

1 Timothy 2:1-8

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (Series C, Proper 10)

Lessons for the Day: Leviticus 18:1-5; 19:9-18; Colossians 1:1-14; Luke 10:25-37**It's Important!**

July 13, 2025

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle I am telling the truth, I am not lying, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling.”

Dear Friends in Christ, and fellow redeemed:

Did you go to the Stampede? That seems to be the question that many ask during the 10 days in July when we are caught up in the hype and excitement of “the greatest outdoor show on earth”. While we may not all feel the need to get to the Stampede grounds and try to navigate our way through the crowds, there is no denying that the Stampede has a great impact on this city. A 2019 study by the Conference Board of Canada found that the 10 days of Stampede alone generate approximately \$282 million in economic impact for Alberta, including \$227 million for Calgary. “The Stampede is Calgary's global calling card.” It is seen as a key political opportunity. Many feel that the Stampede is important for more than the economic impact, seeing this celebration of western culture setting a mood or a tone for the community that can be so important.

Is the Stampede important for the city of Calgary? It would be hard to deny that it is. Yet the world continues in much the same way that it always has and always will, whether or not there is a Calgary Stampede. We also know that there are many things that can affect the benefit that the Stampede provides. If the rains and cold of this past Thursday had been the norm for all ten days of the Stampede, the benefit to this community would be very different. If accidents plagued the rodeo events, you can be sure that people would see things differently. Some of the security incidents changed the mood of the Stampede for people. It is good to have this economic injection into our community, but it isn't the answer to the real needs of our lives.

But listen to what God says to us in our text today, as Paul is inspired by the Holy Spirit to remind his young protege, Timothy: *“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.”* Paul is saying, “when we want things to happen, or when we see things that aren't all that great around us, the first thing—the very first thing we should do—is pray. When we use God's gift of prayer we see God working because of His grace and mercy to accomplish what we cannot do for ourselves. Pray, Paul says. This is really, really important!

Today we merge two of our requests together. One member asked for a sermon about praying for others. Another asked how we can pray for our leaders when they are urging such things as MAID - Medical Assistance in Dying. Our text addresses both those concerns. Of all the things we can do, one of the most important, and yet one of the simplest tasks, is to pray. You may have seen the bumper-sticker message: “Prayer changes things”. The biblical version of this is far better: *“The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”* (James 5:16, ESV) Prayer is important, for in prayer we take our needs, the needs of those around us, the needs of the church and the needs of our world to our God. We seek His help and strength for our needs.

We are so blessed that God invites us to come to Him in prayer and to seek His blessing on our labours. James reminds us: *You do not have, because you do not ask.* (James 4:2 - ESV) The most important thing we can do to have anything in our lives be the blessing that we want them to be, is to pray. Through prayer we ask our loving Father to grant us His grace and to work for our good. In prayer we ask our Father to bless our world, our nation, our neighbours and all people, even as we pray that He may work through His holy Word to bring lost and dying souls to the glory of His light and truth in Christ.

Paul tells us: *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people.* We often see Paul speaking of the prayers he offers for the congregations he has served and the people he knows. He raises special prayers in times of need for those people. We do the same thing. We tend to be good at praying in the times of great need—a friend is diagnosed with stage 4 cancer; a family we know lost a dear member in a tragic accident; a fire destroyed a

home and devastated another friend. But some of the most important prayers are the ones we offer for our friends or family members who do not know the joy, the hope, the forgiveness and the life that we have in Jesus Christ. When Paul speaks of praying for others he sees a purpose in those prayers. He tells us: ***This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*** Our prayers for others must surely address the needs that we see for healing, help, strength or whatever. But we pray for others, asking God to bless them with the faith and hope we have because we know Jesus died and rose to give us forgiveness and eternal life in heaven.

That same truth applies to our prayers for our leaders. Paul urges us to pray ***for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.*** How often do we see our leaders making decisions or supporting issues that are contrary to the Word of God? MAID has not been a blessing to our land, even though there are more and more people opting for this misguided practice. So many leaders err when it comes to moral issues that affect the family and the good of society as a whole. But we need to pray for our leaders. We need to ask the King of Kings, the Lord of all nations to work in the hearts and lives of those who rule so that they may bring forth justice and righteousness in the land. When Paul wrote these words, the emperor Nero was in power. Nero would be a major persecutor of the church. But Paul wanted Christians to pray for Nero. “It’s important”, Paul said. “We want Nero to change. We want the emperor to know God’s love and grace in the Saviour who died for all people, and who rose again as the victor over even death itself.”

We need to pray for our leaders. We don’t just sit back and complain. We pray that God would bless the nation and its people with peace. Sadly, we often fail to make use of this great gift that God has given to us. Either we don’t think of prayer as important or as powerful a gift as it is. We like to sing: “What A Friend We Have in Jesus” and the hymn’s reminder: “*Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.*” (LSB 770, v. 1) Paul understood that truth so well. Again, what is it that Paul says to Timothy? ***“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.*** Paul tells us: “Don’t just sit there. Pray! It’s important!”

It isn’t enough for us to simply be concerned with the things that are happening around us in the world. We need to take these things to the Lord in prayer. Again and again we are given the assurance of God’s listening ear, and His desire to answer the prayers of His people. Jesus tells us: ***“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”*** (Matthew 7:7–11, ESV) James tells us: ***“You do not have, because you do not ask.”*** (James 4:2, ESV) We miss out on so much help and strength from our loving Father in heaven, simply because we don’t seek His help through prayer.

If we want God to bless this land in which we live; if we want His blessings upon our church and its ministry; if we want His help and strength for the needs of our family and friends, we need to take it to the Lord in prayer. God says through the psalmist: ***“call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”*** (Psalm 50:15, ESV) We miss out on so much help and strength from our loving Father in heaven, simply because we don’t seek His help through prayer.

There is so much for which we can pray. Your family, your friends, your neighbours, your coworkers all need your prayers. Your employer needs your prayers. Your pastor needs your prayers. Our less-than-perfect government leaders need our prayers. Deaconess Miriam puts out information for the prayer chain each week (and if you want to be part of that effort, simply let her know!) There is never a shortage of things on that prayer list—and the list is always far from complete. Right now we want to pray for God’s guidance for Pastor Pearce as he contemplates the call to Foothills. We pray for our brothers and sisters in congregations without a pastor. We pray for labourers in the Lord’s harvest. Pray! It’s important!

Pray that God would lead our elected officials to know what is truly good on issues like MAID and the gender issues we face. Paul tells us that God ***desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*** Jesus didn’t come and give His life on the cross only for some people. Jesus died to pay the terrible price of the sins of every man, woman and child who has lived and whoever will live, including our pastors and church leaders; including our government leaders. Having done that, the resurrected and living Lord wants all people to be saved as they put their trust in Him. Paul reminds us that ***there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which***

is the testimony given at the proper time.

God has promised to hear and answer our prayers. God has promised to respond to the faithful prayers of His people. At the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, God assured Solomon: ***if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*** (2 Chronicles 7:14 - NIV) Even when we don't get the answer we want or expect, we go on praying. We pray because our land needs it. We pray because our leaders need our prayers. We pray because our pastor, our church, our friends, our family and everyone around us needs our prayers. We pray boldly and confidently in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us on the cross. No matter how great the needs are that we see around us, the grace and mercy of Almighty God is greater. Don't just sit there—pray! It's important! And let our gracious God help us as He gives answer to all our needs. Amen.