

## #171 “Does God Care About Politics?”

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God very much cares about those who lead our nation and the nations around the world. When it came to the nation of Israel, the king had such great influence that, if he feared God, the people would often turn to God as well. Conversely, if he rebelled against God and turned to idols, the people would follow suit. Obviously, the faithfulness of our leaders or the lack thereof is of major consequence. Since God cares about the heart of the leader and the hearts of the people, God must also care about governments.

Jesus believed in respecting earthly authorities and not believing that we can simply ignore civil authority because we belong to a heavenly kingdom ultimately. He said that when it comes to taxes, for example, that we should “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's” (Matthew 22:21). Of course, there can be unrighteous governments which exploit the people, and there may well be a time, as in the beginning of the United States, to try to form a new government built upon proper principles. But that is an extreme situation. In societies where the people have a say such as ours, we might consider that opportunity and freedom a matter of stewardship. We are stewards of how we use our talents, our time, our energy, and so on, but we might also consider how we steward our right to vote or speak out for righteousness, for example. As God leads, there may be a time or place for us to be involved in the political process. God cares about abortion and the sanctity of marriage, for example, and inasmuch as we can protect children through the legal process, how can we say that we shouldn't? How can we say that God wouldn't care about such a thing? Granted, laws don't make people righteous, but they can protect the innocent and slow the decay of a society, thereby protecting the guilty from destroying themselves as well. Godly laws are good laws.

God tells us that we should pray for our leaders. Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:1-2, “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.” Righteous rulers lead to peace for the people, and we should pray for our leaders to pursue truth and godliness. Even when we have ungodly leaders, we should still pray and even more so. However, let us never think that God is not ultimately in control, even when evil people are in power. God says in Proverbs 21:1, “The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.” In other words, God is always ultimately in control, exercising His sovereign purposes on the earth. Sometimes He gives evil people over to their evil desires to let them see just how painful the results will be. There is great peace for the believer knowing that God is ultimately in control and that no king or earthly ruler can thwart His sovereign purposes.

Romans 13:1 says, “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.” Christians have no right to rebel against our governing authorities, unless, of course, we are being commanded or forced to do something that blatantly violates the commands of

Scripture. In fact, we should honor our leaders and be respectful, knowing that God is the only ultimate authority. Since those who are in positions of authority are ultimately allowed those positions in God's sovereign working, as we submit to our authorities, we submit to God. Thus, honoring our civil leaders is one way that we can obey Scripture and, in so doing, honor the One True Ultimate Authority.

All political systems are flawed, some more than others. In America, we are fortunate to have things such as individual rights, due process, and a system of election that values the input of the people, albeit imperfectly. But we need to understand that as long as we are led by mere men and women, we will always have political problems because we have people who sin in command. Only when Jesus comes back and sets up His earthly kingdom will government be perfect. It will be led by a Person Who shows no partiality, Who makes no mistakes, and Who makes decisions that benefit all people, rather than some select interest. He will rule with righteousness, and the result will be peace. As Isaiah 9:7 says, "There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace." Until that day, we can expect to be disappointed, even by people who claim to be Christians.

If only our leaders understood that righteousness breeds peace, whereas iniquity and lying breeds destruction and division. Proverbs 16:12 says, "It is an abomination for kings to commit wicked acts, For a throne is established on righteousness." Proverbs 20:28 adds, "Loyalty and truth preserve the king, And he upholds his throne by righteousness." Let us pray that our leaders will begin to make decisions based upon truth and Biblical morality rather than upon polls, raising money, and getting into office. As a people, we need to love righteousness, or else why should we expect a righteous person to rise into leadership from a pool of unrighteous people? This is why how we live as believers impacts our government, whether we realize it or not. As we live for Christ and as we stand for truth, we make a difference spiritually and therefore also politically whether we realize it or not. If believers were silenced, as Hitler did, unrighteousness can run free. The church is the pillar and support of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15), and if truth is cast aside, evil can and will prosper (Daniel 8:12). We must not let that happen inasmuch as it depends upon us. God, the Ultimate Authority, can be trusted to honor our faithfulness and righteous acts.

When politics becomes a cesspool of lies, deceit, and corruption, let us pray for righteousness to prevail and for God to raise up people after His own heart to lead us. People who love God and believe His Word are the only hope freedom has.