

Spirit-Filled Pastor Says Ours Must Be a Government of the Lamb and the Lion

I'm not beholden to the Donkey Party or the Elephant Party, but I do choose to express and stand for my biblical convictions as a follower of the government of the Lamb and the Lion.

I also understand the importance of the elections, especially in the spiritual and political climate we find ourselves in today in 2020.

On November 2, 2016, four years ago, I spoke at a community wide prayer service in Spring, TX. That day the seventh game of the World Series was also played. Throughout the audience many people were wearing either Chicago Cubs or Cleveland Indians gear.

As I got up to speak, I asked the crowd, "How many of you are Cubs fans?" Many responded enthusiastically. I got a similar response to, "How many of you are Indians fans?" Then I said, "Tomorrow, some of you are going to be celebrating because your team won the championship. Some of you will be sad and disappointed that your team did not. But at the end of the day, no matter who wins or who loses, you'll still be Christians. You will still be members of the body of Christ, and you will still be part of the Church."

I went on, "In a few days the Presidential election will occur, and many of us may differing political preferences. And, at the end of the day, some of us will be ecstatic and will celebrate, and some will be deeply disappointed. Yet, we must remember that our hope is not in the institutions of man, nor in a candidate or political party. Our hope is in the Hope of Glory, Christ Jesus. When the election is over, we will

still be Christians and, as such, should reflect Christ even through our strongly held differences. Will we still reflect Christ even to those who may disagree with us?"

Again, I understand that the elections, especially in the spiritual and political climate in which we find ourselves today, have far more significance and consequences than that of a World Series. Yet, as Christians, we must keep our eyes on the Lord. We must guard our hearts and minds lest we become disillusioned, even bitter. We must keep our eyes on God's destination for us and not miss the opportunities to reflect His Kingdom in a world of divisiveness, fear, lawlessness, and confusion.

A Return to Civility and Character

One of the biggest challenges in our society is the lack of civility we display in our disagreements—even in the Church. I've never seen so many people who are so adamant and opinionated—politically and otherwise—that they allow their preferences to divide their families, their friendships, and even their churches. It's painful and heartbreaking, especially from those representing Christ, on both sides of the political preference spectrum.

The only unshakable kingdom is the Kingdom of the Lord, and we, the Church, must still love each other in our disagreements if we are to help others find their place in the Kingdom. John 13:35 says, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." How can we lead others to a relationship with God if we can't get past our own differences?

A Church United for a Nation Divided

In Mark 10:9, Jesus teaches, *"Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."* This passage applies to the context of marriage, but it is clear that God is the one who brings the Church together and woe unto the man or woman who

causes dissension and separation in the Church. Proverbs 6:19 lists one who sows discord among brethren as one of seven things God despises.

We must walk in Christlikeness, crossing racial, denominational, and political barriers to be part of something bigger than ourselves. We need to love with the love of Christ; it's the only way we can help others find hope in Christ.

Only a Church united can bring hope and healing to a nation divided!

Regardless of our political differences, the Church must find unity in our diversity, so we can be a plumb line of healing and hope within a culture of so much division.

While I was reflecting on and pondering some of the lessons we see in the historical examples of Israel, I came across a Nov. 2019 article from *Watch Jerusalem*. It addressed similarities of the political and spiritual climate in Israel prior to the conquest by Romans and ultimate destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D, to that of today:

“Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian who witnessed the tragedy of the destruction of Jerusalem and the desecration of the Temple, wrote that the Jews ‘turned their hands one against another.’ Divided families, towns and communities were in conflict...”

He witnessed the political divisiveness and the spiritual division from within that opened the door to attack from without. Josephus wrote that disagreement became so sharp it split apart families. The fighting amongst the Israelites caused instability and weakness; and ultimately in 66-70 A.D. Rome conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple.

In uncanny similarity, we see today the political divisiveness among the body of Christ. We also see the Church being divided

by external and outside influences that is causing instability. This is why I personally sense the urgency to pray for the Church and to get the wisdom of God. We need the atmosphere of His Presence if we are going to see the transformation we need.

While there is so much infighting in the Church (and lived out in public), we are in danger of being a divided kingdom. The advent of social media has opened a new era of how information is disseminated. Although there are many opportunities to use it for good, there has also been a plethora of exaggerated, skewed, and even false information that has opened a Pandora's box of rumors breeding division, animosity and mistrust.

John Wesley once asked his mother, "How do you define sin?" She replied, "Son, whatever weakens your reasoning, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, takes away your relish for spiritual things..."

It seems today that our reasoning is weakened, our tenderness is impaired, our sense of God is obscured in all the noise pollution, verbal jargon and depleting our relish for spiritual things.

The Lord is shining the light of the Holy Spirit upon us and His Church, identifying the dross and rubbish in our lives to purge and refine us in preparation for the days ahead. He is searching throughout the Church with lamps of His Holy Spirit and marking those who are settled in compromise and complacency (Zeph. 1:12). But He is also searching out and marking those who are weeping for all the detestable things that are happening (Ezekiel 9:4).

Perspectives and Life Experiences

Our personal life experiences, race, religion, and relationships are all factors that influence our perspectives and our ideology. In turn, our preferences are easily influenced by and filtered by our ideologies. But as followers

of Christ our ideology is to be defined and based on God's Character, Word, Nature and Spirit.

It is imperative that we surrender our personal preferences and ideologies for the ideologies of God's Kingdom, not man's. I often say, "The Kingdom of God is built on relationships, first with God, then with one another." May we be reminded to love God with our whole heart, mind and soul, and to reflect Christ-likeness to others, even to those with whom we may not even those who may not agree with us.

As followers of Jesus, we must live by our convictions, based upon the characteristics of Christ, rather than by our personal preferences. Our preferences are influenced by many factors, but as Christians, our lives are to be surrendered to God through Christ Jesus.

It's time for a soul searching and corporate heart awakening for revival in the nation. It will come by choice, circumstance or consequence. It is better to have a heart awakening than a rude awakening.

Regardless of our political, philosophical, religious or ideological beliefs, we must awaken to the reality that our foundations and freedoms are under attack. Where are the lovers of truth and the voices of conviction? As John Calvin said, "A dog barks when his master is attacked. I would be a coward if I saw that God's truth is attacked and yet would remain silent."

My political views are not based on my own personal preference or perspective. I cling to the centrality of the Cross and recognize that we can only cross our racial, denominational, and generational lines with true reconciliation if we have the Cross Christ at the center of our lives and in our hearts. Our personal preferences will always divide us. We can only be united when we are together in Christ and recognize His manifest presence.

2 Chronicles 5 says that when the priests came out of the holy, holy, holy presence of God, *"they came not according to division."* I can imagine! When we come into the presence of a triune and holy God, our personal styles of worship, our racial and ethnic backgrounds, our political views are all equalized in His presence. We are undone (Isaiah 6).

We need to come to that place of the presence of God. When we've been equalized in His holy presence, we become undivided. In that place, we have something far more in common together as one voice, one sound of worship, for the glory of God.

I'm praying that we would come to that place of putting aside our personal preferences and realizing that we are part of the government of the Lamb and the Lion, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who was slain before the foundations of the earth.

A.W. Tozer said, "Self is the opaque veil that hides the face of God from us." In today's self-absorbed, self-righteous, self-centered, self-self-self society, we have found ourselves with a veil between us and God. What we need desperately is God's presence.

I often find myself praying Zephaniah 3:3-5, 9. "Lord, You are righteous and do no unrighteousness. You bring Justice to light. You never fail. But the unjust knows no , hear our cry to restore to YOUR people a pure language (lip and heart), that we all may call on the Name of The Lord, and to serve YOU with ONE ACCORD."

Be Encouraged

In the book of I Samuel, Hannah faces a humanly impossible situation. In her desperation, she commits her calling to God and promises to offer her child to serve God. In response, God brings forth, out of an empty womb and out of human impossibility, a righteous judge and prophet.

I believe God, out of the most humanly impossible situations of the past few decades, is about to bring forth a corporate generation of prophetic voices and a corporate generation of righteous judges.

We need the Samuels to arise, and the Esthers and the Deborahs. This is our culmination moment! Don't give up! Don't draw back, but push forward. Yes, we are at a critical juncture. Yet no matter what may happen in the season ahead, keep the long-view. The Church must unite so we can be engaged and positioned to bring in and be a part of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our time, in this nation and around the world.

It's our moment. Don't let the enemy divide and conquer. But let us recognize we're part of something greater than ourselves. It's time to unite in Christ, to mend our net, so that we can be cast by the Lord and bring in a great harvest.
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