

This Sermon was Preached at Good Shepherd Baptist Church  
By Rev Stephen Guantai  
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Scripture: 1Timothy 2: 1-8

Message: Prayer Request in a Time of Crisis

During the time of crisis, all human beings are affected in one way or another. And they will try, by all means, to find ways and means of bringing things to normal. And everyone will react to the crisis either negatively or positively. And you all know every reaction has its own consequences.

I can give several examples here, but let me share this one. When things are not going well in a country, people will elect leaders with hope that they will bring freedom, peace, and prosperity.

This reminds me of the 1940s and 1950s when Africans were struggling to replace colonial rule with self-government. The former Ghana president, Kwame Nkrumah's famous slogan was, "Seek ye the political kingdom and all other things shall be added unto you." which of course is contrary to what Jesus Christ Himself said in Matthew 6:33, *"But seek ye the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

This way of thinking caused more chaos everywhere, because no human being or political party will ever be able to give people true peace and protection. Only God can!

It is for this very reason that today, like Paul, I'm calling each and every one of us to take our God-given responsibility of praying. Our lives depend on it. Given the situation we are in right now, we must call ourselves to mind and seek God's divine intervention through prayer, petitions, and intercession. Particularly for all the leaders of this nation irrespective of their political parties.

I don't know about you, but I'm passionate about the power of prayer. I believe that whenever believers pray, things are never the same. However, sometimes we may lose hope because some things will not just happen like magic.

In today's scripture, knowing the struggles the people were going through and the power of prayer, Paul urged Timothy and the Church to pray for all people (1Tim2: -4).

Let us briefly look what was happening in that particular time. It was around 64 A.D or 65 A.D when there was a crisis in both religious and political areas. The church struggling with false teachings, and politically, all people were living at a critical time under the cruel, ruthless rule of the notorious Roman emperor Nero (54 A.D to 68A.D).

History tells us emperor Nero did unimaginable things, such as murdering his own mother, killing his first wife, marrying his step sister and causing the Great Fire of Rome. Nero blamed Christians for it. I guess he was able to do these things because he was surrounded by political leaders who lack moral character and who were corrupt just like him.

So, Paul wrote this letter to Timothy and the Church at Ephesus to give them clear and practical instructions that would perhaps help them deal with those challenges. He asked them to pray and intercede for all people; that all may be saved and come to a knowledge of truth.

You all know that one of the problems we are facing today is lack of truth telling. But remember, truth cannot be hidden forever beneath evil. Let me put my rant briefly using an African proverb that says, "The words you say to tell the truth are as important as the decision to be truthful."

This is why I'm calling each one of us to take some time and intercede for what is going on right now, especially in this country.

Let me say something about intercessory prayer- in most cases this is where we fail in prayer for others by praying in a spirit of judgment, self-righteousness, or condemnation. We don't even think about what we are asking God, we just say what comes out of our mouth. But what I have learned is that prayer needs more than that. It calls for the spirit of gratitude, if not for anything else, because God loves us and has enabled us to be who we are today.

Again, I'm not saying this lightly, because I know, like me, many of you have been hurt by the very people we are asked to pray for. I must confess that it's not easy to pray a blessing upon those who have caused us pain. But that is exactly what prayer of intercessory is all about!

This reminds me of one of my favorite Swahili songs by a Kenyan artist Rev. Peace Mulu, " that says "Ombea Adui Yako - Aishi Miaka Mingi-lli unapobarikiwa, ajionee kwa macho." Translated: "Pray for Your Enemy- to live a long life so when you are blessed, he will see with his own eyes." I listened to this song when I was in a state of devastation, and I want to tell you that the day I obeyed the word of God, forgave, and started praying for all the people who tried their level best to destroy my life, that's when I started experiencing sense of healing and peace and I'm continuing to see the hand of God working. This is to say, as Mother Teresa once said, "Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts."

My brothers and my sisters, perhaps there is someone in your life who has caused you pain in one way or another. Open your heart and pray for them, and see what God is going to do.

Even after urging Timothy and the Church to pray for all people Paul goes on to be specific: he asked them to pray similar prayer for all those in authority, from the president to the senate, house of representatives, to the governors, judges, prosecutors, sheriffs, council members and all local leaders; So “that people may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” 1Tim 2:2b.

If you read 1 Timothy 2:8, you will notice Paul is asking for something people normally do not pay attention to; he asked them and I believe he is asking today’s believers “*everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.*” (1Tim 2:8).

It’s very easy to pray an angry prayer, especially when the people we trusted fail us. If we want our prayers to be answered, let us pray with the spirit of love and kindness. For that is what will please God.

The writer of Psalm 33:12 reminds us, “*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He chose for His inheritance: And in Isaiah 33: 6 that “He will be their stability of your times, a wealth of Salvation, wisdom, and knowledge.”*

Therefore, let us continue praying in confident hope and in the spirit of love knowing that all things are possible for those who trust in the Lord. **Amen.**