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I'm a rather forgetful person. Whenever I come back from the grocery store there's always at least one thing that I forgot to buy. At the end of the day there are always a few things that I was going to do but I forgot to do. Of course what I should do is make a list! I should make a grocery list and take it with me to the grocery store. I should make a "to do" list and check it throughout the day to make sure I don't forget anything. Our prayer life is kind of like that. There are some people that we should pray for but many times we forget. So today from God's word I'm going to give us a list of people to pray for. Here's my prayer list: 1. Family and friends 2. People I don't know 3. Governors and the president. 4. Missionaries.

The Bible passage we are looking at is from 1 Timothy. Timothy was in charge of a congregation in Ephesus and Paul is writing this letter to give him instructions about running the congregation: things like the qualifications for leaders in the church and instructions for worship. Paul writes, "**I urge then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people**" (1 Timothy 2:1). I mentioned that these are instructions for worship. You'll notice that we have a place in the worship service where we pray for individual people. It's called the prayer of the church because in this prayer the church is praying for individual people. The church prays for people who are going through hard times: maybe someone just experienced the loss of a loved one. Maybe someone is going through a serious illness or is about to have surgery. The church also gives thanks for those who are experiencing good times. So when a couple gets married or when a child is born we have a prayer of thanksgiving. That part of the church service goes back to this Bible passage.

But of course it's not just in church that you pray for your family and friends. Also in your private prayers you pray for your family and friends. About a month ago we had two people in our congregation undergo heart surgery. And as I was in contact with the families of those people what they kept saying was, "I'm praying so hard for them." And God answered those prayers, both surgeries went very well. We thank God for that. So the first people on our list to pray for are our friends and family.

The second people on our list to pray for are people that we don't know. Paul says, "pray for *all* people." I was reading one commentator on this passage and I really appreciated what he said: "**It would not be surprising if Timothy and those committed to his care had been somewhat oblivious to the fact that behind the mountains also there are people, beyond the narrow limits of their horizon there were interests as weighty as their own: Christians who were as dear to God as themselves, whose needs were as great as their own**" (Plummer).

Sometimes we get wrapped up in the bubble of our own lives and our problems that we forget that there are a whole lot of other people in the world. I'm not starving, but somewhere in the world there is someone who is. God please feed that person. I have a house, but somewhere in the world there is someone who doesn't. God please give them shelter. Give thought to those people and pray for them. So the second people to pray for are people you don't even know.

The third people on the list to pray for are governors and the president. Paul says, "**Petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority.**" (1 Timothy 2:2). Governors and the president have a very hard job and they deal with very important and weighty issues. Pray for politicians from both parties that they may govern with wisdom and justice.

Paul says that we should pray "**for kings and for all those in authority that we may live peaceful and quiet lives.**" (1 Timothy 2:2). Because we have a stable government, we don't live in fear of our little town being bombed or invaded. That doesn't even cross our minds. Let's thank God that we live peaceful and quiet lives.

Paul says that we, “live peaceful and quiet lives **in all godliness and holiness**,” (1 Timothy 2:2). We live under a government that lets us worship God in his house in peace and quietness. That’s not true everywhere in the world. We have some disagreements with our government, and it’s good to express those in a respectful way, but we also receive many blessings from our government so let’s thank God for our governors and the president.

On our prayer list so far we’ve talked about 1. Family and friends, 2. People we don’t know, 3. Governors and the president, and the finally, we should pray for 4. Missionaries.

Paul says, “**This is good and pleases God our Savior who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God**” (1 Timothy 2:3-4). There’s one God who made the entire world and who loves every single last person in this world. “**It says that he wants all people to be saved**” (1 Timothy 2:3). If all people *need* to be saved that implies that something has gone terribly wrong with God’s world. What went terribly wrong with God’s world is that he created the world but then people rebelled against him. The Bible says that all people have turned their backs on their good and loving Creator. But the one God who created this world also set out to save his world, this passage calls him “**God our Savior**” (1 Timothy 2:3). When human beings rebelled against God it created a terrible rift between God and humans. It’s like when you have a close friend and you have a terrible fight with them and you never want to talk with them again that’s what happened between God and humans. But God sent his Son Jesus to be a mediator between himself and humans. **There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (3:5)**. Jesus is the perfect person to mediate the dispute between God and humans because Jesus is both God and a human.

Jesus brings God and humans back together again. How did he do that? It says: “**He gave himself as a ransom for all people.**” (1 Timothy 3:6) You see when God first gave the command to Adam and Eve he said “Don’t eat from this tree otherwise you will surely die.” Adam and Eve ate from the tree. And God still says that the penalty for disobeying his laws is death. He says, “The soul who sins is the one who will die.” But Jesus said, “I’ll die instead of them.” I’ll die so that they can live. I’ll die so that they can go free. That’s what a ransom is, it’s a price paid so that someone can go free. Jesus himself said in Mark 10:45, “The Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45) And the Bible says that people who break God’s laws not only deserve death but they also deserve God’s wrath after death. But what Jesus did is he stood between us and God’s wrath. On the cross he took all of God’s wrath in our place so that we would never experience God’s wrath.

And so now instead of death and God’s wrath after death, everyone who puts his trust in Jesus gets eternal life. Jesus says, “**Whoever believes in me will live even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die but have eternal life.**” Jesus says, “Whoever *believes in me* will have eternal life.” “**God wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.**” God has decided to save people by bringing them to a *knowledge* of the truth. What Jesus did he did for the entire world, but the only ones who receive the benefit of that are those who believe in Jesus. This is why missionaries are so incredibly important. People who go all over the world and tell people what Jesus has done for them. Paul says, “**For this purpose I was appointed a herald and apostle**” (1 Timothy 2:7). Missionaries voluntarily live in a foreign country to tell people what Jesus has done for them. Pray for missionaries and their families. It is not easy to live away from your home country. But missionaries do it because they too want all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

This is not an exhaustive list of people to pray for. But it’s a start. Let’s pray for our family and friends. Let’s pray for people we don’t even know. Let’s pray for our governors and the presidents. And let’s pray for missionaries. Amen.