

Evangelicals and U.S. Politics - 1 Peter 2:9-17
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Oh great! Politics and religion. These are the things we are supposed to avoid talking about in polite society. Yet, let's be honest, the discussion and presence of politics seems to be omnipresent. Our question this week is a good one, and an important one in our culture for those who follow Jesus. *How should we approach US politics and the role of Evangelical Christians?* Let's begin by saying this isn't something new. People have always become passionate about political issues and leaders, and rightfully so. C'mon, in the 1850's fist fights broke out on the floor of Congress. These things do impact our daily lives. Yet, it is so easy to build our identity around political parties and passions, and for so many who claim the name of Jesus at our time have embraced a form of Christianity that seems to be more passionate about party politics than they are the salvation of their neighbors. For many, their values, thoughts, and ethics are being shaped by cable news and political pundits way more than they are influenced by the Gospel and their church.

The people of Peter's day had a difficult relationship with their government and political world as well. The book of 1 Peter is written to people living in modern day Turkey (called Asia then) who lived under the dominance of the Roman Empire. Every political movement in that day was shaped by a local government's relationship with Rome. People everywhere picked sides and had political passions. Furthermore, for followers of Jesus, the tension was rising because of an increasing level of persecution instigated by local rulers, yet being fueled by Rome and its Caesar Nero. So you would expect a passage speaking to the Christ-follower's relationship to government, politics, and culture to either be a call to withdraw or fight. Yet, Peter does neither, rather he reminds them of their true identity and allegiance.

To understand how this passage and all other Biblical texts address our political engagement we must begin with a central truth. A follower of Jesus has aligned and pledged allegiance to a different King and Kingdom. This means that our values, ethics, morals, and character are to be shaped by those of Jesus, our King. This King has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and into His marvelous light. This King has made His church an outpost of His Kingdom making us a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a royal nation, a people for Christ's own possession. Everything about us is both changed and realigned in such a way that our posture and relationships in this broken world are reshaped to reflect Jesus purpose and mission. And His mission is never about a nation, a king or president, a political party, or a single issue. Rather, the mission of Jesus is about the salvation of the nations, that people from every ethnicity, political persuasion, culture, and even lifestyle hears the glorious Good News of Jesus and has an opportunity to believe and be included in this new Kingdom. No political party is going to truly reflect the values of Jesus, and for certain all worldly politics has as its aim the gaining of power so that their agenda can be accomplished. Yet the Kingdom of God does not come by force, but through humility. It advances not by winning arguments but by sharing news while His people lives defined by righteousness and faith.

This is why Peter reminds these people that their posture toward the culture is that they are sojourners and exiles. In our vernacular this would be to say that we as believers need to see ourselves and refugees and immigrants. Our lives and character should reflect the righteousness of Jesus, so we abstain from the fleshly passions engaged by the world. These passions do include the pursuit of power for the purpose of ruling. But our King came in humility, love, and peace. So while our own lives are defined by righteousness, our posture toward the culture, rules, and politics should be defined by love, justice, kindness, and humility. We are to live in submission to the government and its authorities. Yes, there are other places in the Scriptures where believers are commanded to resist, but those times are when the government demands allegiance to someone other than Jesus for themselves. In other words, we obey the government until the government demands that we bow to a golden

idol (Daniel and his friends), make the claim that Caesar is Lord, or the government seeks to force us to engage in conduct that is not holy. And Christians are demanded to resist as the voice for those who cannot speak for themselves, as we stand for justice for others. Yet the central commands in this and other texts call believers to submit, obey, pray for, and seek the welfare of kings and kingdoms in this world. The message of Christianity will offend, and people will hate us because of that message. Yet, the lifestyles and love of Kingdom people should compel them to rejoice because believers become conduits of Jesus' mercy.

So, what is our political posture. Evangelical Christians are people whose allegiance is to Christ as King, subjects of that Kingdom first and foremost. And we are to live in human kingdoms with the mission of Christ as our primary aim. This means that loving our neighbor and sharing Jesus is always more important than any political agenda. And our care for the poor, love for neighbor, concern for justice, and peaceable lives should make those who follow Jesus the absolute best citizens of any nation, including America.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
2 Samuel 5	2 Samuel 6	2 Samuel 7	2 Samuel 8	2 Samuel 9	2 Samuel 10	2 Samuel 11

Reading from this past week's sermon: 1 Peter 2:9-17

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

Family Worship

Song - *Christ the Sure and Steady Anchor*

<https://youtu.be/kllNj-cLOW8?feature=shared>

Gospel Project

Unit: King David

Story: David Defeated Goliath

Big Picture Question: Is there anyone or anything greater than God?

Answer: No, God is greater than everything and everyone

Scripture: 1 Samuel 17

New City Catechism

Question 28: What happens after death to those not united to Christ by faith?

Answer: They will be cast out from the presence of God, into hell, to be justly punished, forever..

Verse: John 3:16-18, 36

1 Peter 2:9-17

- Why is it important that we begin with Jesus as King and our inclusion in the Kingdom of Christ before we seek to answer the question for this week?
- What are the ways this text reminds us that we are separate and different from the culture around us? How does this text also push us toward the culture as followers of Jesus?
- What is the mission for the church? How might our overemphasis on politics and tendency to side with a party affect our ability to live out this mission?
- How can we be intentional to pray for our government, its leaders, and our culture?

Prayer

*Pray that we would see the wonderful truth in the resurrection of Jesus and have certainty that this event actually took place.

*Pray for Send St. Louis Church Planting Network and our Send City Missionary Michael Byrd.