

1 Tim 23-09-17b

We're ready now to pick up our study. We're looking at 1 Timothy via 2 Timothy, and knowing that we're going to go to 2 Timothy, I've had a little bit of trepidation in, you know, going there in advance, but it is such an illuminating expansion of what Paul is talking about with regard to how important the truth is, how important it is for us to identify and oppose error. It needs to be called out.

It needs to be identified. Those who spread it need to be confronted. Those who listen to it need to be encouraged to stop doing so.

And there are not a lot of sources of truth when you compare it to the sources of error. And if we can speak the truth to one another in love, in humility, as Paul says here, that is our opportunity. That is our privilege.

So we avoid the error. We flee youthful lusts. We pursue righteousness and faith, both of which require the truth.

It is faith in the truth that enables us to lay hold of righteousness. Faith in something wrong isn't righteous, doesn't make us righteous, doesn't permeate our soul with God's righteousness and the presence of that spirit and truth, faith and righteousness in our soul. This is the fuel.

This is what makes love happen. It is a supernatural love. It is a discerning love.

It is a well-informed, self-controlled, biblically directed love and peace. If there is not peace, we need to look at ourselves. This is all of us.

This is yours truly. I was mentioning yesterday to somebody that every time I'm engaged in study and learning and trying to improve my grasp of these passages that we look at together, I have sore feet. My toes are stepped on.

My own correction and rebuke and instruction in righteousness comes first. And if that doesn't keep you humble, I don't know what will. And to recognize that it is only by God's grace that any of us can do anything.

And we need to be willing to change our minds. This is Paul's purpose at the end of 1 Timothy 1. When he disfellowships and sets Hymenaeus and Alexander outside, he delivers them to Satan. Paul doesn't have a contract with Satan to educate or motivate wayward believers.

What does he mean when he says he has delivered them to Satan? Putting them outside the fold, eliminating fellowship and contact with them, leaves them in Satan's world. They, even as troublemakers, even as teachers of falsehood, even as those who deny that the resurrection is still future and are harming and destroying the faith of some, undermining people's walk with God, by allowing them to remain in the fellowship, they are shielded and sheltered. There is blessing by association.

There is forbearance, both inside and out, by God. And there are sometimes when, after a period of that forbearance, if people do not repent and change their mind, they have to be pushed outside the fold. They've got to be taken away from where they do more harm than good.

And the good that is done to them is not having a beneficial effect. They are taking advantage of access. They are taking advantage of contact.

They are taking advantage of those longsuffering and fruits of the Spirit that get them a hearing. And so Paul says, "I have delivered these two to Satan." What does that mean? Well, we saw it in 2 Timothy 2: correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, grant them change of mind with a view toward what? Knowing the truth.

The only thing that will fix these idle babblers, profane tale-tellers, those who stray concerning the truth, is to acknowledge the truth, to be corrected and rebuked and instructed by the truth, the truth of the Word of God. It's not just the truth of physics or the truth of math or the truth of science. It is the truth of the Word of God.

To be set straight, to be returned to the narrow road and given a push toward the strait gate, we have to have knowledge of the truth. And that they may come to their senses, 2 Timothy 2:26, come to their senses. They're not in their senses.

If they're going to come to their senses, they need to change their mind, come to a knowledge of the actual truth. And sometimes the only way that happens is if somebody can speak the truth to them in love, in humility, not argumentatively, not to win a debate or score a point or beat them into submission with the Word of God. But have you thought about this? How do you account for this passage? Doesn't it seem that if that were God's intention, His Word would say so, and you wouldn't have to use a strained interpretation and ignore these other passages to get that across?

If God perhaps will grant, this is granting the opportunity. God doesn't decide that He will dispense repentance, but He will grant opportunities. And this is how we can pray for those who have strayed, those who are clearly off the path, those who have clearly shipwrecked their faith, are clearly involved in disputes, idle babblings, and are sponsoring ungodliness and are overthrowing the faith of some by their life and by their words and by their efforts.

And you say, "Well, how can I pray for somebody that is in opposition?" Well, we're coming to that in 1 Timothy chapter 2. But if God perhaps will grant, this is granting another opportunity, another confrontation, another conviction experience from the Holy Spirit.

God the Holy Spirit is the One, capital O, who convicts of sin and righteousness and judgment. And for these who, you know, Paul says, "I tell you even weeping," that these types are enemies of the cross. These who are preaching and teaching falsehood, they're enemies of the cross.

And Paul says, "I cry over this unhappy circumstance." But they may be given an opportunity to confront this truth that is spoken gently, that is spoken in love, that is spoken humbly without a desire to engage in argumentation and strife, that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil. What happened? Having been taken captive by him.

Love these participles in Greek. Action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb. Having been taken captive.

Having been captured by him. How can they escape? If you've been captured by the devil, captured philosophically, captured doctrinally, misled. Satan has been a liar from the beginning.

He got Eve to eat the fruit. He roams the earth seeking whom he may devour. He sponsored thoughts in Peter's mind.

"Get thee behind me, Satan. You're thinking the thoughts of men and not the thoughts of God." Satan.

It's as old as God talking to Cain when his sacrifice was not accepted because he wasn't practicing the truth. He wasn't thinking about what would be pleasing to God. He was thinking about what he would find pleasure in bringing to God.

"Look at this great fruit of my garden and my fields. I've worked hard. This represents my effort.

I'm so proud of it. I want to bring it before You, and I want You to be as proud of it as I am, O Lord." And God did not accept his sacrifice.

I want to see the film at 11 of how this was indicated. In those days when Cain and Abel brought sacrifices, when Adam and Eve brought sacrifices and the other first-generation children from that marriage, did God express His approval by fire coming down from heaven and consuming the sacrifice, as at Mount Carmel? How was God's acceptance indicated? I'd love to see that. Genesis doesn't say.

But Cain knew that his sacrifice was not approved, and God came to him and gave him truth. "If you do well, will you not be accepted?" It is up to you. It is your choice.

I am ready, willing, and able to accept you if you do what you know is right. If not, sin lies crouching at the door. Satan lies crouching at the door.

He's got a desire for you. You've got to overcome him. How? Not by our strength, not by our perspicacity, not by our wisdom.

We're not going to sit down at the chessboard with Satan and outplay him and checkmate him. It is God's power. It is God's grace.

And it is inherent in the truth. The Christianity of our postmodern day is increasingly abandoning this understanding and failing to appreciate the pillar and ground, the foundation of God's house, which is the truth: to know the truth, to rightly divide the Word of truth. Grant them repentance so that they may know the truth.

I don't have to remind you what Jesus said about knowing the truth. This is what frees us from the snare of the world. This is what frees us from youthful lusts.

This is what frees us from the snare of the devil. Even those who have been taken captive by him to do his will. And in this, something—someone who is of the household of faith, body of Christ, going to church, in the fellowship, can actually be practicing and doing Satan's will.

They've been co-opted. They've been subverted. They've been pressed into service as what amounts to a fifth columnist, somebody that has been infiltrated into the body.

They've got the pass to get inside the door, and they're a bad actor. They're working for the enemy. They're handing off secrets.

They're betraying trust. They are doing the will of the enemy and not the will of the Lord. What a scary thing.

Nobody thinks they're doing this, by the way. Nobody says, "You know, I really love Satan. I really like his scheme.

I think he's going to be victorious in the end. What I'm going to do is infiltrate the church, and I'm going to bring them over to the dark side, because that's the great side. That's the best side."

Nobody does this. It is done through deception. We think we're doing a good thing.

"There is a way that seemeth right to a man." It seems right. We don't do what we do because we think it's wrong and just delight in iniquity. That's the realm of unbelievers.

Believers get co-opted and subverted through deception. It sounds good. "Did you know if you eat this fruit, you can be an animal that can talk and carry on a conversation like me? You'll be like God, knowing good and evil.

You'll enhance yourself. This will be an improvement. This will be better.

This is something you didn't hear in church. You're hearing it from me. You didn't hear it when the Lord was walking in the breeze of the day in the garden.

I'm here to tell you that there's an even better way. And I'll quote some Scripture in the course of doing it. Hath God not said?"

But it's a partial quote. It's a misleading quote. And then it gets added to by something that is manifestly not God's Word and not God's will.

And the woman didn't rub her hands in glee and say, "I can't wait to do something mischievous and rebellious and bold and show what a strong woman I am." Why did she eat the fruit? She saw that it was pretty to look at and desirable to make her wise.

I will be better than God made me. Think about it. I will be better than God made me, desirable to make me wiser.

God gave me this much wisdom, this much intellect, this much knowledge. I can better it. And I can do it by disobeying a clear prohibition from the lips of God Himself.

But I minimize that. I maximize these fine-sounding words. That is what is happening today all around us.

Fellow believers, members of the body of Christ, whole churches, whole denominations have been co-opted and fooled into doing Satan's will, following the way of the world. Anytime you find yourself in step with the world—my social sensitivity is the same as the world; unbelievers agree that this is good and that is bad—that is no longer a good conscience. That's a worldly conscience.

Love not the world or the things that are in the world. And if we find ourselves in step with godless society, we need to check and figure out, are we knowing the truth or not? So that they may know the truth, Paul says, come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive.

“Get thee behind me, Satan.” Human thoughts, not godly thoughts. Deception and not truth.

“Lord, there is no reason for You to be arrested and be placed into the hands of men. I don't understand that. How can You be God? How can You be the coming King? How can You bring in the kingdom if You're arrested and delivered into the hands of men? That makes no sense to me,” Peter thinks.

“Far be it from You, Lord, to go to Jerusalem and be arrested and worse.” And Jesus says, “You're working for Satan now.” That quick.

Just a handful of verses above that, the great confession: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” “If we leave, to whom would we go? You have the words of life.” Peter is doing so well, and in a trice, in the blink of an eye, he steps off the road. An impulse comes into his mind, and instantly he goes from, “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, Peter, but My Father in heaven.” Truth. Foundation.

We have to be so watchful, because knowing the truth alone does not guarantee that we're going to stay in it. The presence and power of the Holy Spirit doesn't guarantee that we're going to stay in it. Our chooser is always functioning, and at any given moment, on impulse, without thought, in the grip of a youthful desire, hearing a deceptive word that hooks into some part of our fallen nature, we—one bad step, one false step.

It reminds me of football. Football season is upon us. Haven't seen any yet; don't know if I will. But you have a team that's backed up against their own goal line. Their ability to score a touchdown is 98 or 99 yards away. The quarterback is taking the snap in his own end zone.

If he gets tackled back there, the other team is going to get points. If he fumbles back there, they can recover and get a touchdown. He's got the entire distance of the field to go.

So they call a great play, transfer the ball to a running back, blockers do their job, a hole opens up, he gets through the line, he outfoxes the secondary, he head-fakes the safety, and he's running down the field. He is on his way to a touchdown. Everybody else is behind him, and he's running for all he's worth.

He passes the 20, the 30, the 40, the 50, the 40, the 30, the 20. A guy is angling in from the other side of the field, hoping to tackle him before he crosses the goal line. And in looking at that guy, he puts out a stiff arm, and his right foot just touches the white line at the 17-yard line.

Just a quarter of an inch of a misstep. That play is over. There is no touchdown.

Now they've made a great advance down the field, but he is disqualified from running any further by one misstep. A receiver in football, if he is going to bump and run and go right down the field and get a long pass, if he steps out of bounds at any point and reenters the field, he is ineligible as a receiver. You can't leave the field and come back while a play is underway and be eligible.

You cannot receive the ball. And there have been fantastic catches, heroic trapping of the ball in the air and coming down and scoring. And they go back and there's a ref blowing the whistle way back 70 yards the other way.

“Sorry. Look at the film. This guy stepped out of bounds.” He's disqualified from receiving the ball by a single step.

It's so disappointing to have done so well in every other way, but there is one disqualifying step. And this can happen to us in the blink of an eye. Be watchful. Be diligent.

Your enemy, the devil, roams the earth like a roaring lion. Watch and pray. Be alert.

Let no one deceive you. Let no man deceive you. Let no one deceive you, over and over and over again.

Getting our eyes somewhere other than where our feet are landing is the quickest way to be disqualified. These who have strayed concerning the truth, who are overthrowing the faith of others, are probably well-intentioned. They think, "I'm imparting knowledge here. I can make these people wise like I am.

This information is desirable to make us all wise." They need to know the truth, come to their senses, and escape the trap of the devil, having been taken captive by him. Once you're captured, you're doing his will.

You can't stop doing his will until you get out of the trap, which requires coming to one's senses and knowing the truth. Know the truth. Know the truth.

Know the truth. So, back to 1 Timothy: "I've delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan so that they may learn, may come to know the truth. Come to their senses.

Repent." Sometimes we come to our senses in the cold of the outside. Being disfellowshipped is the only way to bring some people to their senses. Think Prodigal Son.

1 Timothy 2, verse 1: "Therefore," notice, "on the basis of what I have just said," everything in chapter 1, "I've urged you, don't give heed to false teaching, bad doctrine, wayward understandings. Don't give heed.

Don't let people communicate it. Encourage people to eschew it and avoid it and shun it and depart from it and reject it. That's your job.

Focus on the truth. Keep other people from being led astray." Therefore, looking at what happens when people teach falsehood, make shipwreck concerning the faith, therefore, here's my exhortation first and foremost.

The very first thing that ought to happen, individually and in the fellowship of believers, in the light of the danger of being deceived away from the truth, departing from the faith, making shipwreck, leading others astray, all of these bad things: first of all, supplications, prayers, and intercessions. Supplications, prayers, and intercessions.

What are these? At first blush, if you keep reading, you say these should be made for all men and for kings. It's a little bit more precise than this. First of all, then, I urge that petitions—petitions, this is intimate personal request.

This is us going to God with our situation. These are at firsthand. This is personal.

It's not an abstraction. "Oh, Lord, bless our nation. Blessed is that nation whose God is the Lord.

Let's all become Christian nationalists," or whatever. Petitions. This is when the lady comes to the judge and says, "Grant my request."

This is when the lady comes to the Lord Jesus and says, "Even the dogs can get crumbs from the children's table. Please heal my daughter." This is a one-on-one personal request about personal issues.

I urge that petitions, personal petitions, personal requests, that's the first thing. Prayers is the second. So this is *pros eucami*.

This is our most often translated word for prayer, but the *pros* part is face to face. And so this is often translated intercession. And intercessions is also personal.

I am interceding on behalf of someone I know well, someone whose situation I understand. I can pray knowledgeably and confidently, not, "Oh, God, please bless Fred. Oh, God, please bless Trudy or Gertrude."

Some person that I've heard about. People often will put prayer requests out, and you can pray for people that you don't know. And here's how.

Let's say there's someone else in our church who has someone in their periphery that they know and understand the situation, and they are praying, and they come to us as a group and say, "I have a request that we pray for this person." I can pray, not that I have first-person knowledge of the actual situation and person in need of prayer, but I know the person who has asked me to pray.

And in our fellowship, we can multiply the effectiveness of any one person's prayer in our group by all of us praying with them and on their behalf and relying on their understanding and their knowledge of the situation. And, well, if my fellow believer is asking me to pray, and I know them well enough to trust their judgment that this, I know how to pray.

People often, I would say most often, when there is a request for prayers because somebody's got a health issue, there's been an accident, there's a progression of a disease, they're in the hospital for some reason: "Please pray for my Uncle Joe," or, "Please pray for my sister-in-law," please pray for whoever it might be.

Well, I don't really know them or their situation or their standing with regard to the Lord, and they're not a part of our immediate fellowship. And just looking at it in the abstract, how could I pray with any effectiveness? It isn't open sesame. It's not a mantra.

If I just mention somebody's name to God, He is automatically going to intervene and bless just because I said so. Our prayers have to be intelligently offered. If I'm going to pray for anybody, I imagine the Lord coming back to me and saying, "Okay, you're praying for Jillian's Aunt Gertrude. Why? What do you want Me to do?"

Would that be a fair assessment, that if I go to God and make a request on somebody's behalf, I ought to know what I am asking Him to do? What would my answer be? Well, let's think through it.

I'm not real sure if Gertrude's a believer, but I know the person who made the request. So I can first of all pray for that person, that God will honor the prayers of those who do know and have a more detailed understanding. I don't have to have them tell me everything so that I can pray intelligently, but I can pray that, on the basis of their request for prayer, that God will multiply the value and add my name to those who are requesting whatever it is my dear fellow believer is asking, and that I join my voice with theirs and I trust in their understanding in appealing to God that they know what God needs to do.

And if I don't know, I can always pray that God will be glorified in that situation, that the issue of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation will be made clear, that to the extent that there are growing and faithful believers involved, that their witness and testimony will be a light shining in a dark place, that others will see Christ in them and glorify the Father who is in heaven, that those who are wrestling with the conviction of sin and righteousness and judgment will see in this situation the glory of God and be drawn to His light, that God will sustain and enable and empower and strengthen the believers who are in that situation, and that they will have an awareness of God's presence and power and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, that God will grant His peace and His power to them as believers and will remind them of their place and their privileges in the Lord Jesus.

When you start thinking about the situation, you can pray for minutes on end for a situation that you have no firsthand knowledge of because there are certain things that are always true, and you can always expect God to answer yes: that Satan will be crushed under the feet of the believers who are in that situation, that truth will prevail and falsehood will be shown for what it is, that those who are struggling—maybe it's relationships instead of health, maybe it is loss of a job or a setback in circumstances, a setback in finances, a setback in any number of ways, parents with children, children with parents—it's a rough patch.

What can I pray? What can I think of that I know God is going to agree and say, "Yes, I will do that. I will glorify My name. I will hold up My Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I will have My Spirit provide peace and guidance and power and comfort to the believers that are involved, both in the center and in the periphery of that. I will help people come to their senses and come to a better knowledge of the truth. I will expose those who are spreading falsehood and are leading others astray and undermining the faith of some.

I will show those who are speaking falsely for what they are. I will shine the light of the glory of My Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in such a way that believers will be encouraged and strengthened and manifest themselves as lights shining in the midst of a crooked and perverse situation.”

I know God will always answer that prayer, and I can pray it with confidence and I can pray it with excitement to see how He is going to fulfill it because I know He is going to say yes, right? And we can do this both in our immediate periphery and we can do it by proxy with fellow believers of like mind who ask us to join them in prayer.

Isn't this what Paul is doing here in 1 Timothy chapter 2? “I exhort that supplications, prayers and intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all people,” on behalf of all people. This is *anthropos*, the word *anthropos*, and this refers to people, not just men—men, all people.

Now, I can't just stab my finger into the phone book and pick McGillicuddy and pray for them. This is conditioned by context. For whom can I offer a knowledgeable petition? For whom can I intercede before God's throne? For whom can I make a powerful and purposeful prayer, not frivolously, not just rattling off names because they're on a list in the bulletin or saw it online somewhere or I heard that something bad happened, but with intentionality, with purposefulness, with recognition that if I am going to bring this before the throne of the God of all creation, I better have a reason for being there that isn't just to not expect Him to be any more invested in it than I am, or to just have a momentary, “Oh yeah, that's a bad situation,” or, “Please help so-and-so,” and then I'm off to the races doing other things.

This is like filing a request to the court for a lawyer. This is like going to the government and signing a form and requesting aid, requesting support. This is a formal undertaking.

It should be no light thing to approach God and make a request, a petition, an intercession. It is serious. God is not going to start to treat us frivolously if we treat our privilege of prayer frivolously.

And again, people do this with good intentions. “Oh, I sure wish God will bless everybody on this prayer list,” but good wishes—this is like saying, “Go be warm, be fed.” If we're going to make a petition to God, if we're going to pray for someone, we need to have some content and substance drawn from His Word that is a part of our faith that we know is going to receive an affirmative action from God, action from God, and be ready to observe it and be ready to celebrate it and appreciate it and to thank God for it.

Notice the conclusion here: giving of thanks. Make your petitions and your intercessions and your requests and give thanks. What does this mean? You better be tracking the progress of that request.

Follow up. How is this going? How did it turn out if it's an episode? Is there progress? Is there something more I can add to my ongoing intercession, my petition, my desire for God to intervene and to interact with the people for whom I am praying?

This is ongoing interest, ongoing dedication. Don't get a chain-letter thing saying little Timmy's getting a kidney next week, pray for him. I don't know who these people are.

I don't know Timmy. I don't even know if there is a Timmy. And some of you are old enough to remember tabs for Timmy.

Take the pop top off your can, back when they came off, and send them in somewhere, and little Timmy's going to get money for his operation. Total scam. Complete fabrication.

There was no Timmy. There was no kidney. There was no anything.

It was just a joke. Well, we need to be knowledgeable. If we are going to enter God's throne room, we better have something important to say, and it better be something that we are willing to follow up on.

And when God honors that request, answers that petition, acts on that prayer, to come back and thank Him. Remember the ten lepers that Jesus healed and only one came back to thank Him? Ten made requests; one gave thanks.

Who do you think is more blessed? Who do you think is going to experience the fruit and benefit of that healing longer? You can be healed and it's not actually a benefit. If we don't learn, if we don't grow, if we don't enter into a more intimate and personal relationship with God, that healing can actually be a distraction.

“Well, now I'm free to indulge my youthful lust. Now I'm free to go subvert the faith of others. Now I'm free to go spout this weird, you know, people have come back from heaven and they tell stories, and here's what they said.”

And this whole thing about people coming back from heaven, beware. There is not a shred of biblical support. Even Lazarus, who was dead for four days, there is not a particle of suggestion in Scripture that he came back.

And there's been a handful of gospel songs written about, “Well, Lazarus came back and told us, you know, he was walking around with Abraham, Martin and John or whoever.” No.

And anybody who wants to come back and try to glorify God with this life after death, and then they come back and talk about it—several of them have been exposed as hoaxes, and they sold books and made films and gained notoriety and got donations and all kinds of things. And it was a complete scam at best.

If God grants somebody a personal experience like that, it's personal. You don't go on the talk show circuit and write a book and get famous. If God gives you a revelation, Paul was very reluctant to talk about after 14 years: “I know a man in Christ, and whether in the body or out of the body, I'm not sure.”

He was given some revelations, but I'm not going to tell you what they are because they were for that man, whoever it was. I'm split decision between, was it Paul, or is he talking about the Lord Jesus, who was caught up to the third heaven and came back and gave Paul revelations to advance to be uttered? But whatever it is, if God wants people to have an experience of heaven, He'll give it to them personally.

He's not going to have some other body come and give what people treat with the authority of Scripture. “Well, Bobby came back from the dead and he says that Jesus wears a striped robe like Joseph.” Well, that is deceit.

It is a distraction, and those people are in the snare of the devil. You got to let that stuff go and stick with knowledge of the truth in every case. It is the only thing that delivers us.

It is the only thing that empowers us. And it is the privilege we enjoy in Christ to come before the Lord God in heaven, in truth, standing on that truth to intercede, petition, request, pray for all—all who we are qualified to pray for—in the same way. It is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all come to repentance.

It doesn't mean that all will. And though we can make requests for all kinds of people, it doesn't mean we pray for everybody in the world. I'm not qualified to pray for most of the people in the world.

I'm qualified to pray for a few. One died for all, it says. In Adam all die; in Christ shall all be made alive.

Well, not the same all that are in Adam. Those who are in Christ will be made alive. So when you look at all, we have to understand what all means.

And it is context that tells you all in Christ will be made alive, not all in Adam. In Adam all die. That's a bigger group.

Those who are in Christ are a smaller group. Those are the ones who will be made alive. So intercession, petition, and prayer for all—all for whom I am able to pray properly.

Giving of thanks be made for all, for kings. Well, this is a subject unto itself. And let me just say, this is not necessarily for their personal happiness and well-being.

It isn't necessarily for the success of their schemes and plans. In some cases, we pray that God will constrain and constrict in the way that God limits what Satan can do in this earth. We can pray that God will limit what kings do in this earth, what presidents and senators and congressmen and governors and mayors do.

Praying for them doesn't mean praying that they will be blessed and come to faith in Christ and such. You can't pray for somebody to be saved. You can pray that God will bring them to a place where they can repent, like we saw in that other chapter.

But here, praying for a king, your purpose in praying is given in the verse. Pray for the king so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life. "Father in heaven, do to everybody above me in government, and I will name them one by one, whatever is necessary for us to live a peaceable and quiet life.

This guy's evil is going to swarm out and prevent us living a life before You. Hem them in, thwart them, fence them in, keep their evil from spreading like a cancer." I can pray that for any governmental authority that I think is a bad actor.

I can pray for them all the time. "Lord, don't let them win. Don't let them prevail.

Don't let them undermine those who are trying to serve You and please You in what they do." Because my goal in prayer—notice there is a goal in these prayers. It has a purpose.

It has an outcome. And when I see that outcome, and I say, "Look, that terrible policy got thwarted. It didn't pass.

Something happened. And look, I'm able to continue to lead a peaceable and quiet life. Thank You, Lord, for answering my prayer for this awful wicked king."

Nero is the Caesar, as I mentioned last week. And Paul says, "Pray for Caesar." Well, how are you going to pray for him? Pray that whatever Caesar does doesn't prevent us from living a peaceable and quiet life in godliness and reverence.

That's a good prayer. And I don't have to like the king. I don't have to ever have voted for that king.

I may think he's the worst thing that ever happened to government, worst thing that ever happened to the human race. But I can pray that his efforts and his term and his administration or his staff doesn't prevent myself and others from living—notice it's, "we may lead a peaceable, quiet life in godliness and reverence."

Whatever you're doing up there in the halls of government, just let me lead a peaceable, quiet life where I can serve God and revere Him. Pray to Him with confidence. Well, we'll have more to see when we get to verse 3.

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God. Isn't that something? The worst rascal in government, you can pray for him and it's good and acceptable in God's sight. What kind of prayer would it be? "Lord, work Your will despite this bad type.

Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. Lord, let us all see it." That'll be great. And we will thank You for it.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we do thank You for the situation that allows us to meet together, study Your Word together, enjoy the presence and the power and the ministry of Your Spirit together, be blessed by the gifts that You've given to each one of us in fellowship, in enthusiasm for the truth and for Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We do pray for those that have the rule over us, for kings and all that are in authority, that nothing they do can prevent Your will and plan and purpose from coming to pass both in the wide world and in our fellowship and in our individual lives. We thank You for the Lord Jesus and the privilege we have of making these requests, and we do make them in His name. Amen.