

Sermon for July 9, 2023, 1 Timothy 2:1-7, "Teaching on Prayer"

Introduction: Why We Don't Have a Good Prayer Life

Today is the 6th Sunday after Pentecost. Today's text, 1 Timothy, is a pastoral letter. The Apostle Paul and Timothy had a very close and deep trusting relationship. Timothy accepted the gospel through Paul, and Paul was Timothy's spiritual mentor. When Timothy became independent in church ministry, Paul sent a letter to him with instructions on some of the things that were happening in the ministry scene. That's the book of 1 Timothy. Today's text is part of those instructions and is a teaching on prayer.

There are many passages in the Bible that encourage prayer. The reason why the Bible emphasizes prayer like this is because prayer is the foundation of a godly life that is indispensable in a Christian life. Today's text emphasizes intercessory prayer for others. **Verses 1-2 say, "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity."**

According to these verses, through prayer we can live a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and dignity. However, despite the benefits of these prayers, many Christians live their daily lives without being able to pray well.

There are several reasons why we do not pray well: First, because we don't feel the need to pray. The reason we don't feel the need for prayer in everyday life is because the world seems to go on without any problems even if we don't pray. The second reason we don't pray well is because we're busy. However, in many cases, being busy is often an excuse. In fact, we rationalize our unscheduled lives and our laziness through the excuse of being busy. This can be seen by looking at how we use time in our daily lives. Lastly, the reason why people don't pray well is because they think there's no hindrance to living a happy life just because they don't pray. Rather, we believe that owning money, power, and fame through our own abilities and efforts can make us happy.

It is not easy to convince those who live with these thoughts of the necessity of prayer. But prayer is one of the most important ways we can become intimate with God. We can know the Lord through the Bible, the Word of God, and communicate with the Lord through prayer. Therefore, for Christians, it is not a matter of choosing whether to pray or not, but it must be at the center of their life of faith.

I hope that through today's message, we will look back on our prayer life and build a deeper and more fulfilling prayer relationship with the Lord. Do you have a desire to pray to the Lord in your heart?

Body: Prayer that achieves intimacy with God!

Having a heart to pray means that we have become intimate with God. This is perfectly normal. In our daily lives, we want to have deeper conversations with people with whom we feel comfortable or close. If we feel close to God, we naturally pray. Conversely, if we do not pray in our daily life, it means that we are not intimate with God.

Of course, intimacy between us and God does not necessarily appear through prayer. Through our lives, we can reveal God's grace to the world in various ways, such as helping others and serving our neighbors. In this way, it is truly precious to live joyfully and sincerely with the heart God has given us through His grace.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to pray with a certain format at regular times. However, living a life of prayer in everyday life is not easy.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

The essence of prayer is our inner, holy longing to talk to God or to be close to Him. Do you have a longing for this kind of prayer?

Prayer has two directions. One is man talking to God, and the other is God talking to man. In the New Testament, there are four elements of a person praying to God. First is to praise God (Adoration), secondly to confess our sins (Confession), thirdly to thank God (Thanksgiving), and lastly to ask the Lord for help (Supplication). This does not simply refer to the elements and contents of prayer but refers to the Christian's overall attitude of faith. This Christian attitude of faith applies not only to prayer but also to worship. If we do not have this attitude of faith, perfect prayer and worship are impossible. In our prayer and worship life, I hope that our sincere attitude and heart toward God of praise, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication will be present.

However, when our prayers bring us the greatest fulfillment, is when we thank the Lord for what He has done in our lives. The Lord created our lives, forgave us our sins that destroyed the good creation, and saved us. Acknowledging this is the foundation of gratitude toward the Lord.

However, "God the creator" and "God the savior" seem like boring stories to us. Because these are things we hear so often and study doctrinally. Also, just because we know about God intellectually does not mean we know about God. We can know about God only when we experience what God has done in our lives.

To say that God created the world means that God is our master. This means that everything we own belongs to God, and as creatures we cannot own anything in the world.

People are born with fists clenched. It is an attitude to increase possessions in the world. Conversely, when a person dies, they open their palms. Ultimately, this means that human beings, as created beings, cannot own anything. Therefore, it is foolish for a human being, a creature incapable of possessing, to struggle to possess for the rest of their life.

The Lord said in Luke 12:29-30; "Do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them."

However, we forget about our existence as creatures and use our time and effort to increase our possessions. To those who choose that way of life, prayer is meaningless, and sometimes even prayer is used to increase our possessions. Even if we increase our possessions in this way, it does not give us complete satisfaction.

However, if we know that our existence is through intimate fellowship with the Lord, we will confess our gratitude to the Lord. True human satisfaction can only be experienced in our lives through God the Creator, not through what we possess. The fullest prayer will always contain gratitude toward the Lord. And only such gratitude brings us true satisfaction. So, the absence of prayer in the Christian life means that either we are not Christians or our relationship with the Lord is not yet intimate. Please do not forget that the Lord wants a time of true fellowship with us.

Conclusion: I hope you experience the amazing grace of prayer.

Now let's summarize today's message. Today we heard Paul's teaching to pray in his letter to Timothy. Prayer is our gratitude to the Lord at the deepest level for the grace He has bestowed upon us. Therefore, it is a godly life that Christians must have and if we are sincere Christians, we should all have our own prayer time.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! I encourage those who are diligent in their prayer life. I encourage them to create a deeper relationship with the Lord. And those who haven't prayed or can't pray until now, please make a habit of praying little by little from now on. You will experience the grace of the Holy Spirit working amazingly in your prayers.