

SOUND WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Summary and Historical Background

Paul was concerned that the saints at Ephesus learn how to behave in the local church (3:15). First, he instructed them about public prayer (2:1-7). He encouraged them to use four kinds of prayer for all people (2:1). Then he specifically told them to pray for kings and all rulers (2:1b-2). He gave three reasons for this: one, that Christians might live a quiet and peaceable life; two, it is good and acceptable with God; and three, it agrees with God's desire that all people be saved (2:2b-4). God showed His desire for them to be saved when He provided Jesus Christ to be the one and only mediator between Him and them; when He provided Jesus Christ to pay the ransom for their sins through His death on the cross; and when He ordained Paul to be a preacher, apostle and teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth (2:5-7). Therefore, offering prayers for the salvation of all people agrees with God's desire for them.

Second, He instructed them about public worship of men and women in the local church (2:8-15). Men were the spiritual leaders in the church, so they lead the church in worship by their prayers (2:8). Women were the spiritual followers in the church, so they showed their worship by modest adornment and good works (2:9-10). They were to be submissive to the leaders of the church (2:11-12). Paul supported his reason from Genesis where God created Adam first and then Eve. He also stated that Adam was not deceived, but Eve was deceived and led in the transgression (2:13-14). However, she is given the assurance of being saved from the results of sin, if she maintains her God-given role as a mother in faith, love, holiness with sound judgment (2:15).

I. Instruction Concerning Public Prayer — 2:1-7

A. Requirement of Public Prayer — 2:1a

2:1a — Paul exhorted that public prayer be included in the public worship service.

"Exhort" carries the concept of urgency.

"First of all" — This does not refer to the order of the service, that prayer comes first, but it refers to the importance of prayer. Paul gave prayer first place in a public worship service. Paul tells Timothy what public prayer should include.

"Supplications" — Indicates a person has a need and is insufficient to meet that need. Therefore, he asks God to supply his need.

"Prayers" — The general term for prayer directed toward God. It implies devotion and reverence to God.

"Intercessions" — This is not necessarily pleadings in behalf of another, but it is a word for any kind of petitions. It speaks of coming near to God and asking in child-like confidence.

"Thanks" — This should always be a part of public prayer (cf. Phil 4:6). Thanklessness is a sin (cf. 2 Tim 3:2). Be certain to thank God for particular blessings that come to one's mind.

B. Recipients of Public Prayer — 2:1b-2a

2:1b — "All men" - We are to pray for believers and unbelievers, for men and women, for rich and poor. There are no exceptions, no partiality. There are always people to pray for.

2:2a — "Kings" - Believers are to pray for good rulers and bad rulers. Even though they may be persecuted by some rulers and government officials, believers are commanded to pray for them (cf. Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:13-17). Nero was the Roman ruler when Paul wrote this letter.

"All that are in authority" — These are the lesser officials who carry out the orders of kings or rulers over countries.

C. Reasons for Public Prayer — 2:2b-4

2:2b — Christians are encouraged to pray for rulers, so they will be able to lead a quiet and peaceable life. If the rulers receive Christ as their Savior as a result of their prayers, it is even better. So they are exhorted to pray and the Spirit of God will convict them of sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn 16:7-11). When they pray, they will be at peace inwardly and outwardly. Even if the rulers do not accept Christ, they may still yield to God's prompting and treat Christians well.

"Quiet" — Believers will experience no disturbance from without.

"Peaceable" — Believers will experience no disturbance from within.

"Godliness" — Believers will have a proper respect and reverence for God.

"Honesty" — A more accurate translation of the Greek word is "dignity." Believers will have respect and reverence among men.

2:3 — Public prayer for all people is good and acceptable before God. God loves all men and loves to hear a believer's prayers on behalf of others. It brings Him great pleasure.

2:4 — God has a desire or longing that all men be saved, not willing that any should perish (cf. 2 Pet 3:9). If salvation were determined by God's desire, all people would be saved. However, salvation is conditioned by man's response to God's offer of salvation. That is why Paul, as an ambassador for Christ, begged sinners to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:20). It was not a "take it or leave it" matter with Paul. He knew that sinners needed to make a decision to receive Christ as their Savior and satisfy the desire of God.

D. Rationale for Public Prayer — 2:5-7

2:5 — "One God" - Since there is only one God (cf. Deut 6:4), all people need to be reconciled to Him.

"One Mediator" — Since there is only one mediator, all sinners must go to Him to reach God. This mediator is Christ. A mediator acts between two parties. Only Christ, being both God and man, can identify with both His Father and people to represent both of them perfectly.

2:6 — "Who gave Himself" - It was a voluntary act of Christ to be the propitiation for all people (1 Jn 2:2).

"A ransom" — This speaks of the death of Christ as payment for the penalty of all sins by all sinners.

"For all" — Christ died in the place of all sinners in all the world, not for a limited number of them (Jn 1:29; 3:16; 4:42).

"To be testified in due time" — This testimony of salvation offered to all people would be made known to them when the right time had come. That time has come and believers are responsible to make it known to them.

2:7 — Paul was ordained to spread this message among the Gentiles. There was only one message that we are responsible to give to lost Gentiles, the gospel of Jesus Christ (Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12,) and it is their responsibility to believe it and receive it (Rom 10:13-15).

Since God is so concerned about the salvation of all sinners, it is only proper for us to pray to Him for the salvation of all sinners.

II. Instructions Concerning Public Worship — 2:8-15

A. Activity of Men — 2:8

2:8 — "I will" - Expresses a wish or strong intention.

"Men" — Speaks of men as opposed to women. However, public prayer for women was not forbidden if they followed the scriptural qualifications (cf. 1 Cor 11:5). However, in this case men were to be the leaders in public prayer.

"Lifting up holy hands" — This is not referring to a specific posture, but it is a reference to a holy life (cf. Ps 66:18).

"Everywhere" — It refers to every place where public worship is conducted.

"Without wrath" — It refers to anger (cf. Eph 4:31; Col 3:8; Jam 1:20). Anger destroys the attitude one needs for true prayer.

"Without doubting" — It is not about a lack of faith in God, but a lack of agreement among brethren, doubting their spiritual discernment. It is a reference to disputing or arguing, which causes them to lose respect for each other, so that their prayers are hindered (cf. 1 Pet 3:7). Differences must be resolved before one can be engaged in true prayer.

B. Adornment of Women — 2:9-10

1. External appearance — 2:9

2:9 — "In like manner also" - This is still in reference to public worship.

"Modest apparel" — Dress should be in good taste. Public worship is not to be a fashion show. A woman is not to dress so as to bring undue attention to herself.

"Shamefacedness" — She is to be modest in appearance: jewelry and make up are not to be excessive. It would be better to have no jewelry and make up than to have too much.

"Sobriety" — She is to use discretion and be sensible.

"Not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" — Worldly women in that day followed the custom of braiding their hair, interweaving it with gold or pearls or whatever they could afford. They also wore luxurious clothes. Christian women were not to adorn themselves in a showy way (cf. 1 Pet 3:3).

2. External activity — 2:10

2:10 — Women should be known for their good works rather than their costly clothes. The adornment of good works is very becoming to a Christian woman (cf. Titus 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:4). Some examples of women who maintained good works are as follows: Dorcas (Acts 9:36, 39); Lydia (Acts 16:14-15); Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2).

C. Acquiescence of Women — 2:11-14

1. Affirmed — 2:11-12

2:11 — "In silence" - They were to learn with a quiet and submissive spirit in the church, and if they needed to have something explained they were to ask their husbands at home (1 Cor 14:33-35).

"With all subjection" — They were to willingly accept the position given them by God. They were not to try to usurp the authority of men placed over them. However, this did not mean they had to surrender their conscience and sin against God to keep the command of their husband.

2:12 — "I suffer not" - Paul did not allow; he forbid.

Neither "to teach nor to usurp authority over the man" — Women are to exercise no authority over men in public worship. Women may, however, teach other women (cf. Titus 2:3-5).

2. Argued — 2:13-14

2:13 — God ordained man (Adam) to have authority over woman (Eve) because Adam was created first and then Eve (Gen 2:18-22). The woman (wife) was created for the man (her husband) (cf. 2 Cor 11:3, 8, 9). She was created to help him.

2:14 — Eve was deceived by Satan and fell into sin. Adam was not deceived; he sinned with full knowledge of what he was doing. Only Eve used the excuse that she was deceived (Gen 3:12-13).

Eve was not an inferior person because she was capable of being deceived; she was simply given different assets to fit her role as a wife and mother (Gen 2:18, 20).

Eve incorrectly assumed the leadership role of her husband when she gave him the forbidden fruit. She was not given the assets to assume that responsibility, and so she failed (Gen 3:6).

God's instruction to Eve to be submissive to Adam applies to every wife, because that is how God made them (Gen 3:16).

D. Assurance of Women — 2:15

2:15 — "She shall be saved in childbearing" - This is a difficult verse to interpret and there are several views as to what it means, but three views will be considered here.

(1) Christian women will be physically saved in childbearing, if they submit to their husbands and live a godly life. This is not always true, because there have been godly women who have died in giving birth to a child. There is a man in Romania whose mother died in giving birth to him. She was told by her doctor that she would die if she gave birth to the child in her womb, because her heart had been weakened by the previous birth of a son. She told her doctor that she would not abort the child, but would leave the results with God. The doctor was correct, because she died in giving birth to her baby son. She was correct in leaving the results with God, because that child has become an important leader of God-fearing pastors in Romania and a powerful preacher in Romania and in other countries.

(2) "In the childbearing" (the article "the" is in the Greek text to focus special attention on childbearing), Paul is referring to "the" birth of Christ through a woman. Those who take this view believe the woman made it possible for the Son of God to become a man so He could die to pay the penalty for our sins. This was a fulfillment of God's promise in Gen 3:15. However, her salvation, as well as the salvation of all sinners, is dependent on receiving Him as Savior, which is accompanied by faith, love and holiness with sobriety (sound judgment). One serious problem with this view is that the promise is given to women bearing children in the future, not to a woman (Mary) bearing a child in the past. The article before childbearing can refer to her God-given role as a wife to bear children for her husband, not to the bearing of the Christ child.

(3) The context of this verse is the salvation of believers from the doctrine of false teachers. Paul charged Timothy to stop these men from teaching their false doctrine in the church (1:3, 5, 18-20). Paul addresses this matter again in exhorting Timothy to pay careful attention to the doctrine so that he can save himself and those that hear him (4:16). So being saved in childbearing is not referring to the salvation of one's soul, but to the salvation of one's testimony. It is being saved from the doctrine of false teachers that prey upon gullible women (2 Tim 3:6). A married woman does well if she accepts her God-given role in bearing children and teaching them God's word as Timothy's mother and grandmother did for him (2 Tim 1:5; 3:14-

15). Also, she must resist the temptation to do the work God gave to her husband in the church. Then she must continue in faith, love and holiness with sobriety (sound judgment) to save her testimony in the home and bless her family. Her husband's life will be on display in the church; her life will be on display in the home.

The woman was not totally silent in the work of the church. Older women were encouraged to teach young married women how to conduct themselves in their homes (Tit 2:4). Even though the Christian wife is under the authority of her husband, both are under the authority of Christ and Christ is under the authority of His Father, Who has the ultimate authority (1 Cor 15:28). It is the principle of the chain of command.