
What Does the Bible Say About Politics?

Romans 12:1-2

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Intro to Subject:

In the series of “What Does the Bible Say About...”

- How can Christians fruitfully and helpfully engage in the process of politics in our culture?

Why Seth:

- Don't worry - not on any elder track
- Have specific experience in the area of politics that you can see on the screen
- Hope you understand the point of the resume provided - it isn't about what I “accomplished” - desire is for you to recognize that I may have been blessed, and cursed to be in places where many of you have not - providing you an insight that hopefully combined with Scriptural principles will be helpful to you
- Some of the more difficult challenges included a high-profile suit against Governor Strickland, a brutal primary fight - where I represented the “conservative” faction of the Republican Party against Dave Yost, who went on to win the State Auditor position and now serves as the Ohio AG. High profile fights with two City Managers and many many challenges behind the scenes
- Some of the most difficult challenges were that the fights were often with “friends”

Difference between policy and politics:

- This will not be primarily about policy... it will not be a primer on policy
- This will be about the engagement in politics - recognizing that in order to impact policy in America, you must engage in politics

American vs. International Audience:

- Will address the audience as largely American, but encourage the international community to glean from these principles that will apply to them

SOME CONTEXT:

Text Romans 12:1-2

- Not Romans 13 – the classic text used to support the God’s ordaining of government – we will look at that briefly too
- Romans 12:1-2:
 - I appeal to you therefore, brothers,[a] by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.[b] 2 Do not be conformed to this world,[c] but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
- Let’s consider several points immediately... we are to:
 - Present ourselves as a sacrifice for worship
 - To not be conformed to the world
 - But be transformed through a change in our minds
 - To determine what is good, acceptable and perfect

Where Do We Begin?

Eschatology drives in so many ways how one approaches a Christian’s role in government...

- my frame will be that God’s revealed Word is not indicating that one nation will somehow usher in God’s kingdom – Jesus will do that Himself

Governance is Godly:

- Personal, Family, Church, Civil:
 - Personal: Galatians 5:22-23, Genesis 3
 - 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
 - Male and Female directly to God: Genesis 1:27 – So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
 - Family:
 - Ephesians 5:23 – husband headship to serve the wife
 - Ephesians 5:31 – the establishment of a new headship (“leave... hold fast... two become one”)
 - Children - Ephesians 6:1
 - Church:
 - Directly founded by and through Christ – Matthew 16:18 – 19 – built by Christ; building the church; hell will not prevail; given the keys of the kingdom.

- Provided the Spirit directly by God – Acts 2:2: And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.
- Civil:
 - Instituted by God: Romans 13:1 – Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.
- Overlapping, in tension. When one fails another will take its place and fill the vacuum to restore “order”
- God has granted specific forms of governance for specific purposes – some of which is plainly obvious in the Scriptures, some of which must be implied
- These forms of governance have a direct authority granted to them by God – and will answer to God for the use... when those authorities use their power for more or less than granted, it’s a problem

The Bible is not primarily an instruction manual for an earthly kingdom

- – while principles can be derived and even seen in some cases directly, the Bible is God’s revealed Word to His creation, His church, and about building an everlasting Kingdom through the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the redemption of His Church

Liberty is GOOD – it reflects God’s image

America is not a Christian nation – no nation is

- America was founded on principles that reflect well a Christian worldview:
 - Addressing the depravity of humanity (limited scope to government)
 - Focus on education
 - Focus on individual integrity and morality

America is under the “rule of law”

- – there is no “king”, no “ruling family”... the space is “wide open” for engagement

Personnel IS Policy

THE OPPORTUNITY

Politics is Dirty

People are Hurting

- Politicians and the apparatus around politicians are full of people. We can't claim to love people and then avoid a place where there are so many
- There is an excellent opportunity to put the Gospel in action

The gift of America provides an excellent opportunity

- You are granted freedom to speak through the 1st Amendment
- You live in an environment where you are not only given the freedom to engage, but you are encouraged to engage
- You will be held accountable for the gift of liberty and how you steward it

You will be granted influence for good:

- The protection of life
- The execution of justice
- The care of others
- The good of others
- Ultimately the propagation of the Gospel:
 - By defending the ability to for its continued free expression
 - Through legislation that recognizes the need for the Gospel (i.e. government can't solve it)
 - Through personal action that represents the Gospel
 - Through using celebrity and the bullet pulpit for good influence
- You will be participating in an institution that is in fact ordained by God

Minimum engagement: Pray and vote (with knowledge)

- 1 Tim 2:1-4 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

THE PITFALLS

Politics is dirty

Politics is an exposer:

- Don't have a sense of direction for your engagement
- Struggle with pride
- When you believe politics is the answer
- Weak of integrity

The challenge of compromise:

- You will be forced to make binary decisions, over complex issues, with opposing views
- You will be forced to consider the difficult challenge of how much compromise is enough
- Your conscience will be challenged

There will be many critics:

- Can't make everyone happy
- You will simply become a product to many – losing your personhood
- Many of these critics will come from the church

RESPONSE AND REFLECTION

- How do we Renew our Mind?
 - Will the Scripture drive our thinking or our biases?
- Politics DOES NOT replace the Gospel
 - Christians must understand their theology
 - Politics / legislation CANNOT change hearts
- Politics is NOT to be ignored:
 - What politics serves – legislation and government IS ordained by God
 - You live in a country where you can and should engage
 - You have minimum responsibilities (vote / pray)
- A personal appeal: Politicians ARE people:
 - Politicians are people, they are not products
 - They are not for your constant criticism. There are many many bad ones but...
 - They have kids, grandkids, spouses. They have stories. That have insecurities (oh do they have insecurities). They have sin issues. Some of them are godly. All of them are NOT evil
 - You are proud – you know everything there is to know – and you can't wait to tell them
 - You would do better (or so you think) – you would do it this way or that, you wouldn't fail... when most of you have never been offered the power of these people or tempted in their ways
 - You know what is right, and its trendy, acceptable, and fun to pick on the impersonal politician on your TV screen... I'm guilty too
 - But don't be – oppose vehemently, speak up, push back, vote against, oust, etc.... but never never forget, these are people
 - You have hope to offer – but you often spend your time attacking and criticizing

- Politicians are lepers... they are unclean in so many eyes. They are worse than attorneys – or you name it – the worst professions. Now, they’ve earned that generalized reputation, but never forget that Matthew the tax collector was one of Jesus’ twelve... and He’s calling these politicians to follow Him too – and you are Jesus’ ambassador
- A Corporate Appeal: Don’t be co-opted. Don’t be ignorant. Don’t become “factioned”
 - We bicker and fight
 - We are partisan
 - We are frankly silly
 - We are divisive
 - We are angry
 - We are hateful
 - We are proud
 - We are ignorant and small minded
 - We believe lies and rhetoric that support our position
 - We support policies that don’t defend freedom but instead advance our position – we use the government for our personal advancement
 - We feed the power of the political class, the broken or breaking system, the ignorance of American when we act like this – stop it!
- Ending:
 - It’s About Liberty Stupid Acknowledgements: “To My King and Savior Jesus Christ: Thank you for purchasing me as your slave and then setting me at Liberty!
 - Popular Worship Song When Death Was Arrested:
*Oh your grace so free
 Washes over me
 You have made me new
 Now life begins with you*

*Released from my chains I'm a prisoner no more
 My shame was a ransom he faithfully bore
 He cancelled my debt and he called me his friend
 When death was arrested and my life began*

*Our savior displayed on a criminal's cross
 Darkness rejoiced as though heaven had lost
 But then Jesus arose with our freedom in hand
 That's when death was arrested and my life began
 That's when death was arrested and my life began*

*Oh your grace so free
 Washes over me
 You have made me new*

*Now life begins with you
It's your endless love
Pouring down on us
You have made us new
Now life begins with you*

*Oh we're free free
Forever we're free
Come join the song
Of all the redeemed*

*Yes we're free free
Forever amen
When death was arrested
And my life began*

- 1 Peter 2:13 - 17

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

- God is on the throne - He doesn't need a Politician, political party, or even country to execute His will - but he requires us to be faithful... to serve those around us in ways we are gifted... maybe even in politics, because we serve, represent, and honor the KING