

September 21, 2016

The False Hope of Politics

1 Timothy 6:14, 15, **“Our Lord Jesus Christ...He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords...”**

I have been fascinated with the political process for as long as I can remember. The first presidential election that I remember was 1976 in which Jimmy Carter defeated President Gerald Ford. I remember we had a vote in Mrs. Whitely's second grade classroom and Governor Carter defeated Ford. I was very distraught and actually shed some tears because of this. Ever since then I have been fascinated with the drama of the political process.

This election year is without a doubt unlike any one which I have witnessed. Many people are concerned and wondering about what is going to happen 48 days from now. Who will win? And what will that victory mean? Recently during a question and answer session at his church Pastor John MacArthur was asked for his thoughts on this year's election. His answer: “What happens in America, politically, has absolutely nothing to do with the kingdom of God.” You're probably thinking the same thing I did when I saw this, “How can that be true? How could the leader of the most powerful nation on earth – the commander in chief of the globe's largest military – have nothing to do with God's kingdom? Could it be true that such a powerful, wealthy nation has nothing to do with God's global agenda?

That answer quite simply is, yes! Dr. MacArthur continued, “It has nothing to do with the kingdom of God, because the kingdom of God is built one soul at a time, as a sinner puts his or her trust in Christ.”

No matter what the political system is all systems share one thing in common: They simply cannot meet man's greatest need. It matters not whether Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump is our next President they cannot offer the only true hope that humanity has. Humankind's only hope is to have the Lord of the universe save them, transferring them from the domain of darkness into His glorious kingdom.

This is in contrast to God's kingdom. Political systems attempt to create a utopia that is simply impossible in a fallen world. Libertarians seek a paradise where all people live in harmony and freedom and act in their own self-interest. Socialists promise us a perfect world where everyone is equal in status and wealth, assuring us peace and happiness. Progressives work toward an ideal where the future is always better than the past, and conservatives promise us a return to the “good ol' days.”

The problem with all of these systems and many others is that they fail to account for man's greatest problem, sin. We live in a fallen world that is filled with human depravity. The reality of sin means that these promised utopias are completely out of reach. There is absolutely no lasting and sustainable hope for mankind in any politician, leader, or political system no matter how dynamic they are or how effective that system is. The only hope for humanity is God's kingdom.

One of the mistakes that the evangelical community in the United States has made is we have assumed that we can protect and expand the cause of Christ by political activism. Our battle is not a political battle though, it is a spiritual battle and it is not against a political party or candidate but against worldly ideologies and practices that are solidly arrayed against God. We only achieve true and meaningful victory not through political victory but through the weapon of Scripture. 2 Corinthians 10:4 says, **“For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.”** As believers in Christ we can certainly desire the improvement of our country’s moral standards and we can do this indeed by advocating for government to be more righteous. We do indeed grieve over the indecency, vulgarity, lack of chastity and respect for authority and for others, deceitfulness, self-indulgence, and violence that seems to be dominating our culture. But in all of these efforts we must commit to using God’s ways and His Scriptural priorities and not the ways that dominate our culture. In other words we need to be focused on God’s work and be very careful to avoid putting our hope in the world and in worldly political systems or leaders.

There is good news though. A day is coming when God will make all things new and all things right. There is coming a day when all of the depravity and sin in this world will vanish and when all of creation will see the glory of God. Romans 8:22 says, **“For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.”** But this is only good news for those who have repented of their sins and placed their trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. John 3:16 reminds us, **“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”**

If we misplace our trust in the political systems and leaders of this world then we miss out on the unfathomable blessings of salvation. Our citizenship is ultimately not in the United States of America. Paul wrote in Philippians 3:20, **“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”** Our citizenship is determined by who reigns in our lives as Lord and Master. In Christ and in Christ alone is our only hope for the future. We must fix our eyes on Christ and fix our hope on His eternal promises, not the promises of the current political season or political candidates because in the end it matters not who is elected President and it will have absolutely no effect on the Kingdom of God.