

HOW SHOULD WE PRAY FOR UKRAINE? – March 2022

Just a few weeks ago, Russia launched its unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. There have already been thousands of casualties and more than a million refugees. Meanwhile, the US and NATO have condemned the invasion, but are being exceedingly cautious in their response, fearing another world war. The fate of Ukraine and much of the world is resting on critical decisions that a handful of world leaders and politicians will be making in the next few weeks and months.

While we wait on our leaders, what can we ordinary citizens do? This is the one time where I'm actually thankful for Social Media. Every day, I am greeted with a Facebook reminder to "Pray for Ukraine!" That may not seem like much, but according to the Bible, praying for the people of this world is the urgent duty of every Christian. Absolutely, we must pray, but *how* should we pray?

It's one thing to pray for family and friends whom we know and love, but it is a bit more challenging to pray about world events. As I see it, we have two particular challenges before us.

First, **we don't understand the situation.** Maybe we think we do, but we must remember that many "facts" have been fabricated or twisted by the time they reach us. Everything we know comes through the News often filtered through politicians who have their own agenda. Especially in times of crisis, propaganda abounds on all sides. As the saying goes: "Truth is the first casualty of war."

Second, **we don't know the solution.** Even if we did know exactly what was going on, we still wouldn't know what was the best long-term outcome. In the Scriptures, we see that God sometimes ordains the momentary success of great evil in order to ultimately bring about greater good. (Was it not wicked men who conspired against Jesus and had him crucified? And yet, that great evil accomplished the greatest good – For it was God's will that His Son should die for the sins of the world.) This is not uncommon in God's world that, for a time, He allows all sorts of evil to abound for a much greater good to rise.

So, how should we pray? The Apostle Paul gives us some excellent guidance in 1 Timothy 2:1-6. Please take a moment to read this on your own. Here are a few takeaways:

- **We should include *everyone* involved in our prayers, especially those in high positions.** We should pray not just for our allies, but also for our enemies. That means we must pray for Zelensky, Putin, Biden and all world leaders that God will move each of them to do what is right and good.
- **We should pray that *we* will be able to live in peace.** There will be many moments when our leaders will make decisions that will have profound effects on our lives. We should pray that God will turn their hearts to do the things that will enable all believers to lead peaceful, quiet and dignified lives. But this is not a small and selfish request, our peaceful lives are for a much greater end.
- **We should pray for the salvation of *all people* everywhere.** We pray that the peaceful, quiet and dignified lives of Christians would bring eternal salvation to all people. For this kind of peace gives Christians opportunities to proclaim the Good News of salvation through Jesus and to show His love to a lost and dying world. We should pray that all people (especially the Ukrainians and Russians) will come to know the truth about God and our only Mediator, Jesus Christ, who died for their sins. May they hear of the Savior, repent, and find forgiveness and everlasting life. May they be delivered from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God's Son.

We don't know what the Lord's will is for Ukraine, but we do know his will for us. So, let us attend to His will, and let us pray!