

1Tim 23-10-15a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. This is the 15th of October, 2023. We're in the first epistle of Paul the apostle to Timothy and we are in chapter two, the early part of chapter two.

We're gonna be looking this morning at prayer. There's quite a lot of prayer being offered given the events of this last week or so. And it is a very helpful thing that we are in a passage that teaches us on the subject of prayer.

And that is what we will look at this morning. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and our study and we'll begin. Father, what a privilege it is to spend this time together as believers who recognize the central place that the Lord Jesus holds in all of human history and certainly his central place in our lives.

He is the head of all things to the church, his body and we are privileged to be included in that number, to be related to you through him and to enjoy the blessings, the privileges and the opportunities that we possess because of his work on the cross, his ongoing ministry of representation and intercession at your right hand and his preparation to return and receive us to himself to present us before your throne, to accomplish the ongoing purposes you have in human history in the millennial kingdom to come and ultimately your own kingdom which follows. We pray that as we look at the truth of your word together and think about the present circumstances personally and globally that the Holy Spirit will remind us of who we are and why we're here, bring to our minds the truth of your word that we have learned in the past and have stored away as treasure both new and old and that as a result we can live in a way that not only pleases you but bears fruit and is a blessing to those around us and shines a light in the midst of an ever darkening world. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.

Our passage this morning in 1 Timothy chapter two beginning at verse one says, therefore, we always remind ourselves what is the therefore, therefore and so we go back to the charge in verse 18, the charge of opposing false teaching and communicating God's truth that has been given in chapter one. This charge verse 18, I commit to you son Timothy according to the prophecies previously made concerning you that by them you may wage the good warfare having faith and a good conscience which some having rejected concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck. Hymenaeus and Alexander delivered to Satan to learn not to blaspheme.

There is a lot in that section. We have looked at it in preceding weeks. This as so much of scripture is applicable in ways that are not initially apparent.

You think, well, Timothy was in a situation. Paul says, you are my son in the faith. There were prophecies and the laying on of hands as we know from other passages and you've been commissioned as a pastor and this seems to be kind of a little personal aside

between Paul and Timothy, a piece of encouragement and a warning about some specific individuals in his church.

However, as with parables, as with the miracles, as with specific episodes throughout scripture, Old Testament and new, this is fraught with significance for us. And I will just quickly review this charge I commit to you son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you. For Timothy, these are specific prophecies.

What were prophecies in the earliest generation of the church? These were the word of God communicated to specific groups at specific times about specific issues because the scriptures for the New Testament age did not yet exist. God does not leave us orphans. The Lord Jesus said he would not do that, that he would send the Holy Spirit.

He would not leave his followers without guidance. And while the scriptures for the New Testament age are being developed, there is supernatural revelation. You have the gift of tongues and the interpretation of tongues.

You have the gift of prophecy. These are all communication gifts. Why? You have to bring new truth, specific Holy Spirit age, age of grace, post resurrection of Christ truth to the church at a time when the scriptures are not yet complete, not yet available, not yet widely circulated.

And so these were temporary gifts that filled that gap. One of these prophetic utterances, one or more pertained to Timothy, indicating that God had given him a spiritual gift to be a pastor and to be a teacher. This gift is recognized now by scriptural guidance, scriptural qualifications, descriptions such as these epistles themselves to which those with that gift can appeal and identify and prayerfully come to understand that God has detailed a guy to be a pastor, to be a teacher.

But without these epistles and without that guidance to Timothy and to Titus and the other Pauline epistles in particular, these truths were communicated on the spot supernaturally through individuals that had the gift of prophecy. Sometimes this came in the forms of tongues and interpretation of tongues in the earliest days. Why tongues and interpretation? Why not just have prophets only? How do you authenticate that the message is from God? The early ministry of the Holy Spirit in the church, as with the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, the Holy Spirit authenticated, verified the authenticity of the Lord Jesus as Israel's Messiah, as the foretold prophesied coming one.

John the Baptist as the last great Old Testament prophet, identifying the Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Holy Spirit continued that function in the early generation of the church where you do not have the opportunity to appeal to scriptures that have come from authenticated sources, the apostles and those closely associated with them. So supernatural revelation in the form of tongues and its interpretation, this is not something people could fake.

There are, shall we say, unauthentic expressions that are called tongues today, but they do not partake of the supernatural. They generally do not have the interpretation component and it is all about interpretation. Paul makes that clear in Corinthians.

You know, y'all wanna speak in tongues, but if somebody walks in and doesn't understand what's being said, you've missed the entire point. The whole point is understanding. The whole point is divine revelation.

That which is complete has come and that which was in part, that which was temporary and a gap filler has been retired. It's no longer necessary. These prophecies were delivered about Timothy.

Now, let's think about ourselves. Are there prophetic utterances? Are there scriptural truths communicated about us? When Paul says to Timothy here, I have committed a charge to you according to the prophecies previously made concerning you. Do we have responsibilities today that are revealed in scripture that apply to us that are the equivalent of the prophetic guidance and identification that was given to Timothy for his specific function? Yes, there is.

The New Testament scriptures, the Pauline epistles in particular, this is not to diminish the inspiration or the value and the effectiveness of the letters of Peter and John, but it is Paul, as we will see this morning, that is primarily our source for church age truth. So these prophecies, by them, Timothy can wage the good warfare. Are we in a warfare of the spiritual kind? Obviously, Timothy wasn't fending off the Huns or the Visigoths or the Vandals or the invading hordes from some nearby location or for some future historical location for that matter.

He's not fighting a spiritual battle. He is a young man endeavoring to fulfill this commission, this charge, and he is going to be opposed. That opposition is satanic and demonic at its root, but its extensions, the contact points, are typically human beings.

There can be demonic oppression. They can come near and attempt to oppress and depress and mess with our minds. However, our hearts and souls and minds are strong in the Lord, and there is a wall of fire.

There is a bastion which is fortified by daily exposure, exposure, daily reflection, daily rehearsing and renewing in our memory of the word of God and the ongoing presence of the spirit of God. Satan and his demons cannot enter into the inner sanctum of our heart, our soul, or our mind to the extent that we fill the house that has been cleaned and swept with new furniture and with the presence of the Holy Spirit, the presence of the Lord Jesus. When he knocks on the door, we open the door so that he comes in and he's present.

What can Satan and his minions do when we are sitting at the table with the Lord Jesus

himself, dining on divine truth? He's the wolf trying to huff and puff and blow the brick house down. It just isn't going to happen. To the extent that we depart from that, we lose sight of the value of our position in Christ, our possession of the truth, the indwelling Holy Spirit.

That influence gets closer and darker, and it is entirely by our choice whether we are vulnerable or invulnerable to that influence. We have a commission, we have a charge, just as Timothy does specifically here. According to prophecies previously made, according to scripture that has already been recorded and is available to us, it guides us, it helps us to identify where we are in circumstances, where we are in history, where we are in the body of Christ, what we should be doing.

Now, one of those specifically is coming up in our chapter this morning, but there is guidance. These prophecies were guidance and identification and encouragement and assurance for Timothy. And the scriptures do that for us, that by them you may wage the good warfare.

The warfare is going to exist. Is it going to be good or not? Are we going to prevail? Are we going to successfully defend? Are we going to be able to put to flight the satanic opposition? Can we resist the devil so that he flees from us? Can we stand firm with the full armor of God, quench the fiery darts of the wicked one? It is a spiritual conflict. How do we wage the good warfare? It isn't by good intentions.

It isn't by profound wishes. It's not by aspirations and hopefulness in the abstract. There's armor, we've got to put it on.

There's an enemy. We've got to know which direction to face. There is a sword.

We have to know how to wield it. There is a shield. We have to know how to protect ourselves with it.

There are fellow soldiers. We have to know how to be united and present a common front and be one in faith and one in hope, one in the Lord, not divided, not busy quarreling and biting and devouring each other and failing to note that there is a far more dangerous enemy outside than there is within. Having faith and a good conscience.

Faith, this is something we decide to have. Do we believe the word of God to the point that we will live by it? We will change our goals. We will modify our values.

We will establish our priorities based first and foremost on what the word of God tells us, these prophecies that define us, these doctrines and principles and promises that guide us. Is that going to be the light that shines on our path or are we going to listen to media, listen to society, listen to trends, memes and tropes and so on, be blown about by every wind that comes along? You can't stand firm if you're blown off your feet by the wind. And it is a choice, faith and a good conscience.

These go together because our conscience has to contain and resort to the truth of God. There are people who have a way that seems right to them, but the ends thereof are the ways of death. There is a kind of morality.

There is a kind of justice. There is a kind of evaluation of what is right or who is right and what is wrong or who is wrong. If it does not have its roots in scripture, if it is not founded on the rock, it will deceive.

It will deflect. It will be a wind of doctrine. People treat it as a true doctrine from the Lord when it isn't.

But if it functions that way, this is the basis of deception. This is the nature of deception. People don't wake up in the morning deciding they want to be wrong or do wrong or support wrong.

It happens because we get deceived into thinking that what is wrong is right, that what is good is evil and what is evil is good. It's a deception. How many times are we exhorted? I've stressed this over and over again in recent months.

Be not deceived. Let no one deceive you because deception gives us this feeling of rightness when we are in the wrong. So this good conscience is essential.

That's why you're here this morning. That's why we together are looking at the word of God and endeavoring to get it into our souls. That is the only source of a good conscience.

Name me another source of a good conscience than the word of God in the hands of the spirit of God. Where else do you get it? You got a philosopher, you got a commentator, you got a news source, have you got a political party? Do you have a denomination? Do you have a religious affiliation? Do you have a social affiliation? Do you have influential people in your periphery? Are they going to be the source of a good conscience? There is only one source and we're looking at it together this morning because we understand how essential it is. As Paul reminds Timothy here, having faith and a good conscience, you cannot comport yourself with the prophecies.

You cannot fulfill your destiny and your purpose from God without faith. Without faith, it's impossible to please him. Without faith, it is impossible to follow the Lord Jesus.

Without faith, you cannot take up your cross and go where he went to arrive where he now is in the presence of the Father. If any man desire to come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me. Can only do it with faith and a good conscience.

Having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck. We have many believers today who are well-meaning and well-intentioned, who think that they are waving the banner of righteousness and they have

actually suffered shipwreck. Before I make that pronouncement, before I apply that evaluation, I have to first look at myself.

We have to look at ourselves and ensure that we are not inadvertently sailing into the rocks and shoals because we have not established for ourselves and we have not made a top priority out of having faith and a good conscience. Identifying where that good conscience comes from and doing those things that are necessary to keep that good conscience alive and functional as the storms of life pass over us in waves, as the information that comes to us from the press and the media are whelming and in some cases overwhelming those around us. So before I start saying, well, those people over there, look at there, their boat has crashed, their ship has wrecked.

I need to first ensure that I'm standing on a seaworthy vessel, that I am navigating by the stars that God put in heaven and that I myself have not deceived myself, assured myself that I'm right when I'm wrong. If people were less sure of their own righteousness, if people were less utterly convinced to the point of blindness, that their way is the only way, their evaluation is the only evaluation, their solution is the only one, their righteous indignation vindicates all of their opinions. If we would all cultivate humility, cultivate balance, cultivate the still small voice that can speak truth and keeps us connected to God in heaven, keeps us connected to the real reason we are here, the world would be a different place.

Some have suffered shipwreck and instead of arriving by taking up a cross and following the Lord Jesus and coming after Him and following Him, what happens when our faith suffers shipwreck? You end up in the presence of Satan instead of the presence of God. You end up contributing to his program instead of being a part of God's plan and purpose and God will send us there. If that's the way you wanna think, if that's the way you wanna act, if that's the way you wanna prioritize, then you just go right across the lines to the other side.

That is in essence what it is to be turned over to Satan. You like the way he thinks so much, go over there and maybe you will learn not to blaspheme, not to trash the truth of God in the interest of your own morality, your own sense of righteousness. Well, that brings us now to chapter two.

That's a review of the essence of chapter one and the exhortation that comes at the close of it. So Paul says, therefore, because you need to have faith and a good conscience, because you have a commission, because you have guidance in terms of revelation from God as to who you are and why you're here, therefore, I exhort, first of all, I exhort first of all. Now, if we didn't have the rest of this verse and the rest of this chapter and understanding what we just reviewed about faith and a good conscience, what would you expect this sentence to say? Therefore, in the light of all of this, I exhort first of all that you get into a Bible class on a daily basis.

You get in front of a face-to-face pastor, you get your Bible out, and I exhort first of all that the revelation of the scriptures, it exists in the Old Testament form. All scripture is God-breathed and profitable. I exhort first of all that you, we used to say, hear a tape, get some Bible doctrine, get some truth flowing.

Wouldn't you expect that to be first? If that's the source of faith and a good conscience, then I need intake. First of all, I exhort first of all, the highest priority, get the Word. Now, is the Word of God important? Is Paul gonna exhort Timothy, preach the Word in season, out of season, rebuke, exhort with all authority? It is Paul who tells us the value of scripture, its inspiration, its power for reproof, correction, doctrine, instruction.

Obviously, it's important, but isn't it interesting that the first and foremost exhortation that Paul gives to Timothy after that beautiful introduction in chapter one is I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made. Before we listen, before we rush to the scriptures, before we do our evaluations of Hymenaeus and Alexander and Philetus, and I know those guys are fouled up over there. Paul says, if you're gonna accomplish this charge, if you're gonna fulfill this commission, you need to be a man of prayer, and your group needs to be a group devoted to prayer.

Think about this. Why would we start with prayer and not with intake of the Word of God? Not with excavating and the Proverbs chapter two search for understanding and the knowledge of God. Is that search and that knowledge critically important? Yes, it is.

Is gasoline in the tank of your car essential for that car to run and take you where you wanna go? Yes, it is. But is there something that has to come first? Can you just go out there with a five-gallon can, slop the gasoline in, rush around and jump into some portion of the car, get in the trunk, get in the backseat, get in any old where, and I've got gas in the tank. It's the most important thing.

The car will not run without gas. So I put the gas in. How come I'm not going anywhere? As important as the fuel is, knowing how to use it, how to access its power and how to guide and direct that power so that you end up at the desired destination comes first.

There is no point. And I say this at the point that it might raise eyebrows. There is no point in listening to the word of God.

There is no point in studying your Bible and reviewing your notes. There is no point in coming to church and cracking open the word of God if we are not people of prayer. You're putting gas in the tank, but you got no clue about where you're supposed to go or how you're supposed to get there, what route to take.

I got delayed 20 minutes Friday because I was trying to get to Bartlesville. And several months ago, they closed Highway 28 up north of Tallalaha. And you can't get to Bartlesville on Highway 28.

It's closed. It's open to local traffic only. And even local traffic can barely get in and out.

Google does not know that. So when I tap the address and say, take me to this location in Bartlesville, it says, all right, here you go. Run up the road here, get on Highway 28, take it all the way over till you get your westbound Highway 60 something, 62, I think it is.

And into Bartlesville, you'll go. Well, that road is closed. Google does not know how to guide me to my destination.

And it's one of the most brilliant pieces of technology there is. But one missing fact, and the last time this happened to me when I first found out the highway was closed, I spent about 40 minutes wandering the back roads, trying to find my way past the closed highway, going down dead ends, ending up in people's driveways. This time, even knowing how to get around it, I went down a one-lane, rutted lane, one-lane lane, and forded two creeks with no bridge and broken concrete.

It was a good thing I was in a four-wheel drive truck to get to my location in anything like the right time without having to backtrack and take a great big three quarters of a circle to get there. We need guidance is the point. And we need good guidance, knowledgeable guidance, accurate truth, so that when we access the power of God in the presence of his spirit and the truth of his word, we point it in the right direction.

We use it as it is supposed to be used. We don't run over someone. We don't send ourself into the ditch.

We don't cross the lanes. Having the power is essential, but it is not enough. That's why Paul tells Timothy, I am charging you as a pastor and as a teacher.

You've been identified as that. The prophecies have given you guidance and direction as to your identity and your function. You're gonna wage a good warfare.

You need faith and a good conscience, but before you do anything else, you and your people need to pray. I exhort, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. We've already talked about the differences in these kinds of prayers.

And you can tell it from the English. We don't have to do a Greek word study. What is the supplication? Prayer and supplication.

Be anxious for nothing. Paul says in another place, don't get worried. Don't fall apart.

Don't come unglued. Don't unravel in the face of circumstances, far away or near. Be careful for nothing, but in everything by what? In everything by prayer and supplication.

What does prayer and supplication do? What's the rest of that verse? Be anxious for

nothing. Be full of care about no thing. Don't let anything dominate your thinking and fill you with undue concern, undue fear, undue worry.

Don't be that anxious about nothing. It's such a great verse. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything.

Nothing should throw you off your balance. In everything by prayer and supplication, what do we do? Let your requests be made known to God. Don't be full of care.

Be full of prayer and supplication. Put your requests before the throne of grace and relax. Trust.

Be not anxious, but trusting. Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God and you believe in me.

What's your problem? If you believe in God, you believe he is the architect of the universe. He is the creator. He is the planner.

He is the sustainer. He is the fulfiller. He knows the end from the beginning.

You have no need that he hasn't already anticipated. Do not worry about what you will eat or what you will drink or what you will wear. Your heavenly father knows you have need of these things.

He knows before you ask him. Now, Jesus didn't say because he knows, you don't need to ask him. That's another interesting point.

Your father knows before you ask him, but you're still asking. We ask knowing he already knows, but we still ask. Give us this day today's bread.

Forgive us our trespasses to the extent and in the way that we forgive the trespasses against us. So supplications and prayers. What do supplications and prayers do? They bring our requests before the throne.

Now, if you're gonna make a request, how does it end up being effective or non-effective? If we're gonna bring a request to God, what kind of request is gonna work and what kind of request is not gonna work? If you have ever tried to negotiate the administrative hurdles of anything from real estate or titles or licenses or registrations, you try to get a toll tag, a pike pass. If you go to the wrong place, you can make the request all you want, but you're in the wrong place. You've presented a request that cannot be fulfilled at that office.

I know this from recent experience. There are places you can or can't get a title. There are places where you can or can't get a registration.

There are places where you can or cannot get a pike pass or a toll tag. You can go in and

ask, but they're gonna say, sorry, you are in the wrong place or you're making the request in the wrong way. I went to get a toll tag before we made our most recent trip for the new truck and they said, and it's on the window.

Toll tag's here. I go in and say, I'd like a toll tag. They said, well, have you registered this vehicle online at something or other.gov? No, well, I can't give you a toll tag until you're registered and we don't do that registration here.

You've got to go home and get on your computer and register your vehicle, then come back and I can look it up in the computer and then I can issue you the physical toll tag. There is a way to get that request fulfilled and even when you're in the right place, if you have not followed the right steps, if it is not an appropriate request, it's not going to be fulfilled. So if we are going to make supplications and prayers and bring our requests before God, we need to take a look at those requests and be sure that they are appropriate.

Can I pray for God to overrule the free will of an individual that I love and drag them kicking and screaming to the foot of the cross and force them into salvation? That request is not going to be honored. Can I pray that an entire country will have peace because peace is a good thing and I desire it and I hate to see suffering and warfare. Can I just take that request to God and say, Lord, I'm praying for the peace of Jerusalem.

That request will not be honored. You are wasting your time praying for the peace of Jerusalem if that's what you're doing at this time. And you say, Sam, I'm shocked.

Well, we're going to pause here and take our break. And when we come back, because we are on the subject of prayer and it is important for us to understand how to pray and what to pray. This will be our subject when we return.