

Sermon Notes on I Tim. 2:4-6, Sunday before Lent

1. In vss. 1-8 Paul is plainly speaking about public worship, a church service. Vss. 1 and 8 speak about public prayers. Vs. 1 speaks about the variety of prayers in behalf of all people. Vs. 8 speaks about where such prayers should be made, who (the men) should make them and the character of such men, the pastors.
2. Note the universality of this passage. The word "all" occurs six times. Vs. 1, first of order of importance, then of all people. Vs. 2, of all who are in authority. Vs. 4, God seriously wants all to come to the full knowledge of the Gospel. Vs. 6, Christ gave Himself as an offering in the stead of all. Vs. 8, in each and every place.
3. In vs. 3 the universality of prayer ~~of~~ vs. 2 is called "good and acceptable in the presence of God, our Savior." Vs. 4 tells us why this is good and acceptable: God wills all people to be saved, namely, to arrive at the full knowledge of the Gospel, the truth. In vs. 5, just as there is only one will in God, so there is only one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. In vs. 6 this Mediator is described: He gave Himself (cf. Gal. 1:4 and 2:20) in the stead of all people. The last line of vs. 6 is speaking about the testimony about the universal atonement which testimony is explained in vs. 7. Paul was appointed for this testimony as a herald and apostle, the teacher of the Gentiles, to teach the non-Jews to believe the truth, the Gospel. In view of these wonderful truths, Paul returns in vs. 8 to public worship. He desires that in every place the men (pastors) pray, lifting up holy hands without anger and debate. Anger and quarrelsomeness are disastrous for pastors. It renders their prayers and service offensive, not helpful.
4. We should pray for all in authority, kings, presidents, governors, judges. Why? So that we might lead a quiet and peaceful life in godliness (our attitude toward God) and honesty (our attitude toward people). Cf. what Zacharias said at Lk. 1:74-75.
5. With reference to vs. 4, John Calvin, a contemporary of Martin Luther, said that since not all are saved, not all have been redeemed because God's will cannot be thwarted. Calvin still has his followers in modern times. In answer to Calvin, Luther said that, although all have been redeemed, God's redemption in Christ can be rejected and His saving will thwarted. Calvin accused God, in this vs., of a will that is not serious. That is blasphemous. Calvin said that the word "world" in Jn. 3:16; Jn. 1:29 and II Cor. 5:19 denotes only the elect, not all people. That is awful.
6. On the universal atonement read the following: Tit. 2:11; I Tim. 2:4; Jn. 3:16; I Jn. 2:2; II Cor. 5:19; Jn. 1:29; Ezek. 33:11; II Pet. 3:9; I Tim. 2:6; Jn. 12:32. God is a God of great mercy toward ALL men. If a person denies the universal atonement, he has no God at all. He worships an idol of his own making.
7. In our text, vs. 6 plainly teaches the universal atonement. Strictly speaking, vs. 4 speaks about individuals learning about the universal atonement. As often, the word "and" in vs. 4 means "namely." It is God's will that all be saved. In what sense? To arrive at the knowledge of the truth, the Gospel.
8. God has only ONE will: that all be saved because Christ died for all. If man rejects the Gospel, God's consequent will demands that that person be damned. The fault lies not in God but in man. But God does not have TWO wills, a primary will and a consequent will. He has only one will. The consequent will grows out of the one will that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth. Never, never, never accuse God of saving only SOME people.
9. Just once more to make sure we understand correctly: There is only ONE God. But mankind rebelled against this one God. And so God sent ONE Mediator, Substitute, to ransom ALL. Now God seriously desires that ALL be saved by coming to the knowledge of the truth. If they reject this saving will, God's justice demands that they be damned.

Sermon Outline on I Tim. 2:4-6, Sunday before Lent

Theme: THE SAVING WILL OF GOD

Introduction: In vs. 1 Paul says: "I urge that prayers be made etc."

In vs. 8 Paul says: "Therefore I wish that the men pray etc." He is speaking about church services in which the central truth is the saving will of God. God wants His people to enjoy peacefully the results of His saving will. First God willed Christ to be our Mediator. He has paid for our sins. Now God wants all men to learn about this. That is why we have pastors and churches, to spread the good news.

I-What God's Will Has Already Accomplished

- A-He has sent Christ as the Mediator. What is the work of a Mediator? He reconciles two parties who do not agree with each other. A great difference arose between God and mankind. Sin. When sin entered the world it was attended by death. But God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem those who were condemned by the Law. Gal. 4:4. Our text mentions that Christ is a man. He became a man to be our Highpriest. The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that Christ fulfilled both the Aaronic priesthood as a man and the Melchizedekian priesthood as true God. As true God and man Christ became our Mediator. Ps. 40:7-9 is a prophecy about this. It says, in part: "Lo, I come to do your will, oh God." By the will of God Jesus made just one sacrifice for the sins of the world. Hebr. 10:10.
- B-Christ gave Himself as a payment for man's sin. Our text says that He did this as the Substitute of all people. God so love the WORLD that He gave His only begotten Son. Jn. 3:16. God was in Christ reconciling the WORLD unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. II Cor. 5:19. Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the WORLD. Jn. 1:29. He is the payment for our sins and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. I Jn. 2:2. Man can add nothing to that which Christ, our Mediator, has done. But we must believe it.

II-What God Still Wills Among Men

- A-He wills all people to be saved, to come to the knowledge of the Truth. At the end of the story of Zacchaeus Jesus said: "The Son of man has come to seek and save that which is lost." Lk. 19:10. He proved that in the case of this tax-collector. He sought Zacchaeus. He gave him the knowledge of the truth. He forgave his sin. At the house of a Pharisee (Lk. 7:36-50) Jesus sought a sinful woman. She confessed her sin and He forgave her. She learned the knowledge of the Truth.
- B-God wills that this knowledge be preached by His messengers. God proved His divine purpose by sending Christ as the Mediator. And now He sends His messengers. Paul was one of the first. This is mentioned in vs. 7 of our text. He was a herald. He was an apostle. He was the teacher of the Gentiles. He taught them to believe this great Truth, the Truth of Christ, the Mediator. And even today yet we have pastors who bring us this message.
- C-God wills that we have church services. This is mentioned in vss. 1 and 8 of our text. In vs. 1 we read that all sorts and kinds of prayer and thanksgiving be made for all people. Then he mentions kings and rulers. Why these prayers? So that we can lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty. God wants us to serve Him diligently in all quietness. In vs. 8 he mentions prayers once more. He says that in every place the men should should pray with uplifted hands and with hearts that are free of anger and doubt. It is God's will that His pastors be exemplary leaders, men who edify Christ's holy people.

Conclusion: We know that the will of God has accomplished the salvation of all people. But now He also wills us to extend His Kingdom on earth. That is why He has permitted us to live and work.