1 Timothy 2:3-6 3This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4who wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, 6who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

I don’t know how many of you have read the book of 1 Timothy but it you haven’t you deprive yourself of solid wisdom from God. Now that could be true of any book of the Bible, that is, that you miss God’s wisdom by not reading them, but for the church the book of 1 Timothy has special importance, a special wisdom concerning the church and its called servants.

That’s because of what is found in 1 Timothy. The Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote to Timothy, who is the first man to be recognized in Scripture as a full-fledged Pastor of a church. Yeah, Timothy was the Pastor of the Christian congregation that was gathered in the city of Ephesus. Does that name sound familiar? It should. Not only did Paul write to Timothy, with two of those letters in the Bible, but Paul also wrote a letter to the congregation itself. That letter is called the epistle to the Ephesians. So not only do we have a letter to the congregation but we also have two letters to the pastor of that congregation. It is this that makes the books of Timothy so important. And with that recognize that 1 Timothy is the first letter and thus lays down the foundation of all that is said.

What we find in 1 Timothy is a book of Scripture that addresses the circumstances of the congregation and offers advice to that Christian congregation’s pastor. For instance, in our text read today, we hear some of God’s instructions concerning the worship life of the congregation. It said, **First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all those who are in authority, in order that we might live a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and dignity.”** The instructions are simple and clear, and one of the things they do is remind us that prayer is to be an important part of the worship life of a congregation. Not just that, but it also encourages who and what we should pray for.

Note that 1 Timothy offers other instructions as well. It is in this book that the role of men and women in the church is set forth and where the requirements for Pastors and church leaders is given. This book deals with the importance of faith and doctrine and maintaining due diligence in both of those things, reminding us not to back away from what God’s Word says. It gives advice concerning widows, elders, slaves, and warns of the evil of the love of money. 1 Timothy is a book full of the wisdom of God for the Christian and especially for the visible church.

The thing that I like best about 1 Timothy is that the Holy Spirit through Paul not only gives such wonderful instructions but clearly lays down for us the reason for following these instructions. 1 Timothy reminds us of why these instructions are so important for us. That’s what I would like to focus on for this day. Our theme: **THE REASON.**

I hope you noticed that our theme speaks of the “reason” and not reasons! There is only one reason for obeying God, for following his instructions or keeping his commands. How important it is for you to know and rightly understand this reason. For to know and rightly grasp this reason is the very thing that separates the teaching of salvation by works and salvation by faith. Dear people, the only one that counts is salvation by faith!

In our verses, recognize first that we are reminded of the importance of worship and prayer in worship. Immediately following the verses we heard before we then here this: **“This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”** Proper prayer, taking things to God, seeking from God a quiet and peaceful life are all a part of what is **“good and pleasing to the Lord.”** It is good and pleasing because the fact of the matter is that God “**wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”**

Here is something important for us to grasp. It is coming to the knowledge of the truth that saves us. God desires that everyone hear his message and that everyone believes. Of course, the world kicks and resists this desire of God. They reject the truth that is found in God’s Word or they pretend they have that knowledge all the while twisting and contorting that truth usually “in the name of Jesus.” You know who those people are. Those whose message of Jesus is one of how you should live and what you must do in order to be saved. Yet what you do or living the right life is not the way of salvation. Think about this. If you have to live the right way, just what is that way? Is your salvation about not making mistakes? Is your being saved going to happen because you decided that you are good? And what exactly is good and what is best? Is celibacy better? Is being a pastor better? Is the amount of money you give the measure? How about the clothes you wear or the food you eat, is that what will make you good? Just what is the reason that you will be saved as God desires?

The reason is given to us in verses 5-6. Our text says to us, **“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all.”**

What kind of reason is this? To understand this reason we need to go back to the very beginning of things. In the beginning everything was perfect. God had created a perfect world for the creatures he wished to love. And then Adam and Eve disobeyed the one rule God had for them, “Don’t eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” They disobeyed and sinned. By their sin Adam and Eve brought sin to all the world and with that sin its very destructive nature on both man and the universe. We are all, because of that sin, by very nature sinful. That means we have a tendency to do wrong. Don’t believe me? Then let me ask, “Why is it that we have to work so hard to teach our children how to do what is right and good? I am going to guess that not a one of us here ever taught our children to do wrong and be disobedient and yet they do…by nature. That fact alone should make us think. Being sinful by nature also means that there is nothing we can do to please God, to appease God or to earn for ourselves eternal life, the very thing mankind lost through sin.

Despite our sinful nature, it is God’s desire that all souls be saved. So God in love promised a Savior. God then worked throughout history to fulfill that promise and at the right time sent his Son to be that Savior. That Savior has come and that Savior has served as a ransom for our sins.

Think of what it means that Jesus was a ransom for all sins. A ransom is the price one must pay to buy something or someone back from a captive situation. The word can refer to the slave who has bought back his freedom or it can refer to the soldier who is bought back from captivity with the enemy. That word tells us we were captives, captives of sin. Scripture tells us also “slaves of sin.” Yet Jesus paid the ransom price for us. He did that with his life, with his suffering and death on the cross. Because of the ransom Jesus paid we are now freed from the slavery of sin, the fear of eternal death and the power of the Devil. That’s the whole point of Jesus. To grasp that He paid your debt to God. He paid for our sins and has won for us eternal life and salvation. Christianity is not about doing the right thing or being the right person, it is about grasping that Jesus is your Savior and Jesus has ransomed you. You are now a child of God and heir of eternal life just because of Jesus.

Let me try and help you further grasp this great ransom of Jesus. Let’s say that each sin we commit, whether thought, word or deed, is worth 1 dollar, payable to God for disobeying him. Now in a good week, each of us would probably owe God, let’s make this easy and say $1,000.00. Now seriously, I think this a horrid underestimate. God knows everything, and in that light I want you to grasp that I do think $1,000.00 worth of sin in a week to be a really low estimate. Now, take and multiply your age by 52 weeks a year. Next multiply that by 1000. What you have is the total amount of your sin debt, a total that must be paid before you ever get into heaven. Here’s what I can honestly say. In my lifetime so far, based on this, I would owe God $3,328,000.00! I am not going to pay my own way! I am not even going to get close to getting my debt to God paid for.

Here is the awesome part. The Bible tells me that Jesus paid my ransom price. That 3.3 plus million in debt I have, Jesus paid for. Not only did he pay my debt but Jesus paid the debt for every soul ever: past, present and future. Again that’s what Jesus is about. The Bible was not given so we could earn our own way, the Bible was given so we could grasp that God in love sent Jesus to pay our debt. Nor is the Bible again, all about how you must live and what you must do, once you hear about Jesus. The Bible actually insists that once the Holy Spirit calls you to true faith, the Holy Spirit will motivate you to good things, not to get anything but because you already have everything!

Seriously, if some guy in this world were to show up at your door and pay off your 3.3 million dollar debt…what would you do? The truly grateful person would try their best to be of service to that man, and if you couldn’t be of service I would at least hope you would gush with thanks. Of course, I recognize that our world isn’t like that. It has already been shown that the nature of people is such, that when you give them something they just want you to give more. If you don’t believe that, then go read about “The Great Society” of LBJ and the war on poverty and what we discovered happens. In other words, we have data for the last 50 years and it isn’t pretty. That’s why I said the truly grateful person would try to be of service and at the least would shower thanks on the guy.

You get my point. Jesus paid off our debt and now aren’t we a people who are full of gratitude and thanks to Jesus for what he has done, for this great act of love on his part? It is clear to anyone wishing to see it that each of us owes a debt to Jesus. Now, the only thing that Jesus asks is to obey his Word. But before we go any further, contemplate this passage: 1 John 3:23 **“This then is his command: that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ.”**

That passage says the same thing ours does. Everything flows from this fact. That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that Jesus is our Savior from sin, the giver of eternal life and salvation. So, out of thanks, out of love, I am moved by what Jesus has done for me. Out of love and out of thanks I now strive to imitate Jesus, to hear and carry out his Word. I won’t be perfect at it, in truth I will pretty well be terrible at it, but somehow I want to give Jesus the honor and praise He deserves. This is the best and the only reason there is for following God’s Word.

Think about our text. God wants all men to be saved. God wants all men to come to a knowledge of the truth, the truth that Jesus has fully paid the ransom for our sins. Everything flows from that. Everything flows from that because you just can’t know this wonder of Jesus and not have it impact your life. So we Christians, those who believe in Jesus, we worship and sing praise to Jesus. We pray and put our lives and our world into the hands of Jesus. We strive to keep straight the truth of our forgiveness, the teachings of God’s Word and let the impact of God’s message in Jesus be on us. All because we have eternal life and salvation in the ransom of Jesus. This is our faith. Amen.