



A Spiritual Encouragement Message

March 5, 2021

Talk to God

By Andrew Lemus

Paul left Timothy in Ephesus with a large task at hand. The city of Ephesus was known for its wealth, commerce, and the Temple of Artemis. It was a port city, a lot like San Diego, where the masses from all over the known world would travel through. As a result, this melting pot of a city endorsed, approved, taught, and practiced all types of doctrines from Jewish myths to sacrificing goats to Artemis.

It was in this social context that the Apostle Paul charged Timothy to remain on in Ephesus to be the barrier between false doctrines and practices and the church of Ephesus (1Timothy 1:3). He was commissioned to preach the word, equip the church, and provide sound doctrine to the local body in regard to how they ought to behave themselves as God's people (1Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15; 2Tim. 3:16-17). Timothy the evangelist had a very challenging task with many obstacles to overcome. I didn't even mention that rebellious men would arise from out of the eldership of the church (Acts 19:29-30)!

We too face obstacles, trials, and hardships as disciples of Christ. We live in a society that endorses, approves, and teaches all kinds of doctrines from postmodernism to the worship of saints. Men are called women and women men, homosexuality and fornication are applauded and encouraged, the Lord's name is on the majority of our population's lips, but it is being used in jest, the family unit is under attack, immodesty is celebrated, and even brethren are misguided. The behavior of the world is unhealthy and unfortunately, like in Ephesus, it has had its effects on the body of Christ.

So what do we do? In the midst of our modern day Ephesus called San Diego, how do we respond? What's the first step? Thanks be to God that through the Apostle Paul we are told what our first reaction to our current circumstances should be.

"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people," 1Timothy 2:1

Pray! How could Paul have overemphasized this more to Timothy and to us? As his mentor in the faith he wants to make sure Timothy does not miss this most basic, foundational, and essential aspect to walking in

the light in a dark world. Paul puts prayer at the top of the list in regard to his actions and reactions, and strongly urges him to do it (study the Greek word PARAKALO as used by Paul) and it makes sense. Faced with a situation that is challenging, hard, exhausting, and overwhelming? Talk to God!

Humbly ask for help (Supplications-DEESIS in the Greek). With sincerity and conviction, we should ask our omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent God for aid for specific needs in ours and others lives (1Tim. 5:5; 2Timothy 1:3; Philippians 4:6; Matthew 9:38).

Talk to God (Pray-PROSEUCHE in the Greek). Sometimes we don't know what to say, to ask for, or how to express ourselves in the circumstances that we find ourselves in. Talk to God about it. Tell Him about your concerns, hardships, frustrations, and struggles. Tell Him about the good news, the excitement, and the joys that have come your way. Pray to God (1 Tim. 5:5; Romans 8:26, 15:30).

Ask Your King (Petition-ENTEUXIS in the Greek). Go before the king of all kings, the Lord of all things, and the Head of the Lord's kingdom to petition our superior to act and intercede (1Tim. 4:5).

Show Your Gratitude (Thanksgiving-EUCHARISTIA in the Greek). Thank God for those things that He has provided, done, and helped you with. Show your appreciation and thankfulness for the answered supplications and petitions you have brought before Him. Praise Him for carrying you through, helping you to see more clearly, and building you up to endure the challenges you face. There is good in your life, in your relationships, in the church, and in San Diego so don't forget to stop and smell the roses and thank God for the many blessings you have. We should live with an attitude of gratitude (Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 5:4; Colossians 2:7).

Like Timothy, we all face pretty big challenges as disciples of Christ. From our own temptations to the unhealthy environment, we often find ourselves in, we struggle to persevere, remain steadfast, and continue on in the Lord's work. What is the first thing we should do? What should be our first reaction be in the midst of discouragement? The Apostle Paul tells us plainly what it should be, and that is to talk to God.