



15 November 2024

## Faith and Politics

Our B.C. provincial election took place a month ago, the U.S. federal election 10 days ago, and the next federal election in Canada will be in 11 months at the latest.

Politics can be a minefield, even among Christians, where you don't know where the mines are and when they will go off. As a result some people say, "Politics and religion don't mix!" Others equate their political views with their faith.



Today I will venture out into this minefield focusing on just a few selected Biblical truths and applications, and that will be brief. The rest is for another time and place.

Our starting place is a pair of foundational Biblical truths.

The first one is the sovereignty of God. As king David acknowledged in 1 Chronicles chapter 29, "You [God] rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might" (12). Then, as we read in Daniel chapter 4, "the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and He grants it to whomever He wishes and sets over it the lowliest of people" (17). And again, in chapter 2, "It is He [God] who changes the times and the periods; He removes kings and appoints kings" (21). God is the absolute sovereign over His creation. Because this is true, our trust is not in "horses and chariots", or governments and their power, but in God, as we read in Psalm 20 verses 6-7.

The second truth is that we, being created in the image of God, are moral beings who make choices for which we are responsible. The apostle Paul wrote in Romans chapter 2, God "will repay each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, He will give eternal life; but to those who are self-serving and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, He will give wrath and indignation" (6-8).

These two truths mesh perfectly, but only God can fully see and understand that. We live in light of them by faith.

With this foundation in place, let's look at a few truths and applications for our relationship to our governments and politics.

We could turn to a number of passages in Scripture here, but today let's go to Romans chapter 13. Remember, God directed Paul to write this when living under a harsh, autocratic government.

Every person is to be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a servant of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a servant of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Pay to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; respect to whom respect; honor to whom honor." (1-7)

Briefly, note just three points.

- God has established our governments (verse 1). We don't understand all of how unjust governments fit into God's good plans, but they do.
- Governments are God's servants for our good, rewarding good and punishing evil (verses 3-4). They are accountable to God for how they do and don't do that.
- We are to be responsible citizens, obeying our governments, paying our taxes, giving honor and respect to them (verses 5-7). We are to obey them except when their directions to us are a clear violation of God's word, as we see in Acts chapter 5.

Then, moving from Romans to 1 Timothy, the apostle Paul wrote, "I urge that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made in behalf of all people, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior." (2:1-3)

Jesus Christ is our Savior and King. No political viewpoint, party or leader is our ultimate savior or king. Whatever our personal political views we can and are to live in harmony with each other, yes, not only with those who agree with us on politics, but also those who do not.

Let's keep our focus on God and on the responsibilities He gives us to live for Him and with each other in our society.

Pastor Lyle