



Today, we wrap up our series "The Elephant in the Room." We'll finish our series with the easiest topic of them all: POLITICS. The political climate of our country today is perhaps best described as polarized. We have conservatives and liberals who don't like one another - probably more accurate to say they hate one another. Both sides of the aisle do their best to convince you that if the other candidate wins, it is our country's end. This is the environment we all live and operate in as followers of Jesus. So, what are we to do? Are we supposed to care about politics or not? Do we stick our heads in the sand or roll up our sleeves? Thankfully, we have some guiding principles given to us in the Bible.

Warm Up:

1. What's something big or small that happened this week that you're thankful for?

Key Passage: Titus 3:1-3, 1 Timothy 2:1-4

Discussion Questions:

2. What encouraged you the most from the sermon? What challenged you the most?
3. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 says, "First of all, then, 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." What might it look like to live this kind of life in 2023/2024? What practical things can we implement to help us live this out?

Paul tells Timothy that prayer should be the pattern of our lives concerning other people. We ask God for help with people, intercede on their behalf, and thank God for others. Regarding political matters, as Christians, we are to pray for ALL people, including those on the other side of the aisle. You may watch the news and think the other side is crazy and godless, and that might be true, but let's consider when we last prayed for someone that we believe is sincerely wrong. If we think people are wrong, when was the last time we asked God to help change their minds?

We don't have a king, but we do have a President. We need to pray for whoever the President is that God's principles would guide them and have the wisdom of God upon them. We're also told that we need to pray for those in "high positions," which could be other people serving in government.

We are almost exactly a year away from another presidential election. Let's pray for those involved in governmental leadership, President Biden, and those running for political office.

4. In general, how does our culture handle politics? What types of behavior have been normalized? In what ways does the average behavior of this "world" differ from how we've been called to behave in 1

Timothy 2:1-2 and throughout God's Word?

If ever there was a verse that described the opposite of how political engagement is often handled in our world today, it would be 1 Timothy 2:2b. To be peaceful means not to be belligerent or divisive. To be quiet means not to be loud; godly means to not be ungodly. To be dignified in every way – this is one of the primary guiding principles missing in our country today. We need men and women leading us who are people of dignity – the same goes for everyone else engaged in the political process.

Paul gave a similar charge to Titus: “Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people” (Titus 3:1-2).

What is the call to Christians (way beyond politics)? To live a peaceful and quiet life and be Godly and dignified in every realm we’re associated with (with our kids, jobs, and politics). Politics has a way of making people go the opposite of this biblical charge.

When you are the kind of person that verse 2 describes, it is pleasing in the sight of God. Paul writes, “This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3-4). This also tells us something about the heart of God – He desires all to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

5. In Galatians 6:14, Paul famously wrote, "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." What might it look like to follow Paul's example in navigating politics?

Are you living a Godly, dignified life of self-control in the midst of massive polarization?

Does your life show people that you’re of a different kingdom?

Are you living a life that’s leading people toward Jesus?

6. Proverbs 15:1 says, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." How have you experienced this to be true in your own life? How might we apply this wisdom to our lives, especially when interacting with people with different political opinions?

Ask yourself this question: Is my life a hindrance to people getting saved? Is my social media use a barrier to people getting saved? Is my attitude a deterrent to people getting saved?

7. As we enter another election year, how can we rally together to love each other well and lift the name of Jesus? How can we practically live out the call from 1 Timothy 2:1-2 together as a group?

Be involved and work towards righteousness. The Bible defines what is righteous (no talking head on the news, no person in leadership; God defines what is right and wrong). The world is full of governments where people don’t have a voice. God has given us an amazing responsibility and stewardship.

Trust the Lord. Remember that, as Christians, we’re of a different Kingdom. Daniel may be the best example for us. Remember the day in which Daniel lived? A wicked king named Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city of God (Jerusalem), took Daniel captive, and gave him a new name. This evil king was highly prideful and did not care to throw Daniel’s friends in a furnace when they wouldn’t worship an idol, and Daniel was later thrown in the lion’s den when a different king said no one could pray but to a

false god. Do we all see the detestable culture that Daniel lived in during his time in Babylon? God gave Daniel a vision in the night, and Daniel responded with these powerful words: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who understand” (Daniel 2:20-21). Daniel lived in a place that was not his home because of a brutal king who captured his hometown. This king had no regard for human life, and Daniel gave us a biblical principle (true in the sixth century BC and valid for us today): God removes kings and sets up kings. God is working on a plan more significant than we can understand, and He sometimes uses the wicked to push His agenda forward. God works in ways we cannot always see or understand, but will we trust the Lord?

8. What's one personal takeaway from today's study you can focus on this week?