

Pentecost 15 / September 21, 2025

1 Timothy 2:3-5

*"This is good, and 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."*

God Desires all to be Saved through knowledge of the Truth

What do you want most? What is your greatest desire in life? We all have goals, plans, hopes and desires. Some are achieved, others never come to fruition. There is a saying, 'Man proposes, God disposes.' It means that while humans have the capacity to make plans, we don't necessarily have the ability to bring our plans to fruition. Only God has the absolute power to accomplish what He desires and achieve His purposes. In our text Paul says that God's desire is that all would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. It was to this end that from eternity, God planned to send His Son to share in our humanity, reconcile us to Himself through the obedience of His life and the death of His cross. In the letter to the Romans, St. Paul says *"God has consigned all to disobedience, that He may have mercy on all."* God desires to have mercy on all. God has mercy for all people in Christ Jesus. From the cross, Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of those who crucified and mocked Him. When He died the curtain in the temple that separated the holy place from the most holy place, was torn in two from top to bottom. Jesus had atoned for the sin of the world and opened the way to the Father for every human soul in the forgiveness of sin.

Jesus atoned for the sin of the world, God desires all people to be saved; but hard as it is to conceive, not even God gets everything He wants. Not everyone is saved. Not everyone wants to believe and so not everyone receives the salvation God has prepared for all people in Christ Jesus. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit empowered the believers gathered in Jerusalem to proclaim the wonders of God, the most wonderful being salvation through faith in Jesus' Name. We remember that day especially for the powerful effect the Holy Spirit gave through Peter's preaching, more than three thousand believed and were baptized in the name of Jesus. In the ensuing days thousands of others came to faith and received the salvation God prepared for everyone to receive through faith in Jesus. Many believed, but not everyone; really only a small number of people who heard the word believed. Some, when they heard the wonders of God proclaimed in their native speech, said it was because they were all drunk. That doesn't even make any sense! The Holy Spirit convicted many of their sins through Peter's words. They

repented, believed and were baptized. But a few weeks later a different group responded to Stephen's words by resisting the Holy Spirit, rising up against him and killing him. We can resist the Spirit of God and reject Jesus our Saviour. That's why despite God's desire, not everyone is saved. Nevertheless, the good news is that God truly desires all people to be saved through knowledge of the truth. The gospel truth is that Jesus gave His life as a ransom for all people and whoever believes in Him has life in His Name.

If God desires all people to be saved, we might wonder why He doesn't ensure that all people believe. Why doesn't He just make everyone believe? When Christ called the physically dead to rise, they got up immediately. When Christ calls the spiritually dead to rise, we can resist the Holy Spirit, refuse and remain asleep. Having been made alive in the Spirit, we can continue to resist the Spirit and return to spiritual death. When God operates by the absolute power of His glory His will is irresistible. But when God operates through grace, humans can resist His will and refuse His word. God doesn't force His grace on anyone. God wants us to receive His grace through faith with willing hearts. He wants us participate willingly in relationship with Him. He wants us to respond to His love, not out of forced obedience, but in a willing response of love. He wants us to love Him because He loves us. With that desire comes the possibility of resistance on our part. In the prologue to His gospel, John says that Jesus came into the world which He had created, but the world received Him not. He came to the people whom He had formed to be His special people in all the world, but they received Him not. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His Name, He gave the power to become children of God and live with Him in a relationship of mutual love.

There are no surprises for God. He sees and knows everything from eternity. If God knew from eternity who would receive and who would reject His grace in Christ Jesus, why did He give Jesus to bear the sin of the world and pay the debt of every human soul? Why did He not just give Jesus to atone for the sins of those whom He knew would receive His grace? God gave Jesus to atone for the sin of the world, both those who believe and those who do not believe. In his first letter, St. John says, *"He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."* God gave Jesus to pay for the sin of the whole world, because He is serious about the salvation of the whole world. Human beings are the glorious crown of His creation. He created humans to live with Him in a relationship greater than that of any other creature. God wants all His human

creation to live with Him in a relationship of love and peace. As Paul says in our text, He wants everyone to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth.

God wants us who believe to be sure of our salvation. He wants us to base our salvation on His word of promise and the universal atonement of sin. Christ died for the sins of the whole world, means that He died for your sins and my sins. Christ died for the sins of the whole world means that we can be certain of our salvation on the basis of God's word. Jesus died for all. We are part of all. Jesus died for you and me. Christ died for the sins of the world means that we can be certain of God's attitude and feelings towards us, that He gave Jesus to be our Saviour and that He really wants us to believe. The universal atonement means that salvation truly is offered for all to receive and given freely and fully to all who believe in Jesus as their Saviour. The universal atonement means that we can share the gospel of salvation in Jesus' Name with everyone with whom we speak with in the confidence that Christ truly died for them and really wants them to believe. Jesus died for all. They are part of all. Jesus really wants them to receive and believe. Jesus is the Saviour of all people, especially of those who believe. Believe Him.

God wants all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. When Jesus was interrogated by the Roman authority, He told the governor Pontius Pilate He had come to testify to the truth. He said that everyone who listens to His voice is of the truth. Pilate asked out of sarcasm or despair, "*What is truth?*" There are many so called 'truths' in the world. Truth changes from generation to generation. Pilate didn't realize it but He was staring truth in the face. Jesus is the truth of God. In Him the whole fulness of God was expressed in bodily form. Jesus did the works of God. He healed the sick. He cast out evil spirits. He destroyed the devil's reign over the human soul by preaching the gospel of forgiveness, received through faith in His Name. Jesus is the way through which we come to the Father in peace. He fulfilled the demands of the law through His sinless life. He satisfied the demand of the law for justice through His sacrificial death, which atoned for the sin of the world. He is the life, in whom we have relationship with God as Father. To know Jesus is to know God as He truly is in the nature of His being. To know Jesus is to know God as love. God is love. God desires all to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth in Christ Jesus.

To know God as love is to know He earnestly desires the salvation of every human soul. To know God as love is to know He desires the salvation of our souls. God desires we would come to Him through faith in Jesus. God desires that we would persevere in faith until its fulfillment in life everlasting. To achieve His desire

God does everything in His power to give us faith to believe and to bring our faith to fulfilment in eternal life. He gives us His word, a lamp unto our feet, a light for our path that the Spirit would lead us to Jesus. He gives us the water of our baptism and the promise of forgiveness as often as we return to His promise in repentance. He gives us the bread and wine of holy communion, a participation in the body and blood of Jesus so that we would be strengthened in our faith, assured of our salvation in the atonement of our sins and be given the guarantee of life everlasting. Jesus is the Saviour of all people, especially of those who believe. Jesus is the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Him. Believe Him as your God and Saviour. He opens His arms to us and all people. He brings all who come to Him to the Father in peace. We come to Him now!

God who has begun the good work of salvation within us, bring it to completion in the day of Christ Jesus. In His Name. Amen.