

Evangelistic Prayer

Family of Faith, 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Introduction

- Harley-Davidson has become one of the largest motorcycle manufacturers in the world, but it hasn't happened without some major challenges. When Richard Teerlink became their chief financial officer in 1981, the company had just reported \$15 million loss with a U.S. market share of 15%. When Teerlink became the CEO in 1989, he focused the company's efforts on increasing quality and improving customer service. At the end of Teerlink's tenure in 1997, Harley-Davidson had recaptured 50% of the U.S. market share and posted annual sales of more than \$1.7 billion. The story of Harley-Davidson's turnaround is inspiring, but it's not unique. There are other companies, non-profits, & even churches that find a way to recover their lost vitality.
- Paul sent Timothy to Ephesus for a similar recovery mission
 - The church in Ephesus had started off with a bang in Acts 18 - powerful evangelism, dynamic discipleship, a city-wide riot!
 - But the church was in bad shape when Timothy arrived.
 - False teachers were obscuring the gospel.
 - Women were using their newfound freedom in Christ to disrupt worship services (as we'll hear more about next week with Jared Barham)
 - Their benevolence ministry was overrun by people taking advantage of it.
- I don't know if you ever think about this stuff, but where would you start if it were you?
 - Paul tells Timothy to start somewhere surprising (*Read passage*)
 - "First of all, then," introduces the first item of business.
 - He was to lead out in evangelistic prayer
 - When we read this passage with similar goals in mind, a revitalization principle appears: **The church should pray for the salvation of all people.**
 - That means renewal is linked to prayer.
 - And not just general prayer, but evangelistic prayer
 - It's hard to pray about something without getting involved in it.
- These 7 verses give us 1 explanation about what evangelistic prayer is, and 4 reasons why evangelistic prayer is so important.
- May they help us recover our own lost vitality here at Northside.

Body

I. Evangelistic prayer is all-inclusive. (v. 1-2)

- A. Have you ever been on an all-inclusive vacation? You pay one price, and everything is included – the lodging, the meals, the drinks, the activities, the entertainment. In most cases, even the taxes and gratuities are included.
 1. As we've talked in previous messages, false teachers in Ephesus were distorting the gospel message.
 2. Their bad theology was affecting their prayer & evangelism.
 3. They only prayed for & shared the gospel with a select group of people.
- B. Paul uses 4 words here to describe prayer, but there's a bigger focus.
 1. "Entreaties/prayer" an earnest appeal/a reverent petition

2. "Petitions/thanksgivings" – a formal request/an expression of gratitude
- C. The focus here is on "all" - Paul uses the word "all" 4 times throughout.
 1. Prayer should be offered for all people and all leaders. (Even Gentiles)
 2. God desires all to be saved, and Christ died for all people.

II. Evangelistic prayer is good, and it pleases God. (v. 3)

- A. There's lot of kinds of prayer out there: The Thesaurus Prayer, The King James Dramatic Prayer, The Drive-Through Order Prayer, Break-Glass-in-Case-of-Emergency Prayer, and The Hide-and-Seek Prayer
- B. Praying for the lost is morally positive and brings a smile to God's face.

III. Evangelistic prayer aligns with God's will. (v. 4)

- A. God's desire – His will – is for everyone to be saved.
 1. God doesn't force His will on people – He could, but He doesn't.
 2. Instead, He takes the initiative & leads people to a response.
 3. It's not our job to make the decision for someone by refusing to pray for them or failing to share the gospel with them.
- B. The Lord's Prayer teaches us to pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is done in heaven. (Lk 11:2-4)

IV. Evangelistic prayer focuses on the value of Christ's word. (v. 5-6)

- A. A mediator is someone who brings conflicting parties into agreement.
- B. Jesus bridged the gap between us & God with His own life.
- C. Once again, the focus is on "all" – "He gave Himself a ransom for all"
 1. In this context, "ransom" means *payment* – a payment to make us free!
 2. His payment was sufficient for, but efficient (effective) for, some.
- D. We talk about what we value; It's not hard to get you to talk about your grandkid?

V. Evangelistic prayer is part of the Great Commission (v. 7).

- A. Paul was appointed as a preacher, apostle, & teacher - to the Gentiles.
 1. These were the "far from God" people of Paul's day.
 2. It was God's idea, not Paul's idea.
- B. Some are called to vocational evangelism, & some have the gift of evangelism, but all believers are called to bring people to the knowledge of the truth.
- C. Here's an uncomfortable truth: If you don't care for someone enough to pray for them, you'll probably never share the gospel with them.

Conclusion

- With that said, we've come to the end of our reasons for evangelistic prayer.
 - Evangelistic prayer is calling out to God on behalf of someone who is lost.
 - Evangelistic prayer is calling out to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers.
- I want to close by inviting everyone here to response with a time of prayer because **the church should pray for the salvation of all people.**
 - You can come forward and pray, or you can stay in your seat
 - Wherever you are, I want you to pray for 1 of 3 things:
 - Pray for a lost person you know
 - Pray for the Lord to send out more witnesses
 - Pray for yourself, that you would be more sensitive to the gospel.