts of the text state,

"I desire that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control...with good works. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control."

Those are the words that make us shift in our seats. Our world hears them and immediately cries, "unfair!" or "outdated!" It certainly is not a surprise that the sinful flesh would oppose the Word of God. But Paul is not writing to demean women or to puff up men. He is writing about God's good order in the Church and His appointment of the pastoral ministry, reserving it for qualified men. And notice that doesn't mean all men are pastors either. Most men are not. The office is a specific calling, not a privilege of gender. You see, God knows that men and women are made by Him to be different from one another. This is not in a stereotypical way where girls like dolls and tea parties, and boys like action figures and playing in the mud, but in a created way that is according to His gracious will.

Since this is the case that God has created us in an orderly way, He gives men and women different callings in His Church to fulfill His good purposes. Believers in the Church are all equal in worth before the eyes of our Lord, equal in salvation that was won for us by Christ, and equal in baptismal grace that washes us clean of all our sin; yet they differ in role. That is not because men are better or women are less, but because God has arranged His church in a way that reflects His created order and protects His saving Gospel.

The word “submissive” can sound especially harsh. But biblically, submission never means inferiority. The Greek word for submission literally means “to arrange under” or “to place oneself under.” It’s a word about arrangement, order, and relationship, not about worth. Christ Himself was submissive to the will of His Father, even to the point of death on the cross, and He is God of very God! When Paul speaks of women learning in quietness and submissiveness, he is not silencing their voices or denying their gifts but describing a posture of receiving God’s Word with humility and reverence. And in truth, that call to humble submission isn’t only for women, but it’s for all of us before God’s Word. Every one of us is called to lay down our pride and listen to Christ, the one Mediator.

And notice that Paul doesn’t only speak to women here. He calls men to pray with holy hands, not with anger or quarreling. Both are called to humility, to peace, to a life that adorns the Gospel rather than distracts from it. Even the confusing line about “being saved through childbearing” points us to Christ, the promised Seed born of a woman, who came to die for our sins. Paul points us to the precious gift of our God, who orders His Church so that Christ’s peace may be proclaimed clearly, and all may know that in Him, salvation is for everyone.

II. God’s Order Resisted

Now, if we’re honest, these words from Paul expose more than just a potential discomfort with the order God has established. They strike at our hearts regarding our prayer life and our prioritizing of the peace which passes all understanding in Christ. Faithful men are called here to lift their hands in prayer, but how often do we—men and women alike—neglect prayer for wishful thinking? How often do we forget that we are given the gracious gift of prayer, a direct line to God for the sake of Christ, for our benefit? How often do our hands fold for the things we want and our selfish desires over prayer that begs God to continue to provide for what we need?

Faithful women are called to adorn themselves with good works, but how often do we—men and women alike—adorn ourselves with pride, vanity, and self-promotion? It is because of these tendencies that the Holy Spirit, through Paul, shakes us as He reveals the problem that lies in our sinful hearts when we resist God’s good and gracious will.

This is nothing new. From the very beginning in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve resisted God’s order. Adam stood by in silence, Eve ate what was forbidden, and together they lusted for the place of God instead of trusting His Word. That same sinful impulse lives in us. We want to be the authority, to write our own truth, to live by our own order. So, at the end of the

day, if we are hyper-focusing on the supposed injustice that we might read into the words of Paul today, we have already missed the punch of the Holy Spirit's exposure of our sinful hearts.

III. Salvation for Everyone

Paul's words are not meant to cause division, but to show us the God who brings peace through His order and His Son. At the very heart of this chapter is not controversy, but comfort: "God our Savior...desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all."

Paul also writes in his letter to the Galatians,

"...for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."

At the very heart of the Gospel is this: God the Father loved His creation so deeply that even though we deny His created order, resist His gracious will, would rather cut off communication with Him, twist His commands that are for our good, and long to play God ourselves, He still reached into the filth of our sin by sending His one and only Son to rescue us from ourselves. That love that He gives in Christ is not something that is reserved for a special group of people who have somehow lived a better life than others. That love given at the cross was a love given to all people of all times. It is a love given to every race, every nation, every age, every person under Heaven. While one can reject this righteous provision of God by turning away from the truth, it is a universal fact that at the cross, the sins of the entire world were paid for in full.

And that changes everything. Now, for Christ's sake, no matter how much we have resisted the order established by God, no matter how many times we have neglected to bring our prayers and petitions, no matter how frequently we have put ourselves into the position of God, by faith in Christ, we are forgiven. By the faith given to you, the cross does not overlook you, but it covers you completely. And the perfect life that Christ lived is now credited to you.

For His sake, when the Father looks at you, He does not see all the times you failed, but He sees the perfect righteousness of Christ. It is for this reason, and this reason alone, that Paul can proclaim so boldly that we are all one in Christ Jesus. He is the giver of peace, the heart of the Gospel, and the heart of God's good order. He is the peace that proclaims sins forgiven, consciences cleansed, and eternal life secured in Him.

As it is written in Ephesians, "For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility." And in Romans, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

And as Christ Himself speaks, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

IV. Prayer for All People

Today, Brothers and Sisters, I urge you with the Apostle Paul, “that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for *all* people.” With Christ as our Mediator, who gives us peace with God, we are bold to pray knowing that our Father hears us for Jesus’ sake. What a high and holy privilege it is that the Lord of heaven and earth promises to hear the voices of His children! Paul doesn’t say pray only for your family, or for those you like, or for those who think like you. He says *all people*, so that they too may experience and know the great gift of peace and comfort that is found only in Jesus. We pray for neighbors and strangers, for friends and enemies, for leaders and authorities, even when they frustrate us or walk in ways opposed to God’s Word. We do this because the God who desires all to be saved is the same God who invites us to come before Him in prayer for all.

So, pray for the unbeliever, that the Holy Spirit would break through the hardness of their heart with the truth of Christ. Pray for those still wandering in darkness that the Lord may bring them out. Pray for the sick, the suffering, the mentally ill, and the grieving, that they may know the peace of Christ that passes all understanding. Pray for rulers and those in high positions, that God would grant peace in our time so that His Gospel may run freely. And pray also for yourself: that the Lord who has called you His own in baptism would grant you wisdom and strength to live as His child, and courage to bear witness to all that He has done for you. Prayer is not an afterthought for the Christian life; it is at the very heart of God’s good order, His peace, and His saving will for the world.

Amen

Pastor Lucas Abbott