

Post Election Thoughts

Many wonderful people woke up on this past Wednesday morning feeling as though we have been robbed of our country. I must admit, it does now seem like a much different America than I was reared up in. I think it is okay to realistically look at the recent election and interpret it as a referendum by a majority of the voting public that has rejected the sanctity of life, traditional biblical marriage and trust in God for trust in government. If you take dedication to God and obedience to Him as an expression of that love, it is normal to be a little downcast. On the other hand, we as Christians are not to wallow in our sorrows, but rather triumph over our sorrows. Please keep in mind, this was a statement of the voting public. The win was still very much a split vote. There are many out there who did not vote, but still hold our sacred values. Yes, I know we may usher forth a rebuke to them for not voting, but today is not the day to live in the "if onlys." One can lose peace of mind real quickly, if we keep beating up ourselves and others asking, "what if" and lamenting "if only" those who hold these precious beliefs would have voted. We do not know who is out there and how they think. Listen to the words of Elijah, one of God's choice prophets: *"And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away"* (I Kings 19:10). It is so easy, when disappointment comes after we were trying to do right, to feel outnumbered and like the whole world is against us, but God emphatically declared to Elijah, *"Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him"* (I Kings 19:18).

Our Lord presented Himself to a world that He loved. *"He came unto his own, and his own received him not"* (John 1:11). On the eve of Passover, the vote was taken, *"But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar"* (John 19:15). The disciples were devastated: *"And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered"* (Mark 14:27). In the midst of the scattering, our Lord was still in control. So much was going on even after our Lord was laid in the darkness of that dark cave. But on the third day, Christ rose from the dead. And that which appeared to be the end was the beginning. The cross did not stop our Lord, but rather provided the impetus and power of salvation. *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"* (John 1:12).

The comparison between the election and redemption cannot be juxtaposed in the same light. In the greater scheme of things the redemptive act of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus trumps all of history. The point I want to make today is that we as Christians view everything through the crucible

of Calvary. Paul said, *“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”* (I Corinthians 2:2). As Christians, we are commanded not to worry; Jesus said, *“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life...”* (Matthew 6:25). Paul said, *“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”* (Philippians 4:6). Paul also admonished, *“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”* (I Thessalonians 5:18). In the spirit of the cross, we see every set back as a set up. History proves this as well. Just before William Tyndale died as a martyr and his body was burned at the stake, he prayed, "Lord! Open the King of England's eyes." Within four years, at the same king's behest, four English translations of the Bible were published in England, including King Henry's official Great Bible. All were based on Tyndale's work. Yes, there is death, however, we believe also in resurrection. If our ideals are right, if our values are in line with God's, He will bless in His way, in His time. On a day like today, take heart my brothers and sisters. God loves you; He is in control. On the dark and stormy night when Paul was about to survive a literal shipwreck he was able to say, *“For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee”* (Acts 27:23,24). Do you remember the cry of the priests who rejected Jesus? They cried out, *“...We have no king but Caesar.”* Eventually, even Paul was put to death by Rome. But we who experience death shall most assuredly experience resurrection. Long live the King of Kings!

Please permit some simple advice:

1. Don't pout. Lift up your head -- Romans 8:28 is still in the Book.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28). “And we know...,” that is not “we think,” “we hope,” “we perceive.” The Bible says “we know.” In this we shall be confident. And those disciples called by God's name need to be aware that His greater purpose is at work, even through the grief.

2. Don't stop praying.

Continue to pray to God about the matters that we know matter to Him. Don't forget to pray for those who are in authority. *“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”* (I Timothy 2:1-3). Paul said to pray, “...first of all...,” not last, or when all else fails. Today is not the day to delay; it is the day to pray!

3. Be determined to make a difference where you can -- in your home, in your church, at your work, at your school.

Let us say with Joshua, *“...but as for me and my house, we will serve the*

LORD” (Joshua 24:15). In our Lord’s earthly life, perhaps no one knew Him better than Peter who said that Jesus, “...*went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him*” (Acts 10:38). The Roman government was into far more atrocities than the United States government that we live under, but our Lord was not involved with governmental protests. He just went everywhere doing good. Doing good will make a difference! “*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good*” (Romans 12:21).

4. Keep a loving attitude. Don’t ever stop behaving as Christians!

Jesus said, “*And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them...But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful*” (Luke 6:31-32; 35-36).

Robert Frost said, “Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-- I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.” When we as Christians live up to our name, it will make the world take notice and could make all the difference. Jesus said, “*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*” (John 13:35).

-Pastor Pope-