

## 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-4

### CHANGING THE GOVERNMENT, ONE PRAYER AT A TIME

“I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”<sup>1</sup>

Apparently, one of the most difficult commands of all Scripture is that which commands Christians to pray for “all who are in high positions.” At least, that is the obvious conclusion, if the paucity of public prayers for government officials, or even prayers for those who direct our great corporations and businesses, is any indication. Perhaps we fail to pray for such people because we have become so clearly polarised politically, attributing unworthy motives to those with whom we disagree.

Though I do not suggest withdrawal from the political process, I must remind the people of God that though we are not of the world, we are nevertheless in the world. We are responsible to live in such a way that we serve as salt in a decaying world and as light in the midst of a darkened world. It is our presence as Christians that delays the progress of moral and ethical rot through righteous lives and through exercising godly discernment as we participate in the selection of national, provincial and municipal leaders. We reveal the grace of God through holy and godly lives that reflect the love of God and we thus create a desire for goodness in others who witness our righteous demeanour.

The message this day seeks to lay a foundation for “religious liberty.” Religious liberty is the doctrine that asserts mankind’s freedom to worship according to the dictates of the heart—a freedom the state is charged to protect. The tendency in recent years appears to witness states intruding ever more deeply into the realm of the Faith, seeking to compel agreement with and practise of an unspoken, though nevertheless very real, state religion of niceness and quiet tolerance of every deviant behaviour. Addressing the Southern Baptist Convention, the former American Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, spoke of the necessity to protect religious freedom. Ms. Rice stated her conviction that “people everywhere are entitled to religious liberty.” Later, she followed that statement with the affirmation that “government simply has no right to stand between the individual, and the Almighty.”<sup>2</sup> Each true Baptist would utter a hearty “Amen.”

How may we change the situation in which we find ourselves? How can we transform government, assuring freedom to worship as we believe right? The answer provided in Scripture gives no comfort to those who wish to organise a noisy march or a raucous demonstration; the answer given in the Word of God debars us from even imagining that we can castigate government or speak ill of those who give their time to direct the affairs of state. Instead, what we discover in Scripture is that we are responsible to change government—one prayer at a time.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup> “Gregory Tomlin, “Moral leadership needed to confront evil, spread liberty, Rice tells SBC messengers,” Jun 14, 2006, Baptist Press, <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=23463>, accessed 21 August 2011

**THE SCOPE OF THE TEACHING** —Paul urges us as Christians to offer up “supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings ... for all people.” The scope of his plea is as broad as humanity itself, saints as well as sinners. That this is the will of God should be no surprise since God gave each of us our life and our being; and God has provided salvation for all who receive the sacrifice of Christ the Lord. This is in accord with the Scriptures that teach us that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” [JOHN 3:16].

The opening words of the text—“first of all”—indicates that prayer is vital in the program and purpose of a church. Tragically, prayer appears to be an afterthought in the churches of this day. We no longer depend on prayer. When there is a need in the church, we announce the need and ask for volunteers or for contributions; but we no longer look heavenward to find the mind of the Master. A saying that once was common among the churches warned, “No prayer, no power.” That could well be applied to the life of churches today. If I announce a potluck meal, the church will be full; however, if I should announce a prayer meeting for the church, I will be fortunate if the elders attend.

Paul adds the adverb “then,” thus providing continuity by drawing attention to the matters he had already addressed. He has already encouraged Timothy to stand firm, resisting error, and especially to present in all its glory and clarity the message of God’s Good News in Jesus Christ. As a primary means of accomplishing this responsibility, the Apostle urges “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings.” It is fair to state that in the mind of the Apostle, prayer is a primary—if not *the* primary—means of advancing the cause of Christ and in resisting error. The congregation that is not marked by prayer is susceptible to every sort of error and whether there is a large attendance or few members in attendance, that congregation will never enjoy sustained success as they seek to fulfil the call of Christ in the life of the assembly.

The prayers of the church must be offered up for all people. These prayers must include high and low. Both the Emperor in his power and the slave in his helplessness were included in the sweep of the gospel. Both the philosopher in his wisdom and the simple man in his ignorance need the grace and truth that the gospel can bring. Within the gospel, there are no class distinctions. King and commoner, rich and poor, aristocrat and peasant, master and slave are all included in its limitless embrace. In the same way, our prayers must be non-discriminatory as we seek good for all people.

Prayer must include good and bad. Barclay rightly observed that “A strange malady has sometimes afflicted the Church in modern times, causing it to insist that a man be respectable before he is allowed in, and to look askance at sinners who seek entry to its doors. But the New Testament is clear that the Church exists, not only to edify the good, but also to welcome and save the sinner. C. T. Studd used to repeat four lines of doggerel:

‘Some want to live within the sound  
of Church or Chapel bell;  
I want to run a rescue shop  
within a yard of hell.’<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> William Barclay, **The Daily Study Bible: The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon** (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, PA 1975) 56

The church's praying ought to include: (1) **supplications**, which means telling God our needs; (2) **prayers**, meaning worship and adoration; (3) **intercessions**, which involves requests on the behalf of others; and (4) **thanksgivings**, or expressions of appreciation for what God has done. These words for the prayers of God's people are the same as those found in **PHILIPPIANS 4:6** and frequently throughout the New Testament, with the exception of **intercessions**, which appears only here and in **1 TIMOTHY 4:5**.

The Apostle is not enjoining separate categories of prayer to be offered within the congregation, but rather that he is instructing Christians to be conscientious in praying. The multiple synonyms serve to emphasise the importance of praying. The initial term in this list of synonyms for prayer distinguishes the element of insufficiency by the requester, the second highlights devotion by the seeker, and the third underscores the childlike confidence of the petitioner.<sup>4</sup> All this must be suffused with thanksgiving for all that the Master has done and for all that He is expected yet to do.

The local church does not pray because it is expected of the people of God (although it is expected of His holy people); the church is commanded to pray because prayer is vital to her life. In Scripture, we learn that the Holy Spirit works in the church through prayer and through the Word of God [**EPHESIANS 3:20, 21; 1 THESSALONIANS 2:13**]. The congregation that will know the power of God must seek sound doctrine and it must be a praying congregation. The church that prays will have power and will make a lasting impact for Christ. Consequently, the church that does not pray will have scant power with God and little progress against the siren allure of the world. Therefore, the church must pray, and especially must the church pray for civic leaders.

It is necessary to observe that beyond the immediate text, Paul lays down three conditions for the public praying in the local church: (1) "without anger or quarrelling"—loving one another; (2) with "holy hands"—marked by clean, obedient lives; and (3) in faith. Moreover, **the men of the congregation are to take the lead in the prayer ministry** of the church. I make the dismaying observation that though we are prone to "say prayers," few of us know anything about prevailing prayer? Though we tolerate prayers in the public services of the church, we do not know much about praying for all people.

I suppose it is necessary to remind you that the text is not condoning the cult of spiritual nudity, as people bare their souls in a misplaced bid for pity or titillation. God is not calling us to drop every morsel of juicy gossip as a "prayer request." He is, however, stressing the need to learn dependence upon the Living God for our relationship with one another, for our relationships with outsiders, and for our ministry within the world.

We must become a people of prayer. If we will please the Lord Christ, we must learn dependence upon Him and upon His power. Instead of flinging a plea heavenward when we feel the need, giving a feeble tap at Heaven's gate, we must work at becoming a people known for persistently knocking at the door of Heaven until our pleas are heard and we have received power and mercy for all that the Master calls us to accomplish. Until each of our loved ones is saved, and until our colleagues are serving the Master, we have great needs for which we can pray. Until we know the presence of the Holy One in each service and until our services are marked by holy unction, we need to pray.

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<sup>4</sup> See Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, New **American Commentary: 1, 2 Timothy, Titus** (Broadman & Holman, Nashville, TN 1992) 86

**THE FOCUS OF THE TEACHING** — Having established the need to be prayerful and thankful as God’s holy people, and having also demonstrated that the scope of our requests and the expression of our gratitude should be for all people, the Apostle focuses our prayers on “kings and all who are in high positions.” Though we should pray for all people, prayers that include everyone in a non-specific manner actually include no one.

Paul does not permit us to wander aimlessly through the hallowed halls of prayer, but instead, he compels us to focus our requests on the needs of those for whom it is sometimes hardest to pray. Prayer for those in authority can be difficult because government leaders are frequently distant from our lives. Politicians and bureaucrats are often detached from the everyday reality of the life of those they govern. Consequently, we fail to pray for them because we don’t really know what they are thinking or because we don’t really believe it will do any good. Underneath, we are too often disgusted with the arrogance displayed by those in power at the various levels of government.

However, the Word of God teaches that we are not only to seek good for those who are our leaders, but we are to pray for these individuals because we benefit as God blesses those same leaders. **VERSE TWO** suggests that prayer helps to maintain the peace of society. As Christians pray for leaders in government, God overrules wicked men and protects His churches from their evil. This is a neglected benefit of prayer, one that we doubtless take for granted in our day. Because of our failure to pray for government leaders, the future of our nation is jeopardised. When Paul writes that we are to pray for kings, you need to know that this included Nero who was emperor at that time and who had already set fire to Rome and laid it on the Christians whom he was also persecuting.

Paul implies that Christians must pray that their leaders will have the knowledge needed to guide them—freedom from anarchy, persecution and economic hardship can facilitate the spread of the gospel. Wise rulers can provide sound, solid leadership to accomplish these goals. Paul was not merely requesting that Christians pray for the conversion of their leaders, although this was at least a part of the prayer. Our prayers for government leaders should include thanksgivings for those decisions that facilitate the spread of Christianity and requests for wisdom in making important decisions.

An example of a great prayer offered for a bad leader was penned by Clement of Rome. This prayer was written about A.D. 90 when the savagery of Domitian was still fresh in men’s minds. “You, Master, have given [civic leaders] the power of sovereignty through your majestic and inexpressible might, so that we acknowledging the glory and honor which you have given them, may be subject to them resisting your will in nothing. Grant to them, Lord, health, peace, harmony, and stability, that they may blamelessly administer the government which you have given them. For you, heavenly Master, King of the ages, give to the sons of men glory and honor and authority over those upon the earth. Lord, direct their plans according to what is good and pleasing in your sight, so that by devoutly administering in peace and gentleness the authority which you have given them they may experience your mercy. You, who alone are able to do these and even greater good things for us, we praise through the high priest and guardian of our souls, Jesus Christ, through whom be the glory and the majesty to you both now and for all generations and for ever and ever. Amen.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> **1 Clement 61**, in Michael William Holmes, **The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations** (Baker, Grand Rapids, MI 1999) 99

The apostolic churches regarded it as a bounden duty to pray for those who were set in authority over them, and brought even their persecutors before the throne of grace. Even so, we who name the Name of Christ today are responsible to pray for all people, and especially are we to pray for those in authority.

Seeking God's blessing on our leaders is the natural expression of confidence both in God's sovereignty and in His mercy. Government and those who govern are divine gifts, though fallen mankind is prone to contaminate every good and perfect gift. We know that "there is no authority except from God" [ROMANS 13:1b]. Though at a given moment a reigning government may be more or less honourable, no government can long continue without divine permission. To seek good for those who govern our land is to honour God through honouring the office that He has established.

**THE PURPOSE OF THE TEACHING** — We pray for those in authority so "that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way." Moreover, we pray for those in authority because God "desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." These two concepts are not as different as we might suppose. Our first responsibility as Christians is to glorify God; and we do that through turning others to righteousness.

The benefits that accrue from God's blessing poured out on government leaders is sufficiently important that we are obligated to pause in order that we may consider what the Apostle has written. As is undoubtedly true for each Christian, Paul valued "a peaceful and quiet life." However, the Apostle may not have intended us to imagine that this quiet life should be free of all conflict. Certainly, the Apostle did not anticipate that followers of the Master would live a life free of persecution.

Recall that he invited his protégé, Timothy, to "share in suffering for the gospel" [2 TIMOTHY 1:8]. Later, in that same letter, the Apostle asserts that "all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" [2 TIMOTHY 3:12]. The conscientious child of God can anticipate persecution because he is a Christian. However, it should be the desire of each believer to lead a life marked by peace and by quietude. When persecution comes, as it must, the child of God must know that even during severe persecution and at times of great opposition, the Faith of Christ the Lord has spread rapidly and widely because of the gracious witness given by dynamic Christians.

In 1 THESSALONIANS 4:11, 12 the Apostle urged the Thessalonian believers to aspire to live a quiet life in such a manner that they merit the respect of unbelievers. It is incontrovertible that the will of God is for His people to live in such a way that peace—calmness and serenity—marks their lives. Throughout the Word of God, we are urged to make every effort to enjoy an orderly life as a Community of Faith instead of surrendering to the chaos that characterises sin [e.g. ROMANS 12:16a; COLOSSIANS 3:14].

Lea and Griffin suggest that strife and discord in the church Timothy pastored may have caused outsiders to scoff at the religion of the Ephesian Christians. If their supposition is correct—as seems plausible or even probable—they point out a situation that tragically persists among the churches to this day. Should they be correct, it would mean that Paul wanted his readers to live an orderly life free of strife and discord so as to convince unbelievers that Christianity was worthy of their attention.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Lea and Griffin, op. cit. 88

It is an unfortunate fact the reputation of a combative spirit exhibited within a congregation can so taint the reputation of the saints that it will require more than a generation to reverse the prevailing perception of pious pugnacity. The stench of petulant pugnacity will linger far beyond the lifetime of the initial combatants. In the same way, we should think of the impact on outsiders who may be observing our life as a congregation when we demand our own way and anathematise those who share our worship of the True and Living God. We are convinced that so many of the fights we initiate and perpetuate actually address vital matters, when they are but petty feuds that promote our own personal interests. Unity in the Faith should be our goal, instead of trying to have our own way in matters and to impose our own will on others.

What does it mean, then, for Christians to lead “a peaceful and quiet life?” The two adjectives are synonyms, both referring to a life that is calm, serene, orderly and peaceful. This worthy aspiration of each of us as Christians is tied to the ultimate goal of our prayers for civic leaders—we seek to live in a land that permits us to worship according to the dictates of our own conscience. We are not self-centred when we are altruistic in our prayers. This is because we know that only within an ordered society are we free to fulfil our God-given responsibilities without hindrance.

The “peaceful and quiet life” we are called to exhibit as followers of the Lord Christ will of necessity also be characterised as “godly and dignified.” The life of a Christian should exhibit confidence in the One who saved him or her, even as that one moves with determination toward the goal of honouring God in all things. Underscore in your mind the thought that God values a life that is orderly and peaceful. So, our prayers seeking God’s blessing for those in authority are tied to our earnest longing to be a good people. Our prayers are ultimately tied to the lives we live. This is a vital point that bears repeating—our prayers are ultimately tied to the lives we live.

The terms “peaceful” and “quiet” refer to the behaviour of believers. Similarly, the terms that follow—“godly” and “dignified”—obviously refer to our behaviour. Our life-styles display the reality of our faith. To be godly involves a proper respect for God, and dignity demands a serious and earnest life-style before observers, even observers who are hostile. To be godly is to respect God, treating Him with the reverence due His Holy Name. To be godly is to take worship seriously, refusing to surrender to the spirit of the age that insists that we must be “free” to do our own thing instead of serving God. To be godly is to honour God through giving Him first place in our lives. The godly person takes seriously the admonition of Jesus that teaches those who would follow Him to “seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness” [MATTHEW 6:33], instead of seeking “first” our own comfort and our own desires.

“Dignified” is translated from the Greek word *semnotēs*, which is somewhat difficult to translate into English. One scholar, defining the dignified individual, says he “Has a grace and dignity not lent him from earth; but which he owes to that higher citizenship which is also his; being one who inspires not respect only, but reverence and worship.”<sup>7</sup> For the dignified person, all life is one continuous act of worship. When Christians are dignified, they realise that all life is lived in the presence of God. When we are dignified, we move through the world as if it was the Temple of God. The godly and dignified individual never forgets the holiness of God or the dignity of man.

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<sup>7</sup> Richard Chenevix Trench, **Synonyms of the New Testament** (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI 1880), 346

During the past decade in particular, we have observed a disturbing trend in western society. Seventeen men and boys were arrested and charged with plotting terror bombings in Ontario.<sup>8</sup> Shortly after these arrests, authorities in the United States announced the pre-emptive arrest of seven individuals plotting war against the United States, beginning with the destruction of the Sears Tower in Chicago.<sup>9</sup> In Holland, twelve men were arrested for plotting terror attacks.<sup>10</sup> Another US soldier was arrested for planning an attack on fellow soldiers at Fort Hood, Texas.<sup>11</sup> Two men were arrested for plotting an attack on a US military recruiting station.<sup>12</sup> As was true of the individuals who perpetuated the co-ordinated bombings in Great Britain and Spain, these individuals were for the most part citizens of their respective countries. In each instance, these angry men were apparently prepared to destroy their own governments. They obviously had no respect for the governments under which they lived or for the freedoms afforded by those governments.

The arrests mentioned represent only a tiny sampling of an ongoing series of incidents throughout the world in which individuals identified with one particular religion that presents itself as a religion of peace, have slaughtered innocent people and sought to topple governments. Economic status and social standing seem not to be factors in driving the terrorists to destroy and rebel, but rather the common tie in each instance is the unspoken adherence to one particular religion that knows nothing of righteousness.

If those arrested all held membership in Baptist churches, we might reasonably conclude that there was something in the teaching Baptists received each Sunday that disposed them to attempt to kill or to endeavour to injure their neighbours. If those who carried out terror raids were all Presbyterians, we might correctly assume that something within the Reformed Faith motivated adherents to maim and kill innocent people. However, in every instance, those accused of or identified as participating in these terrorists attacks or in planned terrorist acts have been religiously motivated. However, the world is deliberately blind to the religious underpinnings of their violence.

Police chiefs and politicians of all stripes and at all levels of government rush to assure citizens that the adherents of this religion are peaceful people and that the continuing production of violent individuals is not the result of religious persuasion. We are assured that these religiously-motivated attacks against western governments are aberrations. However, one's religion must either produce respect for government, or it must create resistance to government. Either religion recognises government as a force for good, or religion must set itself in opposition to government.

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<sup>8</sup> **15 of 17 Ontario terror suspects appear in court,**

[http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20060604/terrorists\\_court\\_060604/20060604?hub=Canada](http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20060604/terrorists_court_060604/20060604?hub=Canada), 4 June, 2006, accessed 4 June 2006

<sup>9</sup> **FBI: Terror Suspects Sought to Form Own Army,**

[http://wcbstv.com/topstories/topstories\\_story\\_173192838.html](http://wcbstv.com/topstories/topstories_story_173192838.html), 24 June, 2006, accessed 27 June, 2006

<sup>10</sup> "Holland: 12 Muslims Arrested for Plotting Imminent Jihadi Terror Attack,"

[http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas\\_shrugs/2010/12/holland-12-muslims-arrested-for-plotting-imminent-jihadi-terror-attack.html](http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas_shrugs/2010/12/holland-12-muslims-arrested-for-plotting-imminent-jihadi-terror-attack.html), accessed 17 August, 2011

<sup>11</sup> "AWOL Muslim Soldier Arrested for Plotting Attack on Ft. Hood,"

<http://thedaleygator.wordpress.com/2011/07/28/awol-muslim-soldier-arrested-for-plotting-attack-on-ft-hood/>, accessed 17 August, 2011

<sup>12</sup> "Suspects in Seattle military attack plot angry over Iraq, Afghanistan,"

<http://www.king5.com/news/local/Seattle-men-arrested-for-plotted-attack-on-military-recruiting-station-124439589.html>, accessed 17 August, 2011

The reason there is no concerted effort among Catholics to overthrow the government, and the reason there are no significant numbers of Presbyterians plotting harm to those who do not share their faith, and the reason there is not a general movement among Baptists to assault the institutions of society, and the reason Charismatic worshippers are not agitating to storm the Bastille, is that we share a common faith that teaches us to glorify Christ the Lord through obedience to His commands. The Prince of Peace has taught those who follow Him to honour those whom He has placed in authority. More than that, we are taught to give thanks for those who lead us and to pray for their welfare, asking that God will grant them wisdom so that we will be permitted to continue to worship in peace.

The neglected corollary no doubt results because we Christians have adopted a *laissez faire* attitude toward our world. Nevertheless, we are charged to seek the salvation of “all people”; yet, churches too often turn from this great task to dabble in such things as teaching people to raise better hogs or to organise some noisy march. Our prayer for “all people” is that they will come to faith in the Son of God. Convinced by the Word, we Baptists can never coerce or compel the conscience of another person.

Though we solemnly plead with people to believe the message of life, and though we carefully marshal our arguments to persuade people to believe, our conscience will never permit us to force anyone to agree with us that Christ is the Saviour of the world. In **VERSE THREE** Paul states that “this is good.” The antecedent of “this” is the reference to prayer for all people in the first verse. Paul attests that God is pleased to see believers earnestly concerned for the salvation of all humankind and not simply for an elitist group. The knowledge that such prayer pleases God provides a powerful incentive to pray.

In the **THIRD VERSE**, Paul describes God as “our Saviour” because he was dealing with the matter of salvation in the verses that follow. His use of this phrase attests that God is the author of salvation [e.g. **1 THESSALONIANS 5:9**], and that Paul and his readers had experienced the divine gift of life in Christ Jesus. Salvation leads to concern for the lost. The absence of concern for the lost may well be evidence that though we are religious, we know nothing of the grace of God. If we are not serious enough to pray for the salvation of others, we should question whether we have known the salvation of the Lord.

What is God’s will? For one thing, God wills the salvation of lost souls. Christians pray for “all people” because it is God’s will that “all people” come to the knowledge of the truth through faith in Jesus Christ. Among the best-loved verses of the Bible is that one which teaches us that “God ... loved the world” [**JOHN 3:16**]. Related to this is the teaching that Christ died for the whole world [**1 JOHN 2:2; 4:14**]. The Son of God provided His life as a sacrifice that He might draw “all people” to salvation [**JOHN 12:32**]. “This does not mean all people without *exception*, for certainly the whole world is not going to be saved. It means all people without *distinction*—Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, religious and pagan.”<sup>13</sup>

I am reminded of the story of a wee lass who sought baptism and membership in a country church. The elders questioned the child in a perfunctory manner, but they were not inclined to believe that such a young person could actually understand what it meant to be saved. So, they solemnly announced that they were prepared to recommend to the congregation that baptism and membership in the church be delayed for the child.

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<sup>13</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, **The Bible Exposition Commentary: Volume 2** (Victor Books, Wheaton, IL 1989) 216



With that decision, the little girl began to weep. As tears began to flow down her cheeks and she tried to stifle the sobs that broke from her chest, one of the elders, perhaps embarrassed that their decision had distressed the child, attempted to console the lass. “Child, you’ll be grown up soon enough and then you can be baptised and join the church.”

The child responded to the elder’s effort at consolation by saying, “Oh, sir, I’m not crying because I cannot be baptised; I know that I’ll be a woman one day. But, I’m crying because my friend is not saved; and I’m weeping for my friend.”

The Pastor of that congregation, overhearing this exchange, intervened to say, “Gentlemen, I recommend that we reconsider our decision. If this child is thus concerned for her friend, does that not show the heart of the Saviour?”

Are you concerned for the salvation of the lost? When did you last weep because your friend was lost? When did you last find yourself disturbed as result of your own lethargy though your loved ones were outside the life of Christ? When did you last pray for the salvation of the lost? There is need for a revival among the churches of our Lord, and the revival needs to begin with us. I need to heed the teaching of the Word to seek the salvation of the lost; and until I seek the peace of Christ for my nation, I am not serious about the lost.

The message concludes with a call to the people of God to commit themselves to prayer. Specifically, the message calls for God’s people to pray for those in authority. Let us, as His holy people, commit ourselves to pray for national and provincial and municipal leaders, seeking God’s richest blessing on their lives and especially as they perform their duties. Let us do this so that we may enjoy a peaceful and quiet life and so that we may be marked with godliness and dignity in the conduct of our lives.

For those who have yet to be saved, heed this offer of life in the Beloved Son. The Word of God boldly promises, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” That passage continues by asserting, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” [**ROMANS 10:9, 10, 13**].

And that is our invitation to you—to believe this message of life and to be set free from all condemnation. Believe that Christ died for your sin and that He rose for you justification. Believe and be saved, even now. Amen.