*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

February 28 – March 5

Letters of Paul

**Monday, February 28 1 Timothy 2:1-7**

“There is one God and one Mediator”

 God’s concern for people is comprehensive, and his being the one God is both exclusive and inclusive. It is *exclusive* in the sense that there is no other God. He is the only God, with no competitors other than in the imagination of the ungodly. *Inclusively,* he invites all people to accept him as their God and Savior. God created us for a purpose: to live in relationship with him, one in which he loves us and, in response, we love him.

 This being the case, there is only one Mediator. Old and New Testaments show the need for mediation between the holy God and sinful people. Jesus Christ is prophet, priest, and king. Especially in his priestly role, being both divine and human, and offering himself as the sacrifice in our place so our sin would not result in our eternal separation from God, he is the only one qualified to be a Mediator. He gave himself as a ransom, that is, he purchased our freedom from bondage to sin’s captivity by giving himself up in death. He did this on behalf of all people, and all who accept him as their Mediator, as their ransom, are forever reconciled to the one God.

*You died for me, Lord, purchasing my freedom from sin’s bondage. Amen.*

**Tuesday, March 1 1 Timothy 2:8-10**

“Attitude and behavior in the church”

 In the previous verses, Paul gave instructions concerning the content of prayer. Now his teaching relates to the manner of praying, that is, with attitude and appearance. Those who have been instructed to pray for people in authority for the sake of enjoying peaceful and quiet lives should themselves pray without argumentation. Paul instructs the believers to pray in the customary Jewish manner, with hands uplifted, and those hands should belong to believers whose lives are consistent with God’s holiness.

 In Greco-Roman culture, while the way a man dressed reflected much about his social standing, how a woman dressed reflected much about her moral character. In Paul’s day, lavish dress, hair style, and jewelry were considered inconsistent with moral uprightness and true piety. Paul is asking that their outward appearance be consistent with their inner character. Thus, Christian women were to dress modestly. Instead of relying on outward appearance in order to be considered attractive, they will make themselves attractive by their good deeds.

*Our good deeds, Lord, make us attractive to the non-Christian world. Amen.*

**Wednesday, March 2 1 Timothy 2:11-15**

“With regard to women in the church”

 The vocabulary, grammar, and structure of theses five verses need to be seen in the context of their placement in chapter 2. They deal with the importance of leading “peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (verse 2), not only as a blessing for Christians but in reaching non-Christians. This agrees with the general tone and goal of Paul’s two letters to Timothy in which Paul intends for Timothy to follow his practices.

 Paul’s instructions are consistent with ancient culture, Jewish and Gentile, that regarded it as immoral for women to transcend certain public restrictions. His teaching would not have been surprising to either Jews or Greeks, since neither culture permitted women to teach or exercise authority over men. Paul had a missionary purpose for asking women to follow cultural restrictions, as in 1 Corinthians 9:20, where he “became like one under the law . . . so as to win those under the law.” While believers are free in Christ, we are willing to restrict our freedom for the sake of non-believers being attracted to the gospel.

*May I live in such a way, Lord, that others are attracted to you. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

February 28 – March 5

Letters of Paul

**Thursday, March 3 1 Timothy 3:1-7**

“With regard to leaders in the church”

 The church in Ephesus was troubled by those who taught error and, in at least some cases, lived immorally. In chapter 1 Paul urged Timothy both to teach truth and to live a life consistent with those teachings. In chapter 2 he stressed the importance of conduct that befits God’s truth on the part of both men and women. Now Paul takes another step to address the problem of false and immoral teachings by ensuring that the church has leaders who are morally qualified and above reproach.

 Before he lists the qualifications for leaders, Paul affirms the importance of their work. Those who desire to serve in this way aspire to a noble task. Then, in verses 2-7 Paul sets out some significant moral requirements for leaders. His concern that leaders be above reproach, that is, not open to accusation, is spelled out in the following instructions, which do not describe a person totally without sin, but one morally careful and responsible. For leaders to be above reproach is important in the church, but is also crucial for the church’s witness in the world.

*May our church leaders’ lives, Lord, be consistent with the positions they hold. Amen.*

**Friday, March 4 1 Timothy 3:8-13**

“With regard to deacons in the church”

 Paul begins this section on deacons without any definition or description of their duties; the word itself referred to someone in a serving capacity. But nowhere in the New Testament is there a description of how they came into being as a recognized group or what their duties were. The seven men who were appointed to care for the food distribution to a specific group of widows (Acts 6:1-6) may well be the forerunners of organized groups within the churches called deacons.

 Paul’s concern with the demeanor and public reputations of church leaders continues with the deacons as persons who must be worthy of respect, that is, someone who both gives and receives appropriate respect. Since non-Christians, perhaps even kings and those in authority may take note of how the Christians are living, the deacon must also be a person of integrity who can be depended on to act outwardly what the Christian faith proclaims to be and to do in the world.

*Thank you, Lord, for those who serve in our church. Amen.*

**Saturday, March 5 1 Timothy 3:14-16**

“With regard to the church itself”

 Concern over the possible delay of seeing Timothy in person caused Paul not only to write the instructions in this chapter, but, in that connection, to affirm the importance of the church and to append the statement of faith in verse 16. The purpose of this letter is mainly to deal with false teaching and teachers. However, in the need for truth and personal integrity among those called to be leaders and deacons, as well as among all in the congregation, he writes with the purpose “that they will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, the church.”

 Paul’s great statement in verse 16 affirms Christ as the pillar and foundation of the church. This truth is called a “mystery,” the word describing God’s revelation of his sovereign work throughout history. Christ is the center of the mystery. Christ, the Son of God, was not known until he was revealed through his birth, life, death, and resurrection. Christ is the source of the Christian religion and of our spiritual life and, in the context of the household of faith, he is its Savior and Lord.

*You are head of our church, Lord, and we live by your example. Amen.*