

## 20201101 Proverbs 16:33 You Are the Light of The World – The Role of the Believer in the Political Process

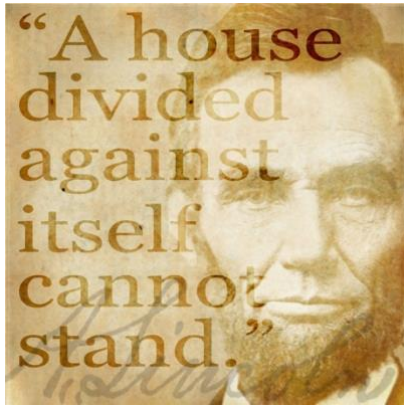


### You Are the Light of The World – The Role of the Believer in the Political Process

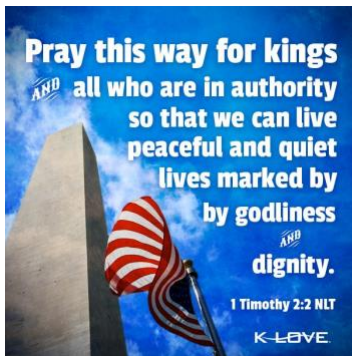
This past week, Arab-American Pastor Michael Youssef, said, “God is sovereign, but we are responsible.” John Quincy Adams, one of the Founding Fathers of America, said “Duty is ours, Results are God’s.” Solomon in his great wisdom said, “*The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of The Lord*” (Proverbs 16:33, KJV). Each of these statements indicate that we’re to do our part while allowing God to do His part. Many Christians are quick to call God “sovereign,” but they would also do well to take responsibility and at least vote and pray for their country (see 1 Timothy 2:1,2). Christians have disengaged from the public discourse for many reasons; some out of fear, some because they are intimidated by the world, and some think we’re just not supposed to be involved in such earthly things. Some misunderstand the meaning of separation of Church and state. Scripture is clear that we should do all that we’re able to do to share truth to the world around us, but we’re to do so in love and we’re to leave the final outcome in the hands of the Lord. We MUST pray and vote for the candidate whose positions most accurately reflect biblical truth, but we are never to put our total trust in a political position or in any political figure. God is sovereign. No matter who becomes president, God is still in control of our lives. No matter who is president, Jesus is still King!



This morning I am going to speak about religion and politics. Maybe I should be a little uncomfortable doing so as we’ve always been told that those are the two things that should never be brought up in polite conversation. But this is not a mere conversation. I am going to speak from the heart as a Pastor about what I think we’re to do as Christian Americans. More importantly, I am going to present what I believe God’s Word, the Bible, says about these things. However, while thinking about this coming election and my responsibility as a pastor, I am reminded that I will be held responsible by God for what I do and do not say from this pulpit. Many pastors are scared to speak up, but most of you all know that I am not a person that scares easily. I agree with the Apostle Paul who said, “*Woe to me if I do not preach the truth of the gospel*” (1 Corinthians 9:16, NIV). Unlike other Sundays, I will mostly read this sermon. It will be listened to and read. It will be scrutinized and dissected. I do not want anyone taking what I say and trying to say that I said something else.



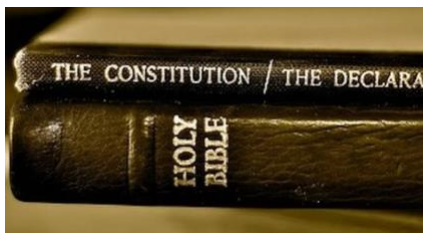
Jesus said, “a house divided cannot stand” (Mark 3:25). Abraham Lincoln repeated it during the years of our great American Civil War. Our nation is at odds with itself. It is more divided than I have ever seen in my sixty-four years. This morning I want you to remember that you carry dual citizenship. As a born-again believer in Jesus Christ, you are first and foremost a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Secondly, you are a citizen of the United States. Way on down the line is whether you identify yourself as a republican, a democrat, a libertarian, or an independent. I’ve told you all before that I don’t discuss much of my political preferences because some of you would criticize me for being too liberal or libertarian, and others of you would think that I am too conservative. As you vote, you should vote as a citizen of the Kingdom of God as much as you are able to do so.



The Bible is clear that we have moral and civic responsibilities. We cannot withdraw from the political process. Paul reminded the young pastor Timothy, *“<sup>1-3</sup> The first thing I want you to do is pray. Pray every way you know how, for everyone you know. Pray especially for rulers and their governments to rule well so we can be quietly about our business of living simply, in humble contemplation. This is the way our Savior God wants us to live. (1 Timothy 2:1-3, The Message).*

In Rome there was no voting. Hence, the only real input a believer could have in government was to pray, or to appeal to the Emperor. We have the writings of early Church fathers such as Justin Martyr and Quadratus who appealed to the government in Rome to leave Christians alone. *They were not silent.* Early Christians were agents of change in their society. Early Christians rescued babies thrown into the rivers or forest by pagans who birthed unwanted children. Eventually Christians established the first orphanages and hospitals in the former Roman Empire. They were salt and light to the world in their day. Christian influence also eventually brought an end to barbaric activities such as the gladiator fights.

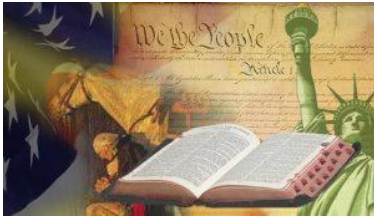
In the United States, we too have a duty to speak up and do our best to influence our government to operate in a godly and orderly way. Why? Because a society built on the Word of God and on biblical truth will result in a society where individuals receive better justice and more freedom. This results in a society where all are respected because all people were made by God and are made in His image. An America that is supported by biblical truth will simply be a better place to live for all men and women. A society built on godly principles results in a society where life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are protected for all in that society.



The Founding Fathers of America understood this well. They realized that a people who are self-governed by religious morés are able to be given great freedom. Having a proper biblical view enables citizens to exercise self-control. Such citizens can enjoy a greater degree of personal freedom than

a society filled with people who have no morals, no biblical knowledge, and who must be ruled by great externally imposed control.

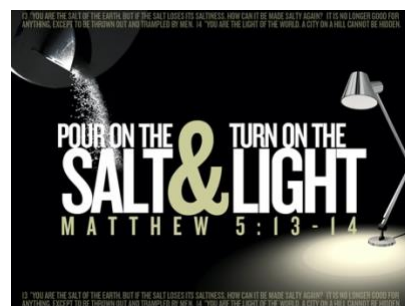
The founders knew that we are selfish by nature, and that we are all fallen. I have preached over and over that when we try to fill our God instilled needs with anything but Him, it results in frustration and conflict. If everyone in society is seeking to meet those needs in the flesh, the society remains in conflict and frustration. I've been speaking for many weeks about "the flesh." The flesh is that old sin nature that lives within each of us due to the fall of man. If we are a society in which all are living in the flesh, how can such sinful and selfish people govern themselves? The answer is very simple. They cannot.



Throughout history governments have imposed laws that allow no personal freedom and enforce conformity. This is done to keep others from doing horrible things to their neighbor, but also to give control to all of those at the top. Without self-restraint, society falls into chaos. There is a whole lot of that going on in America today. The Founding Fathers of America, however, wanted to establish something different. They wanted a system that gave broad freedom and exerted limited control. That system depended on the virtue of the American People. It depended on what I might call the goodness of a people who were self-controlled by a desire to live by God's principles and to live godly moral lives. Regardless of what the media says, almost every Founding Father of America was a Christian or a believer in God. They structured the government following Judeo-Christian principles. That is the historical reality. John Adams, one of the founders said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."<sup>1</sup>

They felt so strongly about this that they put a protection in the Constitution for the free exercise of religion. It is the first right listed in the Constitution. This was done purposefully because every other human right flows from that human right.<sup>2</sup> So how is this religious citizenry supposed to interact with a secular society? How are Christians supposed to interact with the America in which we live?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said,



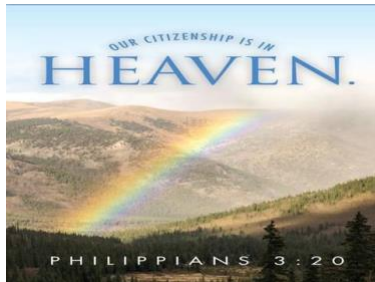
*<sup>13</sup> "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. <sup>14</sup> "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; <sup>15</sup> nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup> Let your light shine before men in such*

<sup>1</sup> <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-3102>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.learnreligions.com/christian-quotes-of-the-founding-fathers-700789>

a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16, NASB).

All of this business about being the salt and the light speaks directly to us voicing biblical truth into society around us. We cannot bring the curative and preservative features of salt into society without speaking biblical truth into that society. We cannot bring the light of God's Word into society without sharing that light. This sometimes brings hatred of us with it. Remember Jesus' words, "I've given them your Word and the world has hated them....I ask that you protect them from the evil one." (John 17:14a, 15b, author's paraphrase). Sometimes being hated goes with the territory of being the salt and the light in society.



Concerning our citizenship in heaven, the Apostle Paul reminds us, <sup>20</sup> *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; (Philippians 3:20, NASB).*

That speaks to the reality that we are also ultimately citizens of heaven. We are citizens of the Kingdom of God. Whatever happens here on earth, including this election, is nothing compared to what happens for eternity in heaven. Yes, political matters here are important, but they're not eternally important.

The bottom line is that your voice matters, and the world needs to hear your voice as a Bible-believing Christian. Being a faithful Christ-Follower includes voting for those who stand for principles that are supportive of what the Bible says is true, good, and righteous. We are not called to blend in, but to make a difference.



Sometime in the post World War II era, a drive began to totally secularize America. Those who do not understand the truth of God's Word and who choose to deny the reality of how we were formed as a nation have made a militant effort to drive religion in general and Christianity in particular out of public view. We are in grave danger. These militant secularists are now attempting to control people of faith. They cite "separation of church and state" as a defense to their position that we should not be allowed to interject our faith into the political process. There is no such statement in the Constitution.

That statement was given as an assurance by Thomas Jefferson to early Baptists who wrote the government, fearing governmental influence in their beliefs and their worship. It was a statement of assurance that government would stay out of the Church and out of our beliefs. It was not a statement concerning the influence of godliness or faith in government. These militant secularists accuse people of faith as being those trying to control others, but in reality, it is they that want to control us. They scream that we cannot and must not have a voice. They are wrong. America was set up specifically with the idea that we WOULD have a voice; a welcome and MUCH NEEDED voice. As a believer, you are called to let your voice be heard. Silence cannot be an option for the Church.



Our voice is not to be a democrat voice or a republican voice, but a Kingdom of God voice. That is a voice that's aligned with the will of God and the way of God. It is a voice that knows His will is built upon His Word. A "Kingdom voice" starts with loving God with your heart, soul, and mind, and loving your neighbor as yourself. That is living with a Bible-centered worldview. But what does a Bible-centered worldview include?

It is difficult to know how to prioritize issues as we vote. We don't always clearly see all civic issues in the Bible. I think as believers, we can have different views on things like taxation, public education, trade, economy, immigration, national defense, climate change, etc. But don't get side-tracked into thinking that all political positions are equal in importance. They are not. I am sorry to say that in the past, as a lawyer, I was tolerant of things that I should not have been tolerant of. At that time, I felt I had to do so as a member of a secular society. I am speaking mainly about the sanctity of all life and the issue of abortion in America and in the world.



My great change came one evening in 2016 as I argued on Facebook with two people who profess to be Christians. We were arguing about abortion, and they would not give me one day up to the birth of a child that it would be acceptable to prohibit an abortion. I was awakened by the realization

that these people (both women) who cling to abortion rights are willing to allow and empower others to take a living child out of a woman's body and to abandon the little baby to die alone in a procedure room. I was horrified by their position. This is evil. This is wickedness. There is no other way to explain it. I also have a personal interest in this as one of my family members was one of the lawyers who represented Roe in the famous Roe v. Wade case which legalized abortions. If my family member could argue before the Supreme Court for abortion, I can argue God's truth before the congregation that God has put into my care. It is my responsibility to give you biblical truth concerning this great societal sin.

Let me quickly add that if you have had an abortion or you have fathered a child that has been aborted or if you have encouraged an abortion, God loves you and forgives you of any participation you've had in that abortion. Sin is sin, and all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). This is not a shaming session. Satan traffics in shame and the currency of the Kingdom of God is forgiveness and righteousness. As a believer, I have come to believe that "abortion-rights" is a defining issue where I must make a stand. God gives life, and it is not our right or privilege to take innocent life that has no voice. Listen to the poet King David speaking of when and how God intimately knows each of us even while we are yet unborn.



- 13 For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.*
- 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.*
- 15 My frame was not hidden from you  
when I was made in the secret place,*

*when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.*  
<sup>16</sup> *Your eyes saw my unformed body;*  
*all the days ordained for me were written in your book (Psalm 139, 13-16 NIV).*

So how we believe MUST affect how we vote. We must stand for religious liberty. We must stand for positions that welcome godly thinking into the political arena. As I look at the candidates, one of the parties has made abortion-rights the centerpiece of their platform. That is unbelievable to me and it is unacceptable. I cannot understand the never-ending drive to put that in the forefront of everything. You might be quick to accuse me of being a one-issue voter. I am not really, but this one issue DOES indeed decide my vote. It has to because it rises above all of the rest. Why? Because God's Word commands that I do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). Justice for the unborn child demands that the killing stop.

Secondly, a vote for the candidates of one party is a vote that endangers religious liberty. They have advocated openly for repeal of the Religious Liberty Act. Thirdly, one side of the political spectrum desires an open door for socialism to "fundamentally change America." One of the candidates for vice-president is the most socialist senator in the senate. Socialism exalts man's ability to solve man's problems without God. Wherever socialism has sought a foot-hold in world history, it has viewed the Church as an enemy to be destroyed and silenced. Catholic Priest, Father Edward Meeks, said in his sermon on October 11th (3 weeks ago) that socialism is "a soul-robbing ideology that always leads to totalitarianism where the government puts itself in the place of God. Mob rule is the tactic of socialism."<sup>3</sup> They chant "silence is violence" as they destroy American cities. I don't think America needs to be fundamentally changed. I think it's done pretty well. I think it can do better. But let's not give a blind eye and remain silent to the goodness and betterment that has come into this world because of what some call this "noble experiment" called America. It came into existence by the US Constitution, and it has proved itself to be something beyond "an experiment." It is a reality that exists. It is a good and noble reality.

It is time to say, "enough is enough." A nation gets the kind of leaders it deserves. If Jews, Catholics, Protestants, and Baptists lose the right to worship, it will be because we remained silent. The time of being silent has passed. Why? Because we are called to be salt and light. Let's take the call seriously.

Now, what do we do if our candidate doesn't win? How can we take it? Where is our comfort? We are told in scripture to "learn to be content in whatever our circumstances are" (Philippians 4:11). Our response must be to praise God that He is sovereign in our lives and that He is sovereign in the progression of the United States. He is sovereign in the universe. Our fundamental happiness CANNOT depend on who is president of the United States. God allows societies to reject Him. Do they often come under judgment for their wickedness? Yes. But does He forsake His children? No. He is sovereign, and it's all going to be alright. It is not going to change any of our status' in the Kingdom of God. We are commanded to do our part, but we must also trust in the sovereignty of God.

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<sup>3</sup> Father Edward Meeks, <https://anticatholicticket.com/archives/1510>



The prophet Daniel tells us, *“And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. <sup>22</sup> He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him.*

*(Daniel 2:21-22, NKJV).* This same thought can be read into

Proverbs 21:31 that essentially says (my paraphrase), You can get a horse ready for battle, but the outcome of the battle is in the hands of the Lord. Praying and voting is akin to getting that horse ready for battle; but we MUST remember that the OUTCOME IS IN THE HAND OF THE LORD. I told you four years ago, and I will remind you this morning; NO MATTER WHO IS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES; JESUS IS STILL KING. God is working His purposes out. Let us be faithful to do our part.

I think part of preparing for what is to come is summed up in the national call that Ezra wrote down for his people. We too, as Christ-Followers, can claim the same promise. <sup>14</sup> *if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14, NKJV).*

Notice how this doesn’t apply to our unbelieving neighbors. IT APPLIES TO US. We, as believers, are His people. As “Christians,” we are called by HIS Name. We are called to HUMBLE OURSELVES and pray. WE are told to seek His face. WE are told to turn from our OWN wicked ways. And what comes with that promise? THEN HE WILL HEAR FROM HEAVEN, AND WILL FORGIVE OUR SINS, AND HEAL OUR LAND.

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at [uniongrove362@gmail.com](mailto:uniongrove362@gmail.com) or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.