

- **\*Read I Timothy 2:1-8\*** In this letter from the Apostle Paul to his son in the faith Timothy, the Apostle begins his instructions by instructing the preacher to be fervent in entreaties, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings for all people. Included within the people that he was to be praying for are those who are within positions of authority. Why is it that Timothy and all Christians ought to be praying for those in authority? It is because the goal for disciples ought to be that they are able to live tranquil and quiet lives. As Christians, we ought to desire to simply go about our day to day lives with the freedoms that God has given to us. We ought to want to be at peace with our fellow man, and simply live our lives as a glorification to our most high God. So how can this be accomplished? How can we live this type of life? We can do so through constant prayer and trust in our God.
- Sadly...there doesn't seem to be much prayer or trusting in God going on in the United States of America. This is especially true when we get into election years in this country. Unfortunately, you cannot get on any sort of social media site without being exposed to post after post...argument after argument concerning the political dealings of this country. It seems as if many people are moving closer and closer to the ledge and they are just about ready to jump off. These many people include non-Christians and Christians alike. This morning, I want to help talk as many as I can off the ledge by reminding us all of 5 truths that will help us all survive another political season.
- Obviously, I recognize that this is a very sensitive subject for many individuals. I recognize this is the case. Honestly, I am not a big fan of politics because of many of the issues that we will discuss this morning, but I respect those who care much more than I do. This morning, my goal is to simply present portions of God's Word that will help us to handle politics and this political season well. I will not name names or parties, and I ask that you take nothing that is said as any sort of hint that you ought to vote one way or the other. I ask that you please have open hearts and Bibles this morning as we consider how the Christian ought to handle politics and the political season.

### **I. Christians are to avoid nonsense.**

- A. As mentioned earlier, far too many conversations regarding politics are reduced to nothing more than arguments and verbal scuffles that profit in no way whatsoever. Whether we're talking about Facebook, Twitter, TV interviews, or maybe even our own conversations...we have a difficult time discussing politics without things coming unglued.
- B. We might expect this type of behavior from those who are of the world, but the sad reality is that many Christians have gotten themselves caught up in these useless ramblings. Let's be honest for just a moment...If I really want to have a serious conversation about politics or anything serious, Facebook/social media does not serve as the best medium for these conversations to take place. It can become easy for us to get all big and bad behind our keyboards and we're not able to convey tone... therefore, nothing good is accomplished and everyone leaves the conversation steaming and angry.  
**(Prov. 10:19)**
- C. Paul wrote to Timothy to instruct him to not allow for those whom he was among to be engaged in conversations that would lead to further ungodliness. **(II Tim. 2:16)** Even when they were discussing spiritual matters, Paul says that we are to do so with respect and love. If this is the case with something as serious as spiritual matters...then surely we ought to approach subjects such as politics with the same composure, love, and respect. **(II Tim. 2:23-25)**
- D. I don't say all of this to say that we cannot ever discuss politics or other serious matters...but we MUST be sure that we have trained ourselves to discuss these matters in a correct manner. Approaching these conversations with harsh words and attitude will do no good. **(Prov. 15:1)** There is a major difference between healthy discussion where we leave with a better understanding and wasteful arguments where we just leave upset. May we be the people who always have our words seasoned with salt. **(Col. 4:16)**

## II. Christians are to respect the freedoms of others.

- A. We live in a country that was built upon the foundation of freedom, yet we are so quick to condemn others, especially brethren, when it comes to them exercising their freedoms during election years. Far too often we see scathing and condemning remarks on social media from one individual to another simply because the two individuals do not see everything the exact same way. Those involved in these discussions continually throw hateful words at one another and treat one another like they're lower and dumber than dirt...it truly is a sad sight....but how much worse is it when those being so hateful are actually brethren who have both been bought by the precious blood of Christ!
- B. Why does this continue to happen? Why are brethren so hateful to others during these years? As mentioned, there is nothing wrong with voicing a disagreement in a loving and respectful fashion, but that is just not the norm for many political discussions. Instead, they break down into what we talked about just a few minutes ago...why is this the case?
- C. I believe this is the case because many individuals have lost respect for the freedoms of other people. They have lost sight of the fact that each of us possess a conscience and opinions and that not all of our consciences and opinions are wired the exact same way.
- D. Let me remind us all that this is no official political party of the Lord's Church. There is no commandment from God saying that we must participate in politics. In fact, the earliest of Christians abstained from political involvement as was their right just as we have the right and freedom to be involved if we would like to, today. Some have tried to use **Romans 13:1-7** as a text that requires the Christian to vote, but that just isn't in the text. This text simply tells us that God has given governments authority. It tells us the purpose of governments. And it finishes off saying that we ought to respect those in authority. Those in authority have given us the right to vote, yet it is a freedom and not a requirement.
- E. If we want to talk about voting in the Scriptures though...let's go one more chapter to **Romans 14:1-3** and talk about respecting the liberties of others. This whole chapter is about respect for the freedoms and consciences of others. Because voting is a freedom and is driven by our consciences...we need to respect our brethren and the decisions they make. Some might vote for candidate A...some for candidate B....some for candidate C...and then some might decide to not vote at all. If that is their decision, if that is what their conscience dictates, if they do not have the conscience to vote for a particular candidate, then we need to leave them be and not coerce them to go against their consciences. In causing them to do so would result in sin. **(Rom. 14:19-23)**
- F. I believe Matt Bassford summed up really well in an article when he said this. "Let us remember that the Kingdom of God is not voting or abstaining, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." **(Rom. 14:17)** Might I add on that whether it is that we vote or not...may it all be done to God's glory. **(I Cor. 10:31)**

## III. The Gospel is the cure for social ills...not the government.

- A. Many in our society put far too much hope in the government to be the catalyst for social reform. The truth is that government is here to be reactive to the wrong of its citizens. **(Rom. 13:3,4)**. True that there are laws in place to keep people in line, but the true standard of goodness is not determined by the government and its laws.
- B. True social reform...the true standard of righteousness comes from the Gospel. It is the Gospel and the Gospel alone that possesses the ability to change the hearts and minds of individuals in such a way that society will be bettered. **(Rom. 1:16)** The Gospel is the power to salvation. The Gospel is that which calls men to live to a higher standard. If we want to help our society to improve, then we need to stop putting so much energy and effort into the government and laws. Instead, we need to get out into the fields and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible.
- C. The Gospel is God's tool to teach what is right and wrong and to change men's hearts, not the government. We need to stop putting our faith in fallible men and instead put our faith in our mighty King and His Mighty Message of salvation for mankind.

## IV. God will always keep His children.

- A. There are many who bemoan the current state of this country, and they fear that difficult days are ahead for those who are desiring to serve God. You know what...they very well might be correct. This election and every election here on out could have an impact on how we are able to live as Christians...but let us not forget that we have had it far better than any Christians in the history of mankind. In fact, we have it better off than most Christians do even today all over this world.

- B. Let's not forget that our Lord through John was very upfront with the disciples in Smyrna. He warned them that they were about to suffer through some very difficult things. Yet, He assured them that they would make it through to the other side if they would only remain faithful and keep their trust in their mighty God. **(Rev. 2:8-11)**
- C. While we don't face the same situations at the present moment, let's not be foolish and think that it could never happen. It very well could, and the question then presents itself, "how will I handle these situations?" The truth is that we won't have to think too much. We can simply follow the instructions of our Lord and be faithful to Him...even to the point of death...remembering that the death of this world is not the final death that we can suffer.

#### **V. This world is not our home.**

- A. There is life beyond this world, and we must be sure to not allow ourselves to be fully engulfed in those things of this life that will do us no good in the next life. Politics, education, sports, hobbies, and other things will serve us in absolutely no way in the next life. Those things might give us a certain level of joy here, but they must not be our focus.
- B. We ought to follow the example of Paul and others who walked according to the ways of Christ. In living as they lived, we can be pleasing to God and we will recognize our true reward in the next life. **(Phil. 3:17)**
- C. Sadly, there are many in this life who will meet their end in destruction. **(Phil. 3:18,19)** They will live fully for this life and they will not be prepared for glory in the next. They think that this life is all that there is, but they will be sorely disappointed in the next.
- D. Paul implores us to remember that our true and most important citizenship is in heaven. Heaven is the place that we ought to be most prepared for. It ought to be the place that we are longing for. If our focus is on heaven then politics will not dominate our lives. Jesus, His love, and the Gospel will be our focus and God will be pleased. **(Phil. 3:20,21)**

Many a wise person has said that politics needs to stay out of the pulpit, and I'd like to give a hearty amen to that. I hope that this has not been a lesson that has focused on the politics, but I hope it has been a lesson that will help us to handle politics a little better, especially when we are in the midst of an election year. May we treat politics just as we would any other thing in this life that can easily take our attention away from those things that are truly important like Jesus, His Church, and His Gospel. May we keep our noses out of useless arguments. May we respect the freedoms of others. May we remember that the Gospel is the cure for this world's ills. May we remember that God will keep us for our true home that is beyond this world. May He help us to survive yet another election year, and may He help us to put our faith and trust not in any mascot, party, or man...but may our faith and trust be fully in the Lamb of God who will help us to be exactly who God created us to be.