

Prayer Series
Prayer and Politics
11/06/21
Newport News

Opening/Introduction

-So I have a question for you tonight...as we open a new series on prayer.

-Should we pray about the outcome of political elections?

- Okay no surprises, any sentence that begins with “should we pray...” I think you know my answer!
- Luke 11:1 (ref)
- What’s strange about this request is how much they already prayed!
- (read from print out)

-So maybe the right question should be, “Are we praying about election outcomes the right way?”

Jesus and Politics

-Was Jesus ever political in His preaching?

(Important question because possibly you aren’t convinced that our faith life and political life should ever overlap)

-**Luke 14:28-32** (give some insight as to what His listeners would have been saying...”Oh snap...did He just say what I thought He said?”) (not parables)

- The city of Tiberius overlooking the Sea of Galilee was built on a cemetery and therefore it was rejected by the Jewish people and failed to achieve the potential Herod had envisioned, especially having named it after the current emperor of Rome.
- Herod had also divorced his wife to marry his brother’s wife. This criticism is what had led to John the Baptist’s death, because he spoke out against Herod. Herod’s first wife was the daughter or the King of Arabia who eventually dealt Herod an embarrassing defeat, no doubt in part over his hatred for Herod.
- So here we have Jesus openly criticizing a political leader AND using it to teach us about the cost of discipleship.

-Matthew 5:41 (ref)

- a Roman soldier could require a Jewish person to carry their pack for one mile...that was civil law.
- that pack would weigh around 110 lbs...it wasn't a fanny pack...lol!
- Jesus here says, carry it an extra mile
- Jesus is commenting on civil law, a controversial civil law, one ALL Jews vehemently protested...
- So here again, Jesus was not afraid to address controversial, politically charged issues of His day.
- The first mile was out of citizenship...
- The second mile was out of discipleship...

I think Jesus is challenging us to recognize that it is hard to be good disciples if we are not also good citizens. (disclaimer about protests, change, and etc...same Jesus was turning over tables in the temple)

-Mark 12:13-17 (another great example of citizenship and discipleship)

-Hebrews 11:13-16 (primary H. citizenship = bringing culture of KOH to earth)

-So how then should we pray...for political outcomes?

Prayer

-Matthew 6:9-13 (let's return to the Lord's Prayer...)

-Philippians 4:4-7

-(but let's overlay Jesus instruction for prayer and Paul's)

-prayer = proseuche, means prayer but also prayer in a worshipful posture

-supplication = deesis, means a request born out of need, often in prayer

-thanksgiving = eucharistia, means thanksgiving, acceptance, deference to whatever God decides!

-request = aitema, means something asked for

So Paul is telling us to come to God in all situations and circumstances (which includes politics and voting) with an

attitude of submission to God's perfect plan, with a heart that defers to Him as divine and sees self as imperfect, talking to him about what we hope to see happen but fully embracing whatever outcome He ordains.

-Philippians 4:7

-Our peace, our Shalom, is not in a particular outcome but rather in the One who controls outcomes!

Beware of "Gnosticism"

-1 Timothy 6:20-21

-Colossians 2:8 (basically all of Colossian is an exposure of Gnosticism)

-Gnosticism is an ancient religion that believes we can rescue ourselves from this temporal, physical world through the attainment of secret knowledge. Not only did Gnosticism reject the incarnation of Jesus, they promoted an idea of superiority over others through intellectual ascendancy.

-Why am I sharing this...because even if we are fully faithful as citizens and conduct ourselves with absolute integrity in the political arena...it is still only the Gospel that can save us! As we are working to make the world a better place for all people, let's keep up the work of telling people about Jesus and what He has done for us on the cross!

Band

-tell story of little boy playing putt-putt in Blacksburg...

-The world is weary of Christians who try to justify a lack of the character of Christ as we operate in political arenas...or another way to put it, when we step into moments of citizenship, are we bringing the character of Christ with us?

-We must work to protect the credibility of our witness!