



water from rock

## **Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- June 11, 2022**

The Lord with you.

Well, our poor country is going through a hard time right now, aren't we? We're seeing a lot of violence, lawless, unrest, turmoil on so many fronts.

And what are we who seek to follow Jesus? What are we to do at this very difficult time in the life of our nation?

Well, this is just a time that I like to turn to my go-to book of the Bible the little book of 1 Timothy. That's right. 1 Timothy. As I've long called it my go-to book because... Well, because the day I was born, there was also a calf born on our family farm, so that my grandmother she dubbed me first Timothy and the calf she called second Timothy. And so I just sort of grew up with a fondness for this little book of First Timothy, and when I was a young pastor I spent a lot of time in 1 Timothy, as here the Apostle Paul has so much to say about how to do life and how do the ministry. So that 1 Timothy has been well, sort of like a manual or handbook for me.

So that today in this troubling time in the life of our nation, I look at 1 Timothy chapter 2, beginning at Verse 1, "First of all..." Did you get that? "First of all," Paul says, "I urge that supplication, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings should be made for everyone. For kings and for all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth."

Here in this book of 1 Timothy, Paul is writing to young Timothy whom he has left to lead the church at Ephesus. And I am struck by the fact that Paul says, "First of all." That is the first thing you do, that's what you treat as first in importance. First of all, then I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings should be made for everyone. That is your first duty, your highest duty as a follower of Jesus, to be a praying person. Supplications, he says, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings. That is, you pray in every way that you know how. You pray for, He says, first of all, for kings.

Well, you know who was King, who was Caesar, as Paul writes? Well, that's Nero the mad man who is persecuting Christians. He says, pray for Him. Pray for His salvation. Pray for kings, whatever their nation, whatever their religion, their character. Pray for them. Not that they are of any more importance than a peasant or a slave, but because the peace and safety of so many people



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depend on them, so special prayer for kings and for all who are in high positions. They're not necessarily in government in office, but they are in high positions that affect us. Maybe it's the media, education, entertainment, you name it. They are in high positions in our culture, and we must do more than complain about them and complain to them. We are to pray for them, Paul says, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. And that's what we want, isn't it? To lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. And that's what we pray for. That's why we pray.

I can't help but think here of God's instructions to his people in Jeremiah Chapter 29-7. As a people of God are in the bondage of Babylon, but God says, "Seek the welfare, the shalom of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf because in it's shalom you will find your shalom." So the apostle Paul here he is instructing that we pray, we pray for those in high positions, those in leadership, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable of life in all godliness and dignity. And he says this is right and is acceptable in the sight of God. And that's why we're going to pray, because this is right and acceptable in the sight of God. It is pleasing to God that we pray like this.

This is right and acceptable in the sight of God who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth. We are to pray and to pray like this, not just so that we can live quiet and prosperous life, but because God wants His good news of Jesus Christ to go forth. This is right and acceptable in the sight of God, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth. So I began with how the apostle Paul begin this passage today. First of all, then first of all, pray. And I'm sharing is passage with you today because first of all, I need it. I want to do more praying for our country, more praying for our leaders, our citizenry. That is this very critical time in the history of our nation that first of all, then... First of all, we pray.

So I want to close today with a prayer for our nation. I take it from the Book of Common Prayer. Would you join with me in your heart as I pray.

Almighty God, who has given us this good land for our heritage, we humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. And do with the spirit of the wisdom those to whom in thy name we entrust to the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the Earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail. All off which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thank you for listening. Until next time.