

Election 2016: What To Do?

Well here we are; 2 weeks out from the most difficult election in recent memory

And I want to start by saying this – I hate it; I *hate* the political process these days

I hate the banter; I hate the maneuvering; I hate the pandering; I hate the patronizing; I hate the posturing; I hate it all

Especially so when it preys on people's fears, plays to their sense of entitlement, enflames their sense of neglect, and fans their greed for money

Which happens more often than not in this election

➤ But this is the hand we've been dealt, so we need to deal with it

And I have 7 thoughts that I hope will help you in that respect; 7 principles from various Scriptures, starting with 1 Tim 2:1-2

And let me just say from the top, I'm not going to tell you who I'm voting for; I vacillate all the time anyway

So here's the first thing to do in this maddening election . . .

• **Pray**

Pray for wisdom, pray for grace, and pray for our leaders

If any of you lacks wisdom [the Bible says], let him ask God, who gives generously to all

We *need* wisdom; Badly; B/c without it, we lack the ability to make a good decision

And since God says just ask, that's what we're going to do

Similar to what we did a few months ago, I'm going to invite you to come forward during my message, and pray

3 stations, 4 chairs each, for 5 minutes at a time; To pray*****

➤ First for wisdom, and 2nd for *grace*; God's grace; Pray for *that*; Just like God told the Israelites to do, in Babylonian *captivity*

Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. Your grace (Jer 29:7)

Pray for grace*****

➤ And third, pray for our leaders – present *and* future

1 Tim 2:1-2 – *First of all, then [i.e. in order to fight the battles of the Christian life with faith and a good conscience], 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.*

Like it or not, we need to do that

B/c a *peaceful and quiet life* is not guaranteed, no matter *who* wins this election

Pray for your leaders; From the school board and city council, to the President of the US

Pray for wisdom, courage, humility, and virtue

And if they're not followers of Jesus Christ, pray for their salvation

How amazing would that be?

3 stations, 4 chairs, 5 minutes; You come as I talk

Here's the 2nd thing to do . . .

• **Go to the polls**

As in, vote; Go, and vote; Take a look at this **video** (*Third Rock* segment on voting)*****

➤ In the last election, 5 million votes separated the winner from the loser

While 38 million professing believers failed to vote at all (George Barna)

Biblically speaking, that's not right

When you combine the fact that . . .

God determines the allotted periods of each nation, including its boundaries and people (Acts 17:26) . . .

And that he has placed you in the boundaries of *this* nation . . .

And that he puts governments in place and appoints their leaders, Romans 13 . . .

When you combine all that, voting is a privilege, and a responsibility

Especially a responsibility; B/c in a democracy, the *people* are God's primary means of appointing government leaders

If God puts governments in place and appoints their leaders, he holds those in democracies particularly responsible . . .

B/c we are the *means* of appointing those leaders

Not only that, but voting is a privilege that some people are literally *dying* for around the world; And have, in our *own* country; Go to the polls

➤ That said, if that's the last thing you want to do these days, you're in good company
But we *must* not throw in the towel; We *have* to hold the line; Especially with so much *on* the line; And the presidential race isn't the only one that matters

As followers of Jesus Christ, we have a responsibility to do *everything we can* to thwart evil and promote good

Silence is not an option; *Inaction* in the face of evil, is evil itself; Like watching somebody get robbed, and doing nothing about it

Tyranny fills the void of apathy, every time

So *not* voting is not an option – not before God and not before man

A healthy democracy depends on the active participation of *responsible* citizens

So don't let anything, *anything*, keep you from the polls

3rd . . .

• **Identify your convictions**

If you're wondering how you can make a choice in this election, identify your convictions
Which, for a believer, are personal preferences based on biblical principles

If you profess to be *saved* under the authority of Scripture, then you should think and form your *convictions* according to Scripture

Like your convictions about the qualifications for leadership; Found in Deut 1 (v13-17)

Qualities like wisdom, and competence, and integrity, and courage, and humility, and virtue (Ex 18:21); Biblical qualities of leadership; That's the *easy* part

The hard part, is deciding which ones are most important to you; The convictions you *will* not, and *cannot*, compromise on

➤ For instance, you might *never vote* for a candidate who is pro-choice, pro-abortion; That might be one of your non-negotiables; And I hope it is; B/c God's pro-*life*

Or maybe your convictions mean never voting for someone who supports gay marriage;
Or promotes transgenderism
Or wreaks of pride; Or has a hot temper; Or a foul mouth

Or maybe you draw the line on someone who lies*****
Or whose policies would undermine our religious freedom; Or result in liberal judges

➤ What are your convictions? And how do you prioritize them?
Are you *okay* with voting for the lesser of two evils? Or is that out of the question b/c both are over the top in your mind? *Both* exceed the threshold of what u can tolerate
It's a matter of discretion, but it's a matter that matters

So determining which convictions are most important, is of the *utmost* importance, to help you make a good decision; You have to identify your convictions

And then . . .

- **Vote your conscience**

As in, vote according to how the Lord directs you, via his Spirit within you; The one who will *guide you into all truth* the Bible says (John 16:13)
That's what I mean by your conscience
That still, small voice that either keeps you awake at night, or lets you sleep at night

Once you've prayed and identified your convictions, vote according to the decision that gives you the most peace
If you're not settled with the thought of being directly responsible for a candidate's victory, don't vote for them; It's okay
If you can't sleep with the thought of voting for the lesser of two evils, don't; Vote for a third party; I'm not advocating that, but it's a legitimate option

➤ On the other hand, if your *fears* outweigh your *concerns*, vote away
For instance, if your fears of a certain *Democratic* candidate, outweigh your concerns about a certain *Republican* candidate, vote accordingly
If your conscience is settled, have at it; It's okay

But remember, someone else's might not be; And that too is okay
And the extent to which you think it isn't, is the extent to which you have a blind eye
A blind eye that will cause you to *deify your opinion*, and *demonize* theirs

➤ So make sure your conscience is clear, in *every* respect, and vote it
Read between the lines; Know the party platforms; Ferret out the facts . . .
Ignore the clever clichés; Condemn the pathetic politics; Disregard the political pundits; And vote your conscience; *Your* conscience

But make sure, #5, that you . . .

- **Count the cost**

Be willing to bear the consequences, and the *responsibility* for the consequences, for however you vote

If you vote for the *Republican* candidate, there's a good chance that conservative values will be promoted, and maybe even some biblical principles advanced

But there's also a chance that he will stir up strife, get us into fights we shouldn't, and splinter our country all the more; There's a good chance; That's the cost

On the other hand, if you vote for the *Democratic* candidate, there's a good chance that the political status *quo* will be preserved . . .

But an equally good chance that we will see a further decline in religious freedom, a greater promotion of gay marriage and transgenderism . . .

And an increase in anti-Christian bias in the courts

IOW there's a good chance that we will see a further slide in the *morality* of this country

➤ If you don't vote for *either*, you're voting for the winner; That's the cost of that
For instance, if you write someone in, or vote for one of the *third* party candidates – you're essentially voting for the winner
Not b/c they'll *win*, but b/c a vote for someone with no *chance* of winning, is one less vote that the *real* winner has to overcome
So a vote for a *peripheral* candidate, is a vote for the winner

But if that's where the peace is, b/c you're not *directly* responsible for the winner, so be it
As long as you're willing to suffer the consequences, and subject those who come *behind* you, to the same; This election is not just about us

So vote your conscience, yes; But make sure you count the cost, and make sure you're willing to pay it; Along with your children and grandchildren

6th . . .

- **Check your perspective**

Heb 11:13-16

[13] *These all died in faith* [referring to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob], *not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.* [14] *For people who speak thus* [that they're refugees essentially] *make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.* [15] *If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.* [16] *But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.*

Perspective, is a beautiful thing when it's not lost or distorted

Unfortunately, it usually is every 4 years

Far too many people are either a Chicken Little about all this, or a rabid dog; Blindly irrational in their *support* of a candidate, or *fear* of a candidate; Christians included

Every 4 years we forget whose we are; We forget where our ultimate citizenship lies
We forget that we are children of God, with an inheritance waiting on the other shore
We forget that we are citizens of the Kingdom of *God*, not the kingdom of man
And we forget that we are *strangers and aliens* on this earth, just like the Bible says
We forget

In which case we need to check our perspective; Evaluate it; Measure it; Compare it to those who've gone before us

➤ Neither Hillary Clinton nor Donald Trump can make America better; Sorry
And if you *think* so, you’ve lost perspective; Both politically *and* spiritually
Neither *one* can deliver on their promises, and neither one can bring about the kind of
change that will actually *fix* our problems; Moral change
And the more we think they can, the less perspective we have
The more we look to *politicians* to fix our lives and save our country, the more we
forget that we are *strangers and aliens*, just a passin’ through

Should we participate, and advocate, and speak up, and vote? You betcha
But we should also realize this is not our home; And start acting like it
Living with a *kingdom* perspective instead of a national one
A *heavenly* perspective instead of an earthly one
A refugee mindset, instead of a citizen one

That’s *our* perspective; Or should be
Especially so, if God is going to be unashamed of *us*, like he was the saints of old
It’s time start living and thinking like the aliens we are
Check your perspective

And last . . .

- **Trust the Lord**

Unfortunately, that’s the *last* thing on our minds in the midst of all this
We act like our entire *future* is dependent on this election; As if God is dependent on *us*
to keep things on track; As if the *sky* is falling; That’s *our* mindset
So much so, that – “*When this inch of history is recorded in the annals of heaven*
[somebody said], *it will not be the scandals of our candidates that slacked the jaws of*
angels. It will be the unbelief of the church.” (Beth Moore, blog)
It will be the lack of *trust*, in us

Ps 146:3-6 says – *Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no
salvation. [4] When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his
plans perish. [5] Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the
LORD his God, [6] who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who
keeps faith forever.*

The church of Jesus Christ does not rise or fall on the back of elections – this one, or any
other; His promise to *build* the church . . .
Does not depend on our political leaders to drive the nails; We can trust *him* to do it;
And should; No matter what happens (**Summary**)
*Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our
God.* (Ps 20:7)

➤ No matter *who* gets elected on November 9th, no matter what party is dominant – God is
still on the throne; God still reigns; God is still sovereign
And life is still worth the living, *just b/c he lives*; Just because

Prayer – Lord, forgive our lack of trust; Forgive our misplaced perspective; Sanctify our
conscience and clarify our convictions; B/c this life is worth the living no matter *what* the
outcome, just b/c you live; We pray in Jesus’ name, and give now in Jesus’ name, amen