

January 28, 2016

Judging The Candidates From A Psalm 15 View

Psalm 15:4 (ESV), **“in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the LORD...”**

At the very end of Romans chapter 1, that great indictment of the sinful and depraved condition of man, Paul writes in verse 32, **“Though they know God’s decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”** This verse comes to mind as I read Psalm 15:4.

We live in a time when it seems that the vile in our world is not only tolerated but is celebrated. One needs look no further than the Presidential race. In the race for the Republican nomination the current front runner is Donald J. Trump. Mr. Trump is a thrice married man who has left each previous wife (and children) for a younger woman. In his book “The Art of The Comeback” he brags of his many affairs with married women, completely immune apparently to the great emotional damage left in his wake. He has declared bankruptcy at least twice and seemingly has no respect for private property. In addition to this he has made a good portion of his fortune through the promotion of the vice of gambling. His views on the great moral questions of our day are far from the Christian worldview. He has been a supporter of partial birth as recently as just a year ago just before he decided to run for Republican nomination. He has been in the past a supporter of same sex marriage and recently stated that he has no need to ask for forgiveness from God because he is a good person. When it comes to his temperament he does not in the words of Oliver Wendall Holmes have a “first rate temperament.” He thinks little of belittling and personally insulting his rivals or anyone who dares to question him. In the process he often resorts to calling them names that most of us quit using on the playground years ago.

But despite all of this many evangelical leaders, Jerry Falwell Jr. being the most recent have publicly thrown their support behind him. But as Christ followers we are called to a different standard than the standards of the world. In the world we live in Mr. Trumps behavior is seen by many as a sign of strength. Many leaders feel that this is exactly what we need and they also sense that he might win so being more concerned with their own influence and power they are throwing their support behind a man who does not share their worldview even remotely.

In Psalm 15, which we began looking at a few days ago we see David ask two questions in verse 1, **“Who shall sojourn in Your tent? Who shall dwell on Your holy hill?”** In other words what are the marks of those who truly have fellowship with God? The Christ follower is going to be blameless, not by anything they have done or are doing but they are made blameless by the blood of Christ and the result is that they **“do what is right”** and they speak **“truth in their heart.”** The Christ follower recognizes truth and they certainly do not participate in deceit. In the next verse David says that those who are in fellowship with God do not **“slander with”** their **“tongue and does not evil to”** their **“neighbor.”** Mr. Trump has displayed an astounding ability to disregard the truth, to lie, and then to lie again about what he has already lied about. It is a well-known fact that Mr. Trump has made use of some very liberal interpretations of eminent domain in the expansion of his properties. He doesn’t think twice about taking what is not his if it advances his interests.

This brings us then to verse 4 and *our* responsibility as Christians as we decide who to support. Verse 4 says that those who are in fellowship with God despise those who are “**vile.**” A Christian does not celebrate evil, does not laugh at it, and does not enjoy the crude and vulgar. Mr. Trump has time and again shown himself to be all of these things and more. As Christians then we should not just shrug off his behavior just because we are angry and frustrated with the brokenness of our political system. Especially when there are several other candidates who at least appear to “**honor**” and “**fear the LORD.**”

We do indeed live in perilous times as our Christian brothers and sisters in the Middle East and Africa can attest to. The angst that many feel after two terms of a President who seems to be oblivious to the concerns of Christians, is understandable. The anger that many have and the desire to “stick it to them” is probably an emotion we have all felt at one time or another. But as Christians we cannot behave that way, we are called to a new life in Christ and anger and revenge are not part of that new life. We also must realize that what is wrong with our world and our country is not going to be solved by whoever the next President is. Our country and the American people are lost and we have for the most part turned our backs on God and I include the church in that to some extent. We must as the church in America get on our knees and pray that God will have mercy on the United States, and we must share the truth of Gospel whenever and wherever we can. When it comes to this election we must evaluate the candidates from a Biblical worldview, with the understanding that God is sovereign, and we must choose the man or woman who we feel would best serve our country with humility. We must in all things stand on Biblical principles and not political expediency. I cannot then vote for someone like Donald Trump just to keep Mrs. Clinton or Mr. Sanders out of the White House. Instead I must while I can encourage my brothers and sisters to look at other candidates and encourage them while they can to support them. Then I must pray for whomever the Lord sovereignly places at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue next November.