

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

PART 1 | JESUS THE ELECTION AND YOU

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Well, so good to be back with you guys. Hopefully you've had an incredible summer. I've missed you and just want to give a great big shout out to everybody joining us across all of our locations, those of you joining us online.

If this is your first time to be with us, we've been in a series of messages this summer called Church In The Wild. And, by the way, can we just express our appreciation to Kyle and Ryan and Chad and all of the other campus pastors, just the incredible job that they have done teaching us.

It is such a thrill to be a part of this team—it kind of feels like we are on the USA Dream Team. It doesn't matter who you dish the ball to, they are going to score. And it's so much fun.

But we've been working our way through a letter that Paul writes to a church in Corinth called 1 Corinthians, it's in the New Testament. And these were first generation Christians. Meaning that they didn't grow up in church, they didn't go to church camp, they don't know the lingo.

And they came to know Christ later in life and now Paul is trying to encourage them to live in a wild culture, but keep their allegiance to Jesus while maintaining their influence in the culture because there are people who need to know and meet Jesus.

So, that's what we desire to be as well, a church in the wild. There is this great little passage in the book of Jude that I love. It says, "Snatch others from the fire," which means that you've got to be close enough that you are going to smell a little bit like smoke, but not be consumed by it.

So, we want to be a church that is in the wild but not of the wild. We don't want to be so enmeshed in the wild that we're not distinct from it but we're also not separated so much from it in our holy huddles that we have no opportunity to impact and influence, love, and serve.

So we're going to be in this series for another couple of months. But what I want to do today and next weekend is stay within the series but do a two-week mini-series within the series, because I can't think of anything more wild right now than the political climate that we are in.

We're talking this week and next Jesus, The Election, and You. Now, as we inch our way closer and closer to the presidential election in November, if there is anything,



regardless of your political ideology, that we can all agree on it's that there is very little that we all agree on.

In fact, even the just the fact that I've mentioned it likely it has evoked some sort of emotional response within you. And that's okay. In fact, what I'd like for you to do is just pay attention to that and maybe even name what it is.

Maybe for you it's anxiety. Maybe you're just really fearful of what's going to happen as the result of the election and the years coming after that.

Maybe it's anger. Your anger is just underneath the surface and it doesn't take much for it to trigger.

Maybe you're, I don't know, a little bit apathetic. You don't know who to believe or what to believe and it's just a constant rhetoric. And you're just like, "You know what? I'm just ready for all of it to be over."

Now, you might even add a few more additional emotional responses to that and I would say, whatever your emotional response is to this subject, that's understandable, likely even justifiable, because we find ourselves in this really complicated, divisive political climate where it doesn't feel like anybody can win. Or, worse yet, we're all set up to lose.

Here's what I mean. Regardless of the results in November there is going to be about half of the country that is going to feel as if the world is going to end. Even right now, if you are being honest, some of you are nervous just because I'm talking about it because you're not quite sure what I'm going to say or where this is going. Right?

In fact, you've been inviting that friend to church for months and months and months and today is the day that he finally decided to come. And you've not had the nerve to look over at him for the last two minutes, like, "I'm so sorry. I didn't know that he was going to do this." And you are like, "Aaron, what are you doing?"

Maybe some of you are so exhausted right now by all of the rhetoric and the media and online that you see church as your safe haven and you are like, "Oh, no not here too."

Some of you are really wrapped up and passionate about this topic and you are ready for your pastor to wave the banner, just as long as it's the right one.

So, what I want to do is, I just want everybody even across all of our campuses to collectively just take a deep breath in through the nose and out through the mouth. It's going to be okay. Alright? Primarily, what I want to do today is I want to encourage you; that's really the message that I want to bring.

Before I even get into that though, I'd like to let you know my motivation for why I want to tackle this. If truth be told, I don't really want to. I don't really want to preach on this.

In fact, several weeks ago I was not really sure I was. I was maybe 50/50 probably more like 60/40 kind of leaning against it. And then I went to dinner with a trusted friend and the subject came up. And he said, "Hey, are you planning doing a message or a series around the election. And I was like, "You know, I've been thinking about it. But I'm kind of leaning toward: no.

And he was like, "Well, why wouldn't you? And I was like, "Well, because It's very simple. I like to be liked. This is a minefield of a topic. I just don't know how to navigate that without having some blood drawn."

And then he said this, "Aaron, I totally get that. But, you are allowing the response and perspective of a very small percentage of people on the fringes to dictate what you are doing. The 80 to 90 percent of your people in the middle need a shepherd."

That was what tipped me over. So, I just want you to know that I'm really not that concerned with the small percentage of people on the extremes, if any of you. What I'm really trying to do is to just simply be a guide, a shepherd to the 80 or 90 percent of you who are just looking for a little bit of direction, some practical handles.

I didn't want to do this too close to the election where we are so emotional we can't hear anything. We don't want to do it too far away so that you forget it about the time we get to November. So, hopefully the timing of this is right.

I don't pretend to have all of the answers. And, by the way, I'm not going to tell you how to vote or my political opinions, or my perspective on foreign policy. That's either a letdown or a relief depending upon your political convictions. But what I do want to do... Somebody said thank you. I appreciate that.

What I do want to do though... Listen. There are about 200 other subjects I'd rather preach on. But I love what it says in 1 Chronicles, chapter 12, "The men of Issachar understood the times in which they lived, therefore they knew what Israel should do." We've got to understand the times in which we live so that way we know what we should do. So, that's my heart. That's my motivation.

Here are a couple of guiding questions to sort of direct our time both this weekend and next week. And I'm speaking primarily to followers of Jesus. And if you're not a follower of Jesus, that's okay. You're probably looking for some answers because you're like, "Man, this is a dumpster fire of division. Is there a better way to handle this?" And I assure you, there is. So here are the questions:

As followers of Jesus, how should we think about, (because that's where it needs to begin) participate in, and respond to the incredibly divisive political climate that we find ourselves in?

Here's maybe another question to ask:



How can we live lives of allegiance to Jesus in a society governed by people with different perspectives and priorities?

Now, thankfully, we are not the first group of people facing the challenge of maintaining our allegiance to Jesus amidst the politics of the day. History shows us that this has been a source of division and debate for centuries.

I'm reminded of something CS Lewis said whenever he addressed the political division of his day. Many people thought that Great Britain should either be involved in the war or that they should not be involved at all. And the debate spilled over to the church dividing many Christians.

And Lewis wasn't nearly as concerned that Christians had an opinion, but that their viewpoint, whatever it was, would become their primary allegiance and platform of their lives.

He addresses this in his fictional book *The Screwtape Letters*, which if you've never read it, you need to pick it up and read it just once. And in *The Screwtape Letters* (it's a fictional book) he's describing the spiritual war going on behind the scenes.

And Screwtape is a demon writing letters to his nephew who is also a demon in training, super weird names, Screwtape and Wormwood, but Wormwood has just been assigned to a brand new Christian. Screwtape is trying to give him counsel on how to lure his new Christian away from God. And he tells Wormwood, "It doesn't matter which side your Christian chooses, you can shipwreck their faith through either side."

And listen to what he says in the book.

Let the Christian begin by treating patriotism or passivism as part of his religion. Then let him, under the influence of partisan spirit, come to regard it as the most important part. Then quietly and gradually nurse him onto the stage at which the religion becomes merely part of the cause in which Christianity is valued cheaply because of the excellent arguments it can produce in favor of the British war effort or of passivism.

So what he is saying is that politics can begin a part of one's faith, which it should be. As Christ followers we should seek to be involved in civic responsibilities, as salt and light. But the problem is when it spirals so easily to the point where it can become the most important part, even to the point of replacing or abandoning of the faith.

And it spirals to where we begin to interpret Jesus and God's Word as tools to advance one's political beliefs and ideology rather than informing and guiding the way that we live our lives.

So here's a succinct way of saying it:

Instead of God's word informing our political views, our political views end up informing the way we read God's word.

Now, here's how you know that this has happened. Whenever you are asked about any of the topics that we are politically divided on right now, you take any of them: the economy, sexual ethics, social justice, life, or immigration among others is your first response to any of those issues what God's word says about them—are you even aware that God's word says things about them—or is your first response the rhetoric of the particular political party that you are aligned with?

Worse yet, have you confused the two and you are not aware of it when you do?

Right now the political landscape is so complicated. It might be easy for us to think, "Well you know, no other Christians have ever had to face this type of division like we are facing today. I'm sure that during Jesus' day things were much more simple and aligned and everybody agreed on politics more than what we do today."

And that would be a nice thought if it were true. But it's not true. In fact, I would even argue that things were just as divided and heated during Jesus' day, politically, if not more so because they didn't just have two primary political perspectives, they had more like six.

These are just the six that we have time to cover. And these six were kind of pitted off against each other. This is the climate that Jesus stepped into.

First you've got what we might call Henry the Herodian and Peter the Galilean. And these two guys just didn't see eye to eye on much of anything, even though they lived on the same street. Peter really believed that God's people lived in Galilee; therefore Galilee should be occupied by Galileans. And he was really miffed because Rome was beginning to occupy Galilean territory and he saw that as a threat. So, Peter really wants to make Galilee great again.

Now, Henry had a very different perspective. He's thinking, "You know what? Actually, Israel's best chances of survival will be to be under the reign of Herod. And so these two guys, they just saw things from totally different perspectives. They didn't get along.

Next we've got Saul the Pharisee and Josephus the Sadducee. These were kind of the cultural elites. But these guys had dramatically different political opinions. One of them wanted to watch CNN and the other wanted to watch Fox News. One would have listened to Meg and Kelly, the other one would have listened to Rachel Maddow. They just had very different ideas.

So, Saul really believed in the written law of God but also the inspiration of the oral law of God and Josephus thought Saul was a liberal. He was like, "There is no oral law of God. How can you have that perspective?" They didn't get along.

Next we have Matthew the Publican and Simon the Zealot. Now, these two guys might most closely represent our political divisions today. They just saw things very, very differently.

The Zealots believed in something called a Theocracy. We'll talk more about that next weekend. They didn't believe there should be any human, earthly elected leader. They should all be under the reign of God.

And Matthew who was a believer in God, a follower of God, worked for the government. He was considered a traitor because he collected taxes from his people for the government. So these two guys were just at odds with each other.

Here's an interesting thing about these two. Jesus invited both Simon and Matthew to be two of his 12 disciples, even though they were on opposite aisles of the political landscape.

Now, can you just imagine the heated debates and conversations that the two of them would have had around the campfire at night with Jesus? They probably would have just been going at it.

And Matthew might have said something to Simon like, "I don't get it man. We've always had people overseeing us as God's people. First we were in Egyptian captivity, then Babylonian captivity, then Persian captivity, and we're okay, man. Hey, we can be opportunistic in the midst of this, not just patriotic."

And Simon likely would look back at Matthew and say, "Matthew, you're an idiot. How can you think that way, live that way, vote that way and call yourself a follower of Jesus?" Sound familiar?

The political landscape that Jesus stepped into then was just as complex and divided as it is today.

So, what are the verses, what are the Scriptures in which Jesus advocates for one of these six positions? Well, I just want to look at a few of the verses in which Jesus speaks up and says, "Hey, this is my party." Alright? Um, actually there are none. There are no verses where Jesus advocates for any one of these six political parties.

In fact, the longest sermon Jesus ever preached, the Sermon on the Mount, which would have given Him plenty of opportunity to do this, He never once brings up the subject of politics.

None of the parables were related to the politics of the day. There isn't one miracle that focused on the politics of the day.

There is one passage we'll actually look at it a little bit more next weekend, where two of these groups decided to put their political differences aside because they both wanted Jesus out of the picture, the Pharisees and the Herodians.

They came to Jesus and they asked Him a political question that was meant to be a trap. And they said, "Hey, Jesus. Should we pay taxes to Rome?" And whatever He said, either yes or no, could get Him into political trouble.

And Jesus' answer is absolutely brilliant. He says, "Bring me a coin." They bring Him a coin. He says, "Whose picture is on the coin?" They said, "Caesar's." And He goes, "Okay, give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but you give to God what is God's."

In other words, pay your taxes to Rome but you never give to Rome what is God's. What is God's? You. You've been made in the image of God. He says, "Never give your allegiance to that. You give to Caesar what is Caesar's."

Now, listen. I would venture to say a good 95 percent of us or more would say, "I'm not giving my allegiance to any political party." Well, you are if you are overly anxious or angry. That's what allegiance is.

Jesus never brings it up. So, why doesn't Jesus delve more into the politics of the day? Is He saying that it's not important? I don't think Jesus would say that it's not important. I think Jesus would say, "It's not the most important."

In John, chapter 18, Jesus has an unexpected conversation with a guy by the name of Pilot. This is after His arrest and His illegal trial. He's getting ready to be crucified and He comes to Pilot. And Pilot is expecting Jesus to come in with a fight. Look at the passage, starting in verse 33. It says:

"Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him. 'Are you the king of the Jews?' he asked him. Jesus replied, 'Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?'

"'Am I a Jew?'" Pilate retorted. 'Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?'

"Jesus answered, 'My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would,'" check this out, he uses the word fight, "'to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders.'" Now I want you to remember this last sentence, "'But my Kingdom is not of this world.'" John 18: 33-36 (NLT).

Here's what He is saying. "The reason why I haven't and will never become a mascot or a spokesperson for temporary, earthly politics is because My Kingdom is not of this world. I'm not running for president. I'm already King."

Jesus has disappointed a lot of people because He didn't back up their political movements. He refused to join their political agendas then and He refuses to join our political agendas today.

In fact, one time He told a woman at a well, "I've got living water to where you will never thirst again if you come to Me and Me alone."

It's the minute that we begin to add anything to Jesus that doesn't satisfy, if it's Jesus plus anything else. It's Jesus plus my own works. It's Jesus plus my money. It's Jesus plus my sexuality. And Jesus says, "That just cancels it out. You can't want Me for what you think I can give you. If you want Me for Me, then I can satisfy that thirst."

He stated clearly over and over again that His Kingdom is not of this world. So, it's not on the ticket in November. His Kingdom is not Republican. His Kingdom is not Democrat. His Kingdom is not Independent. It's a whole other category unto itself.

His Kingdom is made up of people made in the image of God from every tribe, tongue, language, and nation around the world. And His Kingdom is eternal. It never ends.

Remember what we talked about a few weeks ago. Jesus has invited us to usher in His Kingdom coming on earth as it already is in heaven.

You want to know, as different as these groups were what they all have in common? They are all gone. Nobody is running as a Zealot today. I must have missed the Herodian national convention. Not to mention that the Roman Empire, which was the most dominate Empire in the known world at the time, is gone too.

What has not fallen? Jesus and His Kingdom. Jesus and His Kingdom are bigger and it transcends our temporary politics today. Am I saying that it's unimportant? No, I'm not saying it's unimportant. Please don't hear me say that. I'm saying that it's not the most important.

Jesus loves people. So, He pursues people from every tribe, tongue, nation, and language. He pursues people from every political ideology. He loves people on both sides of the political aisle, even though you don't. And He asks both to follow after Him.

So, what that means is that He refuses to be recruited as a puppet for anyone's political view regardless of what that is because He is building His Kingdom populated with men and women made in His image who have been redeemed by the sacrifice of Jesus on a cross.

And that's likely going to mean the church is going to be diverse, it's going to have some disagreement and some differences of opinion and perspectives and that's okay, because in Jesus' own small group there was disagreement and differences of opinion.

Matthew and Simon were on different sides of the political aisle and Jesus invited both to be his followers. Now, here's the thing about these two guys. Eventually they started walking as brothers. Not because I think that Matthew convinced Simon to his side or Simon convinced Matthew to come to his side, but because they realized that they were living for the King and His Kingdom.

In fact, both of these guys actually died side by side declaring Jesus is King because they finally got their allegiance to Jesus right first.

And Jesus is okay with some disagreement because unity does not mean uniformity, where everybody thinks and acts the same. It means unity in the midst of diversity. And if you're uncomfortable with that, you better start practicing because that's what heaven is going to be like.

He wanted our unity and their unity to be based, not on the ever changing political ideologies of the day, but on Him on His never changing Kingdom.

Here's why. The source of our unity is usually what always gets the spotlight. So, if our political ideology is the source of our unity, then that's going to get the spotlight.

Let me just ask you a gut check level, convicting question that I've been grappling with over the last few weeks and I don't want to stay with it alone because misery loves company. So, I'd like to involve you in it. Here's the question:

Am I more comfortable with people who love Jesus but they see things different politically, or with people who don't love Jesus who have the same political viewpoint as I do?

Jesus transcended the political parties and He still does.

Now, you might be sitting there listening to this and you are like, "Aaron, that's all great and good. I don't even know if I disagree with you. But, what about the issues? What about the issues, Aaron? What if there is a political ideology that runs counter to God's word? When do we stand up and say, 'Enough is enough and speak out against that?' What happens if our government makes decisions that run counter so our beliefs?"

Those are great questions. And we're actually going to tackle some of those questions next weekend as we look at Romans chapters 13 and 14, so I'm going to get to that next weekend.

But before I get to that, I need you to hear this because this is super, super critical. It isn't just politics or the vote that brings about impact and influence. It's something more than that because the early Christians did not have a voice or a vote and they still brought about tremendous impact and influence.

I want you to see this. The early Christians cared about issues that God has always cared about. And they did so with no political power, no position, and no voice at all. I just want you to let that sink in for a minute. I think we put too many chips on politics and the vote, and I'm not saying it's unimportant, it's important, you should participate and be involved. It's just not the most important.

The early Christians didn't have a democracy. They didn't have any of that and yet they still brought about change in the world. They had no candidate running for office. They had no voice. They didn't even have the comment section on social media. Some of us can't even imagine life without that.



And the privilege we have in the U S is to have a voice and a vote. I'm so grateful for and I'm so thankful for the men and women who have sacrificed their lives so that we can have those freedoms. And we can hold that in one hand and be grateful and at the same time we can acknowledge that in comparison to the Scriptures and to history, that's a rarity.

That means that we can actually, as followers of Jesus, be salt and light and bring about influence and impact in the midst of a wild world apart from that.

Here's what I'm saying. The Christians in the early church managed to impact their world for God not under a democracy but under a monarchy. And that should actually be an incredible encouragement to us. Because what that means is that we can be involved but we're not going to get wrapped up. Be involved, don't get wrapped up.

What does that mean? Don't let it overwhelm and overcome you. Don't allow it to be bursts of anxiety or anger. Please do not sacrifice your witness for Jesus in this world over temporary politics. Don't lose long-term relationships arguing about short-term candidates because politicians are around for a four-year term, friends and family are around a lot longer.

We've all got those family text chains with the crazy uncle and he just throws something in, blows the whole thing up. I'm like, "Don't let this ruin family relationships," and you're like, "Too late." We need to have a do over.

Some of you may be like, "Well, Aaron. I hear what you are saying. I hear what you are saying, you know. It's like a politician is around for four years but they bring in policies that last a lot longer than that. We should stand up."

Larry Hurtado in his book *The Destroyer of the gods* actually talks about how a more lasting influence and impact could be when we follow the pattern of the early Christians in Rome because they were able to turn the world upside down without any political clout.

And they were able to do so because they were committed to, according to Larry Hurtado, five ways of living that all come out of the Scriptures, these are God's issues, and they were committed to living these things out and it rocked the Roman world and made them sit up and take notice. And it brought lasting change beyond the vote and beyond policies.

We can actually go back and we can live out these same five biblical values as well, regardless of who becomes our next president. So what are they? Well, on the screen behind me, if you want to take a snapshot of these you can go look these references up later. Here are five passages of Scripture, according to Larry Hurtado, and five issues behind them. The early Christians were devoted to these five. First is:

Revelation 5:9, which talks about multi-ethnic worship in heaven: every tribe, tongue, nation, and language. So if there was a word to put to describe this we just might write the word diversity. The early Christians were committed to diversity and multi-ethnic worship.

And people were shocked because they'd never seen Jews and Gentiles alongside one another worshipping the same God. No other system or ideology in Rome had ever accomplished that. And it radically changed Rome.

Here's the next one:

Ephesians 5:32. If there was a word we could write about that it would be sexual ethic. So, the known world at the time, Rome, was pretty much like ours. It was like, anything goes, follow your heart, do whatever you want. As long as it's with a consenting adult it doesn't matter.

And the early Christians were the first to say, "Oh, hold on. This is more than something that is physical or biological. This is spiritual and actually it's a representation of Jesus' covenant with the church, so it's reserved between a man and a woman within the covenant of marriage. So they had a dramatically different view of sexual ethics that shocked the Roman world.

Matthew 25. If we just write one word about that it would just be the word justice. So the early Christians were committed to caring for the poor and they shocked the Roman system by providing for the needs of the impoverished. And the early church, even though they didn't have much, cared for the vulnerable and the hurting and it grabbed the attention of the Roman world.

Psalms 139. If there was a word we could write about that it would just be the word life. The early Christians had a reverence for life that the Roman world simply did not—from the unborn all the way to the elderly.

In the Roman world they would discard infants, primarily female infants because they didn't see them as having that much value and it was the early church that brought them in and adopted them and cared for the women involved as well—shocked the Roman world.

The last one is Matthew, chapter 5, verse 9. If there is a word we could write about that it would just be that it urges us to be peacemakers.

Now, when you look at these five issues, these are the five issues that the early Christians, without a voice and a vote, not under a democracy but under a monarchy, were committed to live their lives by and turned the whole Roman world upside down.

These are values of God not a political party. And the reason why God cares about these five issues, both then and now, is because behind all of these issues are people.

Now, here's the impossible task we find ourselves in. It's part of the reason why our politics in American are so complicated and divided. Our political parties, today, force us to choose which of these are the most important.

Here's what I want to do. What I'm going to do next could ruffle some feathers or get me canceled. So, hear me out before you write me off. Alright?

What I want to do is, I just want to place a D or an R representing our political parties underneath each of these issues. Now, listen. I am not saying that everybody who votes Democrat thinks this way or everybody who votes Republican thinks this way. I'm saying, generally, stereotypically, each of our political parties have grabbed ahold of one of these issues and plat-formed it.

So the issue of diversity—just generally speaking the left has taken that one.

When it comes to the issues of sexual ethics, traditionally speaking the right has taken that one.

When it comes to issues of justice, the left has taken that one.

When it comes to issues of life, the right has typically taken that one.

When it comes to peacemaking: neither. Right? Neither one. Neither one of them want to touch that one.

Now here's the thing. I just want you to take a look at that. This is why things are so divisive as it relates to the church because each of the political parties have kind of grabbed one and it is sort of forcing us to decide between the two.

Now, here's what I want you to see about each of those issues. There might be one or two that you are particularly passionate about—and there is good reason for you to be passionate about them: maybe your upbringing, your trauma, your wounding, your gender, your socio economic status—whatever it is, you look at the issue and you are like, "That's the one that I'm most concerned about," and that's okay. You can be a single issue voter.

But if you are a follower of Jesus, you cannot be a single issue Christian. All five need to be important. Here's the thing. We could actually put a great big J C over all of them because these are all Jesus issues.

Now, listen. We can disagree over the best policies about how to implement these issues, but we cannot pick one and discard the others.

See, the big question right now that everybody is asking is, "Hey, man. Which side are you on? Which side are you on?" And I'm sure the six parties of Jesus' day were asking the same thing.

There is actually a man in the Scriptures who asked that very question verbatim. His name was Joshua. And in Joshua, chapter 5 in the Old Testament he's about to take the land of Jericho, ready to go into battle and a man appears. He's referred to as the Commander of the Lord's army.

Who is that? Well many theologians agree this is a representation of the pre-incarnate Christ. This is Jesus showing up into this Old Testament story.

And Joshua looks at Him and he says, "Hey, whose side are you on?" and check out Jesus' response. "Neither one," He replied." Why? "I am the Commander of the Lord's army."

And get this. Here was Joshua's response. Joshua fell with his face to the ground in reverence. Here is his response, "I am at Your command." And then he asked this question, "What do You want Your servant to do?"

Guys, can I just tell you that that should be our response as well because Jesus doesn't, hasn't, and will not choose a side. He beckons us to choose His side.

And what that practically means is that come this November God is not sweating the election. Now, you might be. You might be. But He's not sweating the election because He's already declared that He's the Commander of the Lord's army and His Kingdom reigns and it pervades beyond all of those political groups.

And from 2,000 years ago, and if God tarries coming for another 2,000 years, we can just add the Democrats and Republicans to this list of political parties that are long gone. But His Kingdom will still reign.

God has worked through very godly leaders. He has also worked through very godless leaders in the Scriptures and throughout history: like Nebuchadnezzar, like Pharaoh, like Herod. He is not dependent upon any man or woman getting into the Oval Office to exact His purposes.

So, on election night He's not going to be sitting there like, "What are the swing states going to do?" And then when the candidate He wasn't expecting gets in, He's not going to say, "Hey, Jesus, Holy Spirit get in here. We've got to come up with plan B, "Oh Myself. What are we going to do?"

Then why are you?

Be very, very careful if a candidate tells you God is on his or her side, because they are likely just trying to get you on their side. Because He's on the side of those five issues. He's on the side of His Kingdom and His Kingdom alone. Jesus doesn't put on our jersey. He invites us to put on His. And He transcends the politics of our culture because He is above all and before all. He is King of kings and Lord of lords.



And if a Democrat gets into office, His Kingdom still reigns. If a Republican gets into office, His Kingdom still reigns. He is not nearly as concerned with who sits in the Oval Office come January as much as who is sitting on the throne of your heart for all of eternity. So, do not give your allegiance to anyone else.

I love what it says in Daniel, chapter 4, verse 17. This could be a verse that regardless of your political ideology... Let's just say the person you vote for doesn't become president next, you can just take this verse and allow it to comfort you. It says:

"...the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world. He gives them to anyone he chooses—even to the lowliest of people." (NLT)

God is not threatened. What grieves God's heart is not that a candidate He hasn't chosen would get into office. What grieves God's heart is that you would give your allegiance to anyone or anything else. And allegiance means too much anxiety of too much anger.

So, what do we do come November? Well I just want to go ahead and ready our hearts for this, three-and-a-half months from now. Can I just challenge you that you begin to see Election Day as a day of worship, where between this day and that, every day, you study the issues, you pray over the issues, you have thoughtful conversations, you ask God to guide you.

And then on Election Day you take advantage of the freedom and the opportunity that men and women have died for us to have and you go vote as an act of worship, which means, you cast your vote and then you release it to God. And you walk out of there and you just trust in the sovereignty of God. Come what may, His Kingdom still reigns.

And you get into your car and you turn up worship music and you sing at the top of your lungs because He is King of kings and Lord of lords and no politician, no political ideology, no presidential election, no policy can threaten, rob, or take that away.

So, can I just say this today? Right now, I don't know how you are feeling. Maybe you've got an email ready to fire off. I'll read it. I'll read it. But can I just challenge you right now if you realize that you've gotten too worked up over who sits in the Oval Office and you've overlooked who sits on the throne of your heart, would you re-invite Jesus to be King of kings?

He's the only One who can stabilize this incredibly unstable ground in which we live. And long after the election is over, long after our political parties are afterthoughts, His Kingdom still reigns and we can have confidence in that.

Father, we come to You right now and I'm so grateful that You didn't choose a side. You've invited us to Yours. Forgive us when we mess this up. I think most of us mean



well. I think we want to live out Your purposes in the world. It's just sometimes we get lured away and we begin to major on minors.

So, God, we just want to realign that a few months before the election, that we would recognize that Your kingdom is not threatened by a political party, so neither should we. So, help us to live out Your values to see the issues the way that You see them so that we can have influence and impact in this world for Your Kingdom. Forgive us when we get too wrapped up with who sits in the Oval Office and we overlook who is sitting on the throne of our hearts.

So, would You please take Your rightful place upon the throne of our hearts as we worship You and declare You as the Commander of the Lord's army? And may our prayer be just like Joshua's, "What do You want Your servants to do?" We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

