

2013_09_22 Pentecost 18 | Sermon (Ascension Batavia) 1 Timothy 2:1-15
Ascension Lutheran Church, Batavia IL
Pastor David Pfeiffer

Jesus Mediates Peace and Order within a Place of Prayer

Luke 14:1-14

INI

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As we continue our series from Paul's epistles to Timothy we consider that inspired word which the Holy Spirit brings to us today ...

1 Timothy 2:1–15 ¹ Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, ⁷ for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. ⁸ I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; ⁹ in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, ¹⁰ but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. ¹¹ Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. ¹² And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. ¹⁵ Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

This is the word of God.

Let us pray, O dearest Jesus, mediate this message from God to us even as You offer up our prayers to God; through Your gracious ransom. Amen.

Chaos. What comes to mind? Perhaps the events this last Monday evoke a scene of chaos in your mind. A scene that is not too far from home. A man walks into your place of work with a shotgun and opens fire. 12 unsuspecting coworkers dead. Many more wounded. A survivor is left with little more to say than, "I got lucky." Surely that Washington Naval Yard was a scene of chaos this last Monday.

Or perhaps the chaos you know goes by a different name – cancer, divorce, persecution, death. Or maybe the chaos you know has no name; a sort of pride or addiction that seems to disorder your life at every turn. Or maybe you know a chaos that is not so much evil as it is the disorder of daily life. Stress or anxiety shape your dealings with the kids when they just can't seem to leave you alone. The demands of work, home, marriage, school – take your pick – have left you pulled in more directions than you can navigate and you are left feeling alone, with no one who can help.

All you want is a little peace and order in your life.

Well, here you are. In that place we call church. Here you are – in that place where two or three are gathered together – as it says in Matthew 18 – He is here in our midst. Here we are in the presence of Jesus, our Mediator who goes between us and God, who is our ransom from all chaos, from all evil, from all sin. Where else shall we bring our disordered lives but to Him who has direct and holy access to heaven. In His name alone we lift holy hands, seeking peace and order from above. Jesus Mediates Peace and Order within a Place of Prayer.

1. Jesus mediates peace and order in society so that we might gather for prayer

Obstacles arise and will continue to arise that might prevent us from gathering in this place of prayer.

It is another Sunday morning, the Lord's day. The father of the household has offered to host. He has invited friends and family to join him, his wife, and his three little children for Sunday worship at his house. But it turns out they are not all such good friends. A false-brother has infiltrated the group. He has secretly alerted the authorities to what is going on.

The father motions for everyone to be seated in the benches that line the small room. He turns toward the altar to offer an opening prayer. As he lifts his hands toward the heavens, a team of 12 trained soldiers break through the door, and begin to grab all the men and usher them off to trial. The accusation? Unlawful assembly of Christian sectarians. It is not just another Sunday morning. This family's place of prayer has turned into a place of disorder and fear.

Is this story so far off from you? It wasn't so far off for the Apostle Paul and Timothy. Under the rule of an emperor named Nero, even in the first century, this was a very real picture that a Christian might hear of, and might even experience.

And this picture is something that is real for us too. In a country like Saudi Arabia, we could face imprisonment, lashing, deportation, and even torture for what we are doing right now. In a country like Germany, you can have your children placed in foster care simply for homeschooling them rather than enrolling them in public education.

So what does Paul call for? A revolt? Organized protest? A call for new government?

1 Timothy 2:1–4 1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

We have much for which to pray. We have much for which to give thanks. For we still live in a country where we have the right to assemble in Christ's name without fear of trial. We give thanks for a constitution that upholds this right and grants freedom to publicly speak on subjects of religion and morality – to do what we are doing right now. These governmental rights allow us to pass our flyers, to advertise, to speak from the pulpit without fear of being prosecuted. We give thanks that parents still do reserve the right to decide what education is best for their children – whether public, private Christian, or homeschool.

And what has made this possible? Why am I not standing trial facing the choice between denying my Savior or confessing the faith and facing death. Why are you still allowed to teach your children the values of Christ? Is it because we voted for the right representatives?

Psalms 146:3–6 3 Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. 4 His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; In that very day his plans perish. 5 Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the Lord his God, 6 Who made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that is in them; Who keeps truth forever.

All for the sake of Jesus. Jesus brings order to our disorder. It is not as if America has such holy hands that God watches over us. Hardly. Peace and order are granted only for the sake of His Son, Jesus, who mediates our prayers and petitions. For the sake of Jesus, who gave Himself into death as our ransom, God hears and is diligent to answer and blesses us.

2. Jesus Mediates Peace and Order in the Church

What divine peace and holy order was enjoyed by that first husband and first wife. There were no arguments in the Garden of Eden. There was this husband who would selflessly think of the needs of his wife first. There was this husband who would talk with his wife, ask her questions and listen to her answer. There was this husband who would serve his wife with love every day. Then there was this wife. There was this wife who was the perfect helper. She served him with perfect respect, wanting only to do that which would compliment his work and desires. She never exerted her ideas above his – well, that was until the forbidden fruit. There before Eve was something desirable. Something that could make her not only wiser than her husband but wiser than God Himself. This fruit would change these restrictions, this order that God has placed us under. And rather than consult the man whom she was joined to; rather than discussing this and making a united decision; she took and she ate. She then made the decision that this was good for her husband too and gave to him and he, in his foolishness, went along with it. He took and he ate.

Desire gave birth to chaos. Eve desired a wisdom that surpasses God's wisdom. Eve was deceived into thinking she could find something better, she could rise above God's design and reorder God's perfect calling. Reordering resulted in disordering.

So John writes: *1 John 2:16–17 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

And how often do we replicate the behavior of our first parents. Drawn by the lust of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life, we too oppose the divine order and distrust the divine call.

Let's take a moment to understand what this teaching of men and women's role in the Church is not.

This is not a teaching that concerns the work place or any secular activity. The "lifting of holy hands" is the posture of prayer. It is an act of the leadership in the church where we lift our prayers heavenward in Jesus name. Such a phrase has no use outside of corporate worship. The whole epistle of Paul concerns itself with the pastor Timothy's instructions to his congregation. He writes in 3:14,15 – "These things I write you you ... that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth." This teaching of the roles of men and women does not apply to the work place. By "everywhere" Paul means to

say, “every location” ... “every place where believers gather in the name of Christ” ... that is “the house of God.”

Secondly, this does not indicate utter silence as if coughing or a squeaking pew are not allowed. The translation of “silence” can be a bit misleading. Literally, it says, “let a woman learn in quietness or rest.” It is silence in contrast to noisiness. It is submission in contrast to having authority. It is rest in contrast to disruption. So the silence called for is in matters where the men are to teach or to exercise a decision of the congregation. It does not mean women cannot ask questions. It is to take a place of rest within this space where the Church is teaching and exercising authority.

Thirdly, this is not an idea construed by the early church because the men were insecure with their masculinity. God traces it back to the Garden of Eden. *v.13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve.* There in that first temptation, we find the root issue. Pride. Eve was deceived by her own pride. Rather than discussing this matter her husband, she decided to make the decision for herself. *14 And the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.*

And lastly, this is not a matter of superiority and inferiority. This is not a call of the man to put the woman in her place. The only reference to men doing anything is that they “lift up holy hands.” Men are called to do one thing, women are called to do another. No where does the Bible say – “Men, you are to put the women into subjection.”

This teaching has nothing to say of a woman’s inferiority or men’s superiority. “You are all one in Christ Jesus.” And since we are all one, the men should rightly treasure and consider women their equal – whether in a marriage or in the church. God adorns women with godliness and good works so that we might treasure these gifts. As they stitch a banner for church; as they color a card for the nursing home; as they suggest to the pastor that maybe there is a better way we could do something – this is a place of prayer. The men should steer the ship, correct. But if they refuse to listen to the woman who points out a rock ahead, whose fault is it when they are both shipwrecked.

The word ransom indicates the price of freedom has been paid. It is the language used to speak of the price of a slave being liberated. Some picture this idea of women being subject to men as a form of slavery. But in Christ this is truly a woman’s liberation. Humility is the call to freedom for every Christian. When someone refrains from dominating the teaching in Bible Class or the decision in a voters meeting – this is not the bondage of a slave; this is the freedom of one who has been called by the gospel, enlightened with its gifts, strengthened in the one true faith. Likewise, men should treat a woman accordingly. With that same humility of Christ, a woman’s help and counsel

is something to be treasured and made use of – not something to be held in bondage. A wife's submission is her calling alone – may we strengthen and honor this in our prayers.

Let the men lift up holy hands and let a woman be adorned with godliness.

Such divine peace in the Church enables us to work together; to lift up our prayers together; to humble ourselves before God's design and order the work of the gospel in a way that is most profitable.

As Paul also writes in 1 Corinthians 14 – 33 *For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. 34 Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.*

3. The goal of Jesus' mediation and our prayers are one – the salvation of all people.

Chaos may go by different names, but it really has one agenda – to distract and place obstacles in the path of God's saving grace. Perhaps it is the chaos around and within you – cancer, divorce, persecution, death; pride or addiction; stress or anxiety at the hands of a disordered and overbearing number of responsibilities. Chaos has one agenda – to prevent more souls from being saved.

The obstacles are great. All the more reason for us to find peace in God's agenda –

1 Timothy 2:4–6 4 [He] desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

Jesus placed no limitations on the sins He would die for nor on the sinner He will save. His is a ransom, a slave-freeing payment, that was given, paid, and complete for all slaves. He raised His holy hands to be pierced for you. God has cleansed you guilty hands and made holy in the blood of His Son. The Church raises holy hands and lifts your pleas toward heaven.

Find this place of peace. Bring all your chaos, all your sins, all that evil that disorders your life and lift it to God in Jesus name.

As you gather here in this place of prayer, why don't you single out just one person in your life that you think is in desperate need of this emancipation proclamation. Think of that person – maybe a close relative that has fallen away from the church; maybe a

friend that hasn't been to church since they were little; maybe a co-worker who keeps stumbling over a certain teaching of the Bible.

Such prayers please God and He works with us and in us to answer these prayers. For He has placed in your hands the holy gospel.

So let us, the Church, pray,

Oh God, who desires all people to be saved, send forth your saving word into the hearts of those for which we pray; draw them near this place of prayer by the mediation of Your Son Jesus Christ. Remember His ransom payment as You seek and save sinners like us. Keep us ever mindful and thankful of the peace and order You have granted us – both in society and in the Church. So preserve us all in your saving grace through Jesus Christ Your Son, our Mediator, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.