

Prayers for everyone 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Over the next few weeks we are focusing our sermons on the lectionary readings from 1 & 2 Timothy. 2 letters written by the apostle Paul to his friend Timothy. Found near the end of the New Testament. Do read through these 2 short letters at home to get an overall picture. Makes a difference knowing the whole rather than just sections. Listen to it on line.

Start of today's reading -

'First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone'

Prayer makes a difference!

Incredible answer to prayer. Been praying for baby Lennon on our Pew Sheet and in our prayers in church for a few months now and you will remember that we were asked to pray very specifically for him in July when he needed to have an operation.

Last Lennon was born with a hole in his heart and problems with a valve leading to the heart. His local hospital did not want to risk operating on him until he had put on more weight.

His first few months of life were spent in and out of hospital as he was very weak and the slightest infection put him in great danger.

He struggled to put on weight and doing anything was a huge effort for him.

Unfortunately, in July Lennon suffered a heart attack following complications with a chest infection. Luckily he was in hospital at the time and they managed to save him

The doctors decided that although Lennon still weighed only 10lbs they couldn't wait any longer and had to operate.

This is where our prayers became more concentrated and possibly more focused!

The operation was a success they repaired the hole in his heart and the problem with the valves leading to the heart. Within two weeks of the operation he rolled over for the first time!

His first tooth followed by his first hair cut.

At 9 months old he weighed 13lb 5oz (he had put on over 3 lb in just a few weeks) and is now going from strength to strength! 29 Aug his second tooth came through and 31 Aug he was finally strong enough to sit up for the first time.

He has just had a check up at the hospital and they are very pleased with him - next check up in 3 months time. In the meantime he is putting on weight and has been to his first toddler group

Huge thank you to everybody that has prayed for him - he should be able to live a normal life going forward. His baptism is booked for November. :)

It is easy to pray for young babies like Lennon. That is - we all have a heart to pray for them, our hearts go out to them and even if we find it difficult to know what or how to pray, our hearts are warmed to pray and we somehow find words, no matter how simple, or we come to God in the quiet of our hearts.

But Paul here is urging Timothy to pray for everyone

'I urge that prayers be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions'

Paul was writing this at a time when he, and the Jewish people were suffering dreadfully under unjust rulers. Nero was emperor who was notoriously CRUEL and demanded the persecution and execution of Jews and Christians. And here is Paul urging Timothy to pray for him and all in high positions.

Why? Because it is God our Saviour's desire that everyone be saved and come to the knowledge of His truth.

The truth of God's unconditional love and grace for ALL

The truth that Christ had given himself as a ransom for ALL

A ransom is the price that was paid to release a slave from captivity

Christ - through His death on the cross and resurrection had paid the ransom that we might be set free, saved, and come to an increasing knowledge of this truth.

The truth of God's transforming love and grace.

Last week Penny started off our teaching on 1&2 Timothy.

She was speaking on 1 Timothy 1 where Paul was reminding Timothy of the love and grace that he, Paul had experienced.

Paul wrote that 'The grace of our Lord was poured out on me (Paul) abundantly... I the worst of sinners was shown mercy'

I have asked Penny to come and just say a few words about what caused the depth of emotion within her as she was speaking to us..... Thanks Penny

Christ gave himself as a ransom for all because of God's incredible and unconditional love for us all. The love that means He desires that everyone be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. The love that is so great and transforms us as we grow into that truth.

And He calls all of us to participate in that love and care by praying for everyone

It is relatively easy to pray for those we know and love, or for small children like Lennon

It is HARD if not almost impossible sometimes, to pray for those who have harmed us in some way or for those who cause horrific harm and pain to others

It is hard to pray because we see the horrors they cause and humanly speaking we often want what we perceive to be justice for them

Think of Jonah in the Old Testament. God asked him to go to Ninevah to warn them of their wicked ways. Jonah felt they deserved all the got and so ran in the other direction rather than share the message of God's love that would in the end save them from destruction.

And yet, that is what Paul is urging Timothy to do - pray for everyone. Even Nero and the others in authority over them who caused pain and suffering

And I believe this is what we are all called to do. Difficult, sometimes impossible as it can seem

And somehow through the mystery of Christ - through prayer, our hearts are changed and become more like Christ

As we participate in God's providential care for everyone, through prayer, made possible by the mediation of Christ, our hearts and the reality in which we live, are transformed.