



## Sunday School- March 6, 2011

### THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

#### Unifying Topic: INSTRUCTION ABOUT WORSHIP

#### Lesson Text

##### I. Living For Christ (I Timothy 2:1-6)

##### II. How To Act In Church (I Timothy 3:14-16)

**The Main Thought:** For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (I Timothy 2:5, KJV).

**Unifying Principle:** There is a renewed interest in ancient spiritual practices in today's society. What gives our spiritual search meaning? Citing an early hymn, I Timothy affirms that Christ is the mediator of all truth about God.

**Lesson Aim:** To help students appreciate how God wants us to live as Christians.

**Life Aim:** To teach Christians how to live holy, prayerful lives, knowing how to conduct themselves in the house of God, realizing the purpose and importance of the Church, and understanding the saving works of Christ.

2:1 I EXHORT therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;  
 2:2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.  
 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior;  
 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.  
 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;  
 2:6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

3:14 THESE things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:  
 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.  
 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

#### HISTORY:

<sup>1</sup>The first assignment the Apostle Paul gave to Timothy in regard to the church at Ephesus was to correct the teaching, which had begun to drift from the apostolic revelation into controversial areas that were destructive to faith. Timothy was to set that straight, using Paul as his model. He was also to stress the need for obedience -- that people actually do what they teach. That is always the first step toward vitality in a Christian's experience.

In Chapter 2 of First Timothy we now come to the second assignment the Apostle Paul gave to Timothy and that is to set order in the public worship of the assembly in Ephesus. Public worship is a relevant subject revealing for us, why we come together every Sunday morning; revealing the relationship and awesomeness of God's presence in a church; and whether your living for Christ produces your action of behavior in public.

#### LESSON:

### I Timothy 2:1-6 Living For Christ

V1 I exhort meaning to urge, **first of all supplications, prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.** Paul uses four different words in this verse. These words help to instruct us as he urges us to do so for all men. Paul has made the first duty of the church to be the duty of prayer. Not a single person is to be left out when he says all men. This is both an encouragement and charge to pray, just as soldiers are encouraged and charged to fight.

#### TERMS:

- "*Supplication*" (*deeseis*) is a humble and earnest request for prayer; prayer that focus upon special needs; deep and intense needs, whether a person needs money, job, car, home, direction etc.—Pray with urgency!
- "*Prayers*" (*proseuchas*) are the times we set aside for devotion and worship before God.
- "*Intercession*" (*enteuxeis*) refer to bold praying; standing before God on behalf of another, carrying their names and lives before God and expecting God to hear and answer; standing in the gap between God and them asking God to be merciful and gracious in salvation and in deliverance.
- "*Giving of thanks*" or "*Thanksgiving*" (*eucharistias*) means we thank God for hearing and answering for what He has done and is going to do for all men. It is a form of praise! We are sealing our prayer.



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/timothy/the-first-thing--prayer>

<sup>2</sup>The apostle Paul put prayer first for two very good reasons. *First*, because prayer focuses people's hearts and eyes on God right at the very beginning, acknowledge the power, the beauty, and the liberty that the presence of God imparts, and it immediately gives a sense of reality and vitality to a service. *Secondly*, to begin with prayer means that we get our own humanity in perspective. Every one of us comes away from some situation at home with which we are still at least partially involved in. Perhaps we are thinking of the hassle we went through getting the children dressed in order to come to church, or the fact that the car was almost out of gas, the upsetting phone call we had earlier that morning, or the fact we had to get up early again. But when we come together and the service starts with the recognition of the presence of God, then somehow all those human problems fade. That's what a church service is about. And as we begin with prayer, our prayers tap the power of God on behalf of others. The first thing you do for a person if you love them is to ask God to work on their behalf; work in their need. Keeping a clear conscience of love means you will be willing to do something hard for them because it had already been easy for you to do.

**V2** Now to get specific about it, it's for all men including authorities: **For kings, and all that are in authority. Why? – That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.** No matter how good or how bad they may be; how moral or immoral; how just or unjust, *Pray for them!* Proverbs reminds us: "*The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will,*" *Proverbs 21:1 KJV.*

Donald Guthrie says, "*This Christian attitude towards the state is of utmost importance. Whether the civil authorities are perverted or not they must be made subjects for prayer, for Christians citizens may in this way influence the course of national affairs, a fact often forgotten except in times of special crisis*" (*The Pastoral Epistles.* "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p.70).

Matthew Henry says, "*Pray for Kings...though the kings at this time were heathens, enemies to Christianity, and persecutors of Christians...because it is for the public good that there should be civil government, and proper persons entrusted with the administration of it*" (*Matthew Henry's Commentary, vol5, p.811.*)

Reasons we are to pray for rulers and all men.

1. We pray for rulers and all men so that we can lead quiet and peaceable lives and the ruler is filled...
  - a. With wisdom and knowledge.
  - b. With morality and justice.
  - c. With courage and boldness.
  - d. With compassion and understanding.

Therefore, believers must pray for the rulers to be filled to the brim. Then, and only then, can citizens of a land, live quiet and peaceable lives. Did you ever realize that the peace of our community is related to the prayers of God's people? There have been outbreaks of terrorism in various parts of the world. Some nations are on the verge of war. The real purpose of government is to preserve the good. And all laws should be designed for the preservation of good. When a government no longer is fulfilling the function of keeping out evil, the evil that they allow will ultimately destroy that government because there is no godliness and honesty. If we are not asking, we will not have (James 4:2). Faithful in prayer does not count for sometimes. It is constant until the answer comes.

**V3** For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

2. We pray for rulers and all men, for this to be good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour in which we can live godly and sincere lives.
  - a. Believers want freedom of worship, and freedom of life and choice, the right to worship and live for God without being opposed and persecuted.
  - b. Believers want freedom of life and choice, the right to live sincere or purposeful lives, the right to pursue their own lives and wills without being opposed because it is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.

God is our Savior and for prayer to be acceptable means there will be peace. When Christians live quiet, godly lives, praying for their leaders, and righteously being subject to them, they have nothing to fear under God. But when Christians rebel against that authority, or just don't pray for government, they cause their government to make wrong decisions. We want all things to be good and acceptable in the sight of God.

**V4** Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth -

3. We pray for rulers and all men to come into the knowledge of truth which can lead to Salvation. Why?
  - a. God loves us so much that He is not willing that any should perish V3.
  - b. There is only one God, one way to be saved V5.
  - c. There is only one Mediator between God and men. God has to make man acceptable V5.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/timothy/the-first-thing--prayer>

- d. The man Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all, and man has to accept what Jesus has done V6.
- e. Ministers are ordained and appointed to proclaim salvation to God V7.

God wants everybody to be saved but not in the sense of a decree. It is in the sense that He loves and longs for them to be saved. If a man perishes, it is his own fault; it is his own choosing. God wants man to come to the knowledge of the truth and be a doer of the Word. What truth does God want man to know? Two things: **1)** there is only one God. **2)** there is only one Mediator. The truth is that all can be saved from sin and death and judgment to come, through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. God loves man so much that He provided the way for man to be saved. That way is the truth, and that truth is Jesus Christ. "*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" Jh.14:6. This is why we should pray for all men—God wants all men to be saved, both rulers, citizens, high, low, educated, uneducated, moral, immoral, just, and unjust—regardless of who they are and no matter how evil they may be.

**V5 For there is one God**, not many gods. If there were many gods, then there would be many ways to reach the heavens of the gods. When we speak of God, we mean the "*Infinite and Supreme Majesty of the Universe*." There can only be one Supreme Being! The One of Creation! The point is this: since there is only one God, there can only be one way to reach Him—only one way to be saved. People may believe in many gods but there is only one real God.

- **The Father and the Son are one!**
  - *I and the Father are one* Jh.10:30.
  - *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth* Jh.4:24.
- **He is the only one who established heaven and earth!**
  - *For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord and there is none else* Is.45:18.
  - *In the beginning was the word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>the same was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made by him; and without him not any thing made that was made* Jh.1:1-3.
- **He is the only one that came from the heavenly throne to earth to be both man and God!**
  - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God. <sup>2</sup>The Word was with God in the beginning. Now the Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We saw his glory – the glory of the one and only, full of grace and truth, who came from the Father* Jh.1:1-2,14
  - *For these are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one* 1Jh.5:7.
  - *For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily* Colo.2:9
  - *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God* 1Jh.4:2.
- **He is the only one that was made an example for mankind to follow!**
  - *...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men: <sup>8</sup>And being found in the fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross* Phil.2:7-8.
  - *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps* 1Pt.2:21.
- **His life was the only sinless one to take away sin on our behalf!**
  - *Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. <sup>3</sup>For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me* Rom.15:2-3.
  - *He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God* 1Pt.1:19.
  - *For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit* 1Pt.3:18.
- **He is the only one that died, was buried, and was resurrected!**
  - *<sup>3</sup>...Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures...<sup>4</sup>he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures* 1Corth.15:3-4.
  - *<sup>45</sup>And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. <sup>47</sup>The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of the Lord from heaven* 1Corth.15:45, 47.
  - *And ye are complete in him...<sup>12</sup>buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead* Colo.2:10, 12.

- **He was the only one seen and preached afterwards!**
  - *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory* 1Tim.3:16.
  - *<sup>5</sup>and he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: <sup>6</sup>After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup>After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. <sup>8</sup>And last of all he was seen of me also (Paul) 1Corth.15:5-8.*
- **He was given all power and dominion!**
  - *<sup>19</sup>And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,<sup>20</sup> Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: <sup>22</sup>And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all [things] to the church, Eph.1:19-22.*
  - *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth Matt.28:18.*

I will still profess the power of the Trinity—God Three in One (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) manifesting with different purposes, however, functioning as One God!

**V5b ...and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;** Man must have a mediator if he is to be saved; if he is to approach God and be acceptable to God. Why? – Because there is only one "*Perfect Person*": God Himself! "*Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one*" Gal.3:20. No man can stand before God, not in his own name or righteousness. Man is imperfect and cannot make himself acceptable to God no matter what he does. Imperfection is unacceptable to perfection. In a human since if perfection accepted imperfection, it would no longer be perfection. However, Jesus is both God and man who has a clear understanding of both and can cover all imperfection.

God is the only one to make man acceptable. God Himself had to handle the sin, condemnation, and death of men. How? – There was only one way. God the "*Perfect Person*" had to become "*Man*." God had to come to earth in such a way that man could understand Him and understand what He was doing. This He did by partaking of the flesh and blood and coming to earth in the Person of His Son, the man Christ Jesus. God Himself had to conquer sin. He had to live a perfect and sinless life as a man in order to handle sin. He came in the flesh as a baby and lived among us. As Mediator, He stands before God as the Perfect Man, and He stands between God and man as the Perfect Man. He is the Ideal Pattern of all men, of just what a man should be. Therefore, when a man really believes in Jesus Christ...

- God takes that man's belief and counts it as the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- God accepts the man's faith and honor in His Son as righteousness.
- God lets the righteousness of His Son Jesus Christ cover the man.
- God accepts the man's faith as the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

The point is this: since there is only one Mediator, we must pray for men to come to know Jesus. And we must rush to proclaim Him to all men so that they can know about Him and have the opportunity to follow Him.

**V6 Who gave himself a ransom for all,** The word "*ransom*" (*antilutron*) means to exchange something for something else. Christ exchanged His life for the life of man. How? – By way of the cross. Jesus Christ took the sin and condemnation of men upon Himself and bore their judgment for them. Christ died for man on the cross. He bore the judgment of God against sin for man. As being the Ideal and Perfect Man, Christ was the only one who could do this for man. He was without sin. Therefore, His death covered the death of all men. If a man really believes and trusts that the death of Jesus Christ is for him, he can receive Salvation. Jesus Christ gave Himself as a ransom for sin and death. When man receives Christ Jesus into his heart and begins to follow Christ, God gives him abundant and eternal life now and forever. When man finishes his task upon earth, God will transfer him right into His presence—quicker than a flash of lightning and man lives forever in the presence of God, never tasting death. This is glorious gospel of God.

**V6b ...to be testified in due time.** The words "*testified in due time*" mean that God sent His Son in the fullness of time; when it was time for Christ to come to earth, He came.

*Living for Christ* surely entailed for us to first pray. And using this prayer would include everyone we meet and don't meet which would lead to a quiet and peaceable life in godliness and honesty. It is all for the salvation of mankind. If we don't pray, the Mediator can't come into men's lives.

## I Timothy 3:14-16 How To Act In Church

We have skipped some verses and the setting now is behavior in the church. This will encase the description and truth of the church. **V14 THESE things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:** The Apostle Paul had left Timothy to take care of the church in Ephesus. Paul is hoping to meet Timothy soon with apostolic authority to set things in order there, but the problems could not wait and so he writes his instructions. This most assuredly refers to the local church in Ephesus. The emphasis here is in order and structure in this local church.

**V15 But if I tarry long,** Paul wrote this letter just in case there was a delay in his plans. **V15b ...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself** There has to be order, or organization, a chain of command, and a policy of correct behavior for God's work to function properly. No Christian is an island unto himself, nor is anyone to do that which is right in his own sight. He wanted all to behave well when they came together as the church. There were some people in Ephesus who opposed the truth. And they taught false things. Therefore, Timothy had to tell them to stop doing so. The reference is not to Timothy's conduct but rather to the instructions which he is to give to church members.

**V15c ... in the house of God,** The church is not a building: The church is people—"the household" (*oiko*) of God representing those...

- Who believe in God and in His son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Who have committed their lives to live for Christ.
- Who have based their lives upon the promise of eternal salvation promised by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Who have committed themselves to live as a family with all other believers.

The concept of the household of God must depend upon, love, serve one another, and their task is to accomplish the Master's goals. Membership in God's household means refuge. We enjoy our Master's protection and find our identity and meaning in Him. Therefore, we will present to the unbelieving world an attractive alternative of lifestyle.

**V15d ...which is the church of the living God,** The church is "*the church of the living God.*" The word "*church*" (*ekklesia*) means an assembly, a gathering, a company of people who have been called out by God (Rom.1:6); the body of Christ (Eph.4:12). <sup>3</sup>Paul reminds the readers how God has called them out from a pagan world. This "*assembly*" of Christian people is distinct from the other assemblies of the world because the living God dwells within it (2Corth 6:16). The privilege of being called out to live in God's presence carries with it, however, the responsibility to live a life worthy of the One who has called. God's calling of the Hebrews out of Egypt into association with himself required them to be holy (Lev 11:45); and membership in the church of the living God makes the same demand (compare 1 Pet 1:15-16). God is: •The Architect •The Builder •He lives there •Provides for it •He is honored there and He rules there.

<sup>23b</sup>*Christ is head of the church: and he is the Savior of the body.* <sup>24a</sup>*...the church is subject unto Christ Eph.5:23b-24a.*

<sup>3c</sup>*And the head of Christ is God 1 Corth. 11:3c.* They are one!

The point is this:

- How are we behaving toward our Father?
- How are we behaving toward our brothers and sisters?

**V15e ...the pillar and ground of the truth.** "*The church is the pillar and ground of the truth.*" Tragically, many churches today sell truth short and are therefore left as weak pillars standing on shaky ground. The church is to support the truth, as pillars in the ground support a building. As the "supporting foundation" of the truth, the believing church is the guardian and communicator of the gospel in the world. What truth?- The glorious truth of the Incarnation –Embodiment –Manifestation—that God has loved the world and has demonstrated His love by sending His Son to save the world. This is the glorious truth that the church supports and holds ever so highly before the world. This aspect of the church also demands from believers, appropriate conduct: godly leadership, that the message might not be discredited, and corporate prayer for the missionary enterprise, that the message might be spread.

A piercing question is this: How many within the church are really supporting the truth before the world? How many are really holding up the truth by behaving and conducting themselves as they should? How many are holding up the truth by proclaiming it as they should?

Now Paul's citing of part of what was surely a well-known hymn in the course of writing instructions for behavior in the church is to bring his readers to the point of corporate response. The hymn itself, like many in the New Testament, celebrates Christ's appearance and ministry on earth. The introductory phrase is a call to consider the implications of this grand event, to evaluate our conduct on the basis of what we confess.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/1Tim/Motivation-Mystery-Godly>

**V16** The introductory words: **And without controversy** - that is, public, solemn agreement. (*Spurgeon*)-- "Without controversy means that there ought to be no controversy (argument) about these facts, though controversies have arisen concerning them, and always will, since the most self-evident truth will always find self-evident fools to contradict it."

**V16b great is the mystery of godliness:** "*Mystery*" refers to the secret or hidden things of God, revealed, made known in the gospel (Rom.16:25); it denotes the appearance of Christ in history as the hidden salvation plan of God which, conceived before time, has been revealed and fulfilled in the cross and resurrection. "*Godliness*" means piety, religion with its focus on conduct. It is the religion that the household of God confesses; the truths of salvation and righteousness in Christ, which produce holiness in believers. The "*mystery of godliness*" is Jesus Christ. He is the epitome of perfection and godliness. Consequently, this phrase the "*mystery of godliness*" forms a connection between the appearance of Christ, which the hymn celebrates, and Christian living: the mystery is the essence (the real meaning) of godliness. The mystery is now explained in the six lines of the hymn, given in three couplets which may be only part of a longer hymn. The conception of the mystery began:

1. **God was manifest in the flesh**, - God actually became a man in the person of Jesus Christ. He actually partook of flesh and blood.
2. **justified in the Spirit**, - The Spirit of God vindicated and proved His claims. How? – The Spirit of God did 3 things:
  1. The Spirit of God enabled Christ to live a sinless and perfect life.
  2. The Spirit of God vindicated Christ by giving Him the power to do the mighty works of God.
  3. The Spirit of God vindicated Christ by raising Him from the dead.
3. **seen of angels**, - They are ministering spirits of Christ who saw all that happened to Him. They were involved...
  1. in the preparation for His birth (Lk.1:26).
  2. in His birth (Lk.2:8, 13).
  3. in His temptation (Mk.1:13).
  4. in His trials (Lk.22:43).
  5. in His resurrection (Matt.28:2).
  6. in his ascension (Acts 1:10-11).
4. **preached unto the Gentiles**, - The message is preached not by angels, but by pardoned men and women who triumphantly bear witness to the redeeming grace they themselves have experienced. So mankind is sent to tell the story. Jesus is both Savior of all people and all nations, both Jew and Gentile alike.
5. **believed on in the world**, - When Christ left and ascended into heaven, there were only one hundred and twenty who were following Him and who began to share the gospel. But within fifty years every nation of the world had been touched for Christ. Thousands upon thousands had accepted Christ.
  - a. Why was the early church able to reach so many, and we seemingly, reach so few? – The answer is: belief! They truly believed on Christ; they rested their past, present, and future upon Him. They cast their souls and lives upon Him. They totally committed their lives to Him. They gave Him all they were and had.
  - b. This kind of belief is missing today. Many have a belief about Christ, that He is the Savior of the world. However, a belief about Christ is not believing in Christ. It is not turning one's life over to Him; not casting one's being—all that one is and has—upon Him. The glorious truth is that one can be saved by believing in Christ—really believing in Him.
6. **received up into glory**. – This is a reference to the ascension and exaltation of Christ. Jesus Christ had completed the great work of salvation. He has been taken back into heaven, back to the very place from which He had come. He sits at the right hand of the Father, and He shall sit upon the throne of heaven until He chooses to return to earth and bring human history to its climactic consummation.

We have just seen the conception (1-2), meaning (3-4), and conclusion (5-6) of the mystery. All of this is the great mystery of godliness now revealed to men. The purpose of this piece was to ground the reality and presence of salvation in the past, historical appearance of Christ. So the hymn concludes by alluding to the point that marked the close of Christ's earthly ministry (including resurrection appearances) and the beginning of the age of the Spirit.

<sup>4</sup>Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of these descriptions of Christian character. We trust that Jesus will transform our life according to the same character, as we put our focus on Him. We sometimes want religion to build this character in us; but truly, it is relationship with Jesus that really does it. <sup>5</sup>All through the Old Testament, God speaks about the future when Christ would come. When He came, Christ had to suffer and die for us, but nobody understood that. It was a

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm\\_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=8057&commInfo=31&topic=1%20Timothy&ar=1Ti\\_3\\_15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=8057&commInfo=31&topic=1%20Timothy&ar=1Ti_3_15)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/1tim-lbw.htm>

secret because people did not know God's plan. It had been promised that the Christ would come to save us from our sins. Now we know that the Lord Jesus has come. Jesus has done all that God had said that He would do. Therefore, the church of the living God is to proclaim that truth of God's Word building a strong church grounded upon the truth where we continually find meaning.

<sup>6</sup>John MacArthur relates the following story: There was once an old church in England. A sign on the front of the building read, "We preach Christ crucified." After some time, ivy grew up and obscured the last word. The motto now read, "We preach Christ." The ivy grew some more, and the motto read, "We preach." Finally, ivy covered the entire sign, and the church died. Such is the fate of any church that fails to carry out its mission in the world.

The truth revealed will cause the church to go forward to cause many to come into the kingdom. Paul has made things clear about Jesus to the church, now the church has to behave as the living church of God and not allow the gospel to be a mystery.

### **SUMMARY:**

As we began this lesson, prayer is the instruction Paul gives to Timothy. Pray for rulers; all men. At the time Paul wrote the letter, Nero was the ruler of the Roman Empire. Under him, Paul had been imprisoned and was soon to be executed. This shows that prayers and intercession should be made for bad as well as for good rulers. If government goes well, we will live a quiet and peaceable life which is the way our Savior God wants us to live. God wants all to be saved; that everyone would get to know the truth—that there is one God and one Mediator!

God chose the Lord Jesus to be the Mediator between God and people. He willingly took on Himself the nature of a man; yet He was without sin. Jesus offered Himself in exchange (ransom) for everyone held captive by sin, to set them all free. He came at a set time. As we come into the knowledge of the truth we must be obedient in testifying the gospel to others.

As Paul wanted to come to Timothy, there was a delay. Therefore, in his letter he writes to give instruction on how things ought to go in God's household. This Christian life is a great mystery, far exceeding our understanding, but some things are clear enough. The church of the living God is the pillar and ground of truth because by its ministry the truth is preserved and spread. As we spread the truth that God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory reveals the mystery of godliness; reveals the hidden truths of our position for the salvation and righteousness in Christ for men. The truth is called a mystery because it was, historically, hidden, until revealed in the person and work of Christ. The mystery is not something incomprehensible; it just has to be revealed (made known). The mystery God has been revealed to us to make clear the gospel, in order to save, make men godly, and give real meaning and purpose in how the church ought to behave as they spreading this News. The search for meaning depends on the truth of Jesus Christ. Believe that truth and carry it to others as someone's life depended on it!

### **APPLICATION:**

If you are searching for meaning in life, <sup>7</sup>the secret of life is Jesus going with you day-by-day, involved in everything you do, and you drawing upon His wisdom, His power, His daily forgiveness. He sets aside your guilt, cleansing you afresh, so that the Holy Spirit bears witness to your spirit, that you are justified by faith. Thus you can proceed with calmness, courage and confidence to take hold of life and deal with it in the midst of the daily pressures. Do not allow your worship to be without meaning!

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.lawofliberty.com/sermons/Resources/mysteryofgodliness.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/timothy/the-central-glory>