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I want to thank you for the privilege of having this time with you this afternoon. When you go to conferences and camps, you should always expect that a few things are going to be tossed in that you had not counted on. I really didn't know about this particular meeting until just shortly before leaving Fort Wayne.

When I did hear about it, I thought, well, that's great, because I love being with the men of our Church. I personally feel that the greatest untapped resource in the missionary church is our men. One of my goals is to see the manpower all across the denomination really harnessed for God and that we see our men involved at every level of the life of the Church that we possibly can.

So, if we start sounding our trumpet and trying to get your attention about ways in which we feel that you as men can really come to the forefront and lend your influence at different levels, it's because I am convinced in my heart that God has raised up men and has a place for men in the leadership of his Church. I want to thank you as a district for your involvement in the total outreach ministry of the Church. I'm thinking in particular right now of the work teams that have come from the Canada East District and that have played such a major role on a number of our fields when it comes to work projects.

I can tell you from having been to all of our fields that the work overseas would be greatly hampered if it was not for the commitment like we have seen from teams that have come from the Canada East District. Whenever I have followed a work team from this district, the rating by the missionaries is very, very high, and the rating by the National Church is very, very high. I just deeply appreciate your involvement at that level.

I think, for example, when I was in Haiti and met Pastor Josier in Port-au-Prince and saw the pathetic hole in the wall where they were meeting, trying to have church. Here is probably one of the outstanding evangelical leaders in that country, and most of the attention was being given to other places in that country. A fifth of the population of Haiti is in Port-au-Prince.

Just think of that, a fifth of the population is in Port-au-Prince. Here is one of the most gifted evangelical pastors in all the country, and just a hole in the wall. One of the men from your district saw that as well, and I came back with such a burden on my heart.

I told Pastor Josier, somehow, someday, we are going to attack this thing. I hadn't been home very long before Tim had called me and said, I want to raise funds to help build that church. They had a parcel of land that was purchased, but no money to put up a church.

I am just grateful to Tim and all of his exercise. The first part of the church is already usable, and we are hoping that within short order we can raise the funds. We think that maybe from an estate that one of the women's groups has inherited and is to use for missions, we think maybe we can get some of the funds from that to help put on a second floor and that they will have

the kinds of facilities that they need.

But I am grateful, and I just want you to know that. For just a few minutes this afternoon, I would like to share with you something that to me is of primary importance as far as the ministry that I believe that all of you can be involved in. Maybe there are some of you here that would say, well, I'm not a builder, or I'm not a contractor or an electrician, I'm not much of a painter, I'm not even sure that I want to go to another country.

Well, what I want to talk to you about for just a little bit is more important than any particular skill that you've got. And it's the kind of an opportunity that every one of us can be involved in. In fact, if we're not involved in it, then we might just as well forget the other.

And I mean that with all my heart. If we're not a part of a major task force committed to the subject that I'm going to draw your attention to, then everything else that we're going to try to do will just be so much effort of the flesh and it will not stand. So I don't know whether you have your Bibles with you or not, but if you do, I want to read the first eight verses from 1 Timothy chapter 2, 1 Timothy chapter 2, the first eight verses.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to his spiritual son Timothy, says first of all then, I urge that in treaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony born at the proper time.

And for this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle. I am telling the truth, I am not lying, as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. Therefore, I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands without wrath and dissension.

In these eight verses, the Apostle Paul identifies at least seven major doctrines of the Christian faith, either mentions them specifically or alludes to them. And I want to just quickly identify those seven major doctrines that he either specifically mentions or alludes to. The first one is the doctrine of prayer on behalf of all people, the doctrine of prayer.

Next in verse five, he focuses on the unity of God. There is one God, and that's what he focuses on. The third doctrine that I see him referring to is God's love and concern for all the world.

God's love and concern for all the world. You'll find that in verses one, four, and six. The next doctrine is that there is only one mediator between God and men.

Folks, there are not a multitude of saviors for the human race to choose from. There is one Savior. There is just one.

And there's only one true God. And there's only one mediator between that true God and the

world, and His name is Jesus Christ. And we have a responsibility because we have been entrusted with that.

The next doctrine that I see him referring to is found in verse six. And that is the doctrine of the mediator providing a universal atonement. He talks about the fact that this mediator has ransomed us.

The word ransom means to buy back. And so this one mediator has paid the price. He has paid the ransom price for mankind.

Provisionally, provisionally the entire human race could be saved. The provision has been made by God through Christ. Another doctrine that I see here has to do with the fact that redemption is to be shared with all mankind.

And that is not just the responsibility of the select few. That is the privilege and the responsibility of every person who names the name of Jesus Christ. That you and I are being counted upon by God to share the message of redemption.

He wants everyone to hear. He wants everyone to hear. Verses four, five, and six.

And then the seventh doctrine that I see here is the doctrine of the use of human instrumentation in world evangelism. There is no substitute when it comes to world evangelism for flesh and blood telling the story. There is no substitute.

And I suppose that some of you men who are here today are retired and others are still very much a part of the workforce. But it doesn't make any difference at what particular stage or station you are in your life. You have been entrusted with a message that will make an eternal difference in the lives of those who embrace it.

But God's word asks a very significant question. How can people embrace the message if they don't hear the message? And who is going to tell them except those who already know? Who is going to tell them? And so for just a few moments I want to talk to you about what I believe is the top priority that Paul identifies here. And that is the subject of prayer.

Every man in the missionary church can be involved in what I am convinced is the most important ministry that has to do with the total church. You might say, well evangelism is the most important. Folks, if we are not going to undergird evangelism with prayer then we better forget evangelism.

Every ministry that the church has embarked upon or is involved in needs the undergirding of intercessory prayer. And the thing that I see here is Paul saying to men that they are the ones who are to pray. That doesn't mean that the women in the church don't have a place in the prayer life of the church.

But I think that we have, without realizing it, said well we are the bread winners. And we have

got to keep up the equipment. And we have thought of a whole bunch of things that are keeping us as men from spending the kind of time in prayer.

Now I don't mind laying it on the line to you because I don't have to apologize for the kind of a schedule I keep. If I was the kind of a person that would sleep in until 8 o'clock every morning and didn't get up early, then I would have to be careful that I wasn't saying to you one thing and doing something else. But you can call our house Indiana time.

I want to make that clear. You can call our house Indiana time 5.30 any morning of the week and you will not wake me up. I find that that is the best time of the day to spend with God.

And that's been my practice for years. That has been my practice for years. Now maybe you can't get up at 5.30 in the morning.

And I don't know what is the best time for you. But I really believe that we need to mobilize the men across the denomination to form a mighty prayer band to undergird the total life and ministry of the missionary church. And not just the missionary church but the work of Christ at large.

Now notice the language that the apostle uses as he writes to Timothy. He says, I exhort therefore that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made for all men. That word exhort in the Greek language is a very, very strong word.

That's a very strong word. It means I urge, I plead, I press upon you. I press upon you.

The literal translation of this would read like this. I urge out of my soul, out of my inner being that you pray for all men. It speaks of a deep concern and desire.

And it expresses something that is of profound importance. Isn't it interesting that as Paul is writing to Timothy and giving him these different doctrines of the church and different doctrines of the faith, he says that of first importance is prayer. First importance is prayer.

Men seeking the face of God. Men discovering the heart of God. Men discovering the mind of God.

Being able to get on the right spiritual wavelength so that we really know what matters to God and what matters to God ought to matter to us. And so he says I exhort you. And then the expression first of all, first of all, this expression speaks of the place and the priority of prayer, that you and I are to give to prayer in our daily lives.

The language that is used, first of all, speaks of the place that prayer is to have in our daily lives. The place that it is to have in our daily lives. Dr. A.T. Robertson, the noted Greek scholar, in focusing in on those particular words, says I regard Paul's expression, first of all, as the equivalent of our saying something like this, in the first place.

In the first place. In implying that prayer is something of major importance. We can go to some

of our prayer meetings in our churches and there is so little time devoted to prayer that you can't really call it a prayer meeting.

I believe that one of the reasons that God has been moving this week in Steiner Camp is because of the amount of prayer that has been undergirding the overall ministry of this camp. I'm convinced of that. And I know that not all of the prayer is taking place at 7.30 in that room.

But what a thrilling thing it is to see 50 or 60 people meeting there every morning of the week at 7.30 and taking specific requests and spending most of the time in prayer, calling on God. And so Dr. Robertson says the Greek language, and he is a noted Greek scholar, he says that the language that is used here says that Paul was identifying prayer as a major importance in the life of the individual and the life of the church. Now, who should be our example when it comes to prayer? It would seem to me that the one who is the head of the church.

And that is Jesus Christ. And I just quickly went through the Gospels and I identified some different things about the prayer life of Jesus. The first thing that I identified is when He prayed.

When He prayed. And I discovered that He prayed at His baptism. There were times He prayed all night.

Other times He prayed early in the morning. Other times He prayed in the evening. He prayed before eating.

He prayed before great trials. And He prayed while He was dying. If ever there was a man, a man among men, who was devoted to prayer, and He prayed while He was dying.

If ever there was a man, a man among men, who was devoted to prayer, and saw the necessity of prayer, it was Jesus Christ. And men, if Jesus saw the necessity of prayer, then where does that leave us? Where does that leave us? The next thing I identified is where He prayed. He prayed alone much of the time.

Alone much of the time. And sometimes it was on a mountain. Other times the Scriptures say that it was in a solitary place.

Other times in a garden. But much of the time He spent alone with God. There is the need for both.

There is the need for me as an individual to have time alone with God. There are other times when I need to be with my brothers and my sisters in the body. When there's the corporate body of Christ coming together for prayer.

And you find both in Scripture. Who did He pray for? Well, He prayed to the Father. He prayed for Himself.

He prayed for the disciples. He prayed for those who believe. He prayed for Peter.

He even prayed for His enemies. He prayed for His enemies. And how did He pray? I discovered that He prayed for the glory of God.

For the glory of God. He prayed in submission. There were times when He was being put to the test.

And He felt it very, very keenly. But He said, Not My will but Thine be done. He prayed on His knees.

He prayed on His face. He prayed with His eyes open toward heaven. He prayed earnestly.

Hebrews 5.7 says that He prayed with a strong voice and tears. He prayed with repetition. It wasn't vain repetition.

It was just heart repetition. And then we read, He prayed with thanksgiving. He prayed with thanksgiving.

So, if Jesus made prayer a priority in His life and ministry, I just have to say to you in all honesty, I am convinced that that leaves you and me no choice if we're really serious about this business of living for God. And if we're really serious about the work of the church and the kingdom of God, then prayer must be a priority with you and me. Now, I've shared in our services several different times about the relationship that I have with my wife.

And I'm not ashamed of that relationship. She's a special lady as far as I'm concerned. And I love her.

And I'm committed to her. But if I never spoke to her, or if I went for weeks or months without conversing with her, I think she would have a legitimate reason to question my commitment to her. And we say we love the Lord.

We say we love our Father. And yet, we can allow days to slip by without spending time talking to Him and sharing with Him. All of us need someone to share with.

Every person here needs someone to share with. And you and I have been given the privilege of sharing with our God. We can come to Him in the name of Jesus Christ, His Son.

We can come to Him and sharing with Him. All of us need someone to share with. Every person here needs someone to share with.

And you and I have been given the privilege of sharing with our God. We can come to Him in the name of Jesus Christ, His Son. And have immediate access to the throne of God.

And what a privilege that is. Why did Paul say of first importance of top priority is this matter of prayer? What did he think could be accomplished by this? As I look at this passage, he says, first of all, I urge you that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgiving be made on behalf of all men. And then he goes on in the second verse for kings and all who are in authority.

And as I read this passage, I draw a number of conclusions. Evidently, Paul thought that if God's men would band together in prayer, and as I read this passage, I draw a number of conclusions. Evidently, Paul thought that if God's men would band together in prayer, that God could touch the hearts of those who were in places of political and government authority.

We have been commanded by Scripture to pray for government officials and for those who are in authority over us. And I don't know whether you like the government you've got or not. But if you aren't praying for them, then you don't have any reason and you don't have any right to gripe about them, do you? Amen? Alright.

Get you going here yet. Paul wasn't looking for an easy time of it. Surely his life is an indication of the fact that he wasn't looking for an easy way out.

But he believed that as men would band together in prayer for kings and presidents and princes and premiers and anyone in authority, that God could so move on their hearts as men prevailed in prayer, that the church could have a reasonable, peaceful approach to presenting the gospel. Do something about the political climate that it would be at least cooperative and conducive to the spread of the gospel. And so he says, I want you to pray.

I think that another thing happens as I look at this passage of Scripture, and that is that a missionary vision and some discernment that it would be at least cooperative and conducive to the spread of the gospel. And so he says, I want you to pray. I think that another thing happens as I look at this passage of Scripture, and that is that a missionary vision comes when men pray.

If you are serious about prayer, and if you're sincere about it, I don't think it's possible for you to pray for your next door neighbor who is lost and on his way to hell or pray for unreached tribes in other places around the world. I don't think if you're serious about it that it's possible for you to pray and at the same time remain indifferent. I want you to think about that.

Can you just take a casual approach to prayer and see God change the world? I don't believe that. Spain, for example, is one of the neediest countries in the face of the earth. Fort Wayne, Indiana has 175,000 people.

If you were to take the ratio of the number of believers in Spain as compared to the population, and we'll use Fort Wayne as an example, 175,000 people. If you use the ratio, there would only be 175 Christians in Fort Wayne. That's not very many.

That's how under-evangelized Spain is. And I want to ask you, I've asked in the prayer meeting, that's not very many. That's how...