

It Doesn't Matter Who Wins

Main Scripture Reference: Romans Chapter 13

You read that right. I've come to this understanding in preparing to lead this study, that in this and every other election, it really doesn't matter who wins. But, that's just me, and with all of your collective wisdom, I may feel differently when we're done.

We are in one of the most contentious US General Election that I can recall and, literally, on the 'eve' of the official US Election Day., we're going to discuss this current election environment from a Christian perspective.

Because this could easily become a heated topic, please keep within the 'ground rules' and commit to the following:

- I will not attempt to convince anyone here to support the candidate for whom I plan to vote (or for whom I have already voted)
- If I choose to disclose for whom I will vote (or have voted), I will do so only to explain how I came to my decision to vote in this way.
- If others choose to disclose for whom they will vote (or have voted), I will not judge them or their decision, I will seek only to understand how they came to their decision
- I will not gossip about what is discussed here this morning.

Below are examples of the kinds of statements I've heard since the major parties nominated their candidates for President/Vice President. Most, if not all, of these statements came from people who identify themselves as Christians:

- "It is your obligation, as a Christian, to vote for <candidate's name>"
- "<Candidate's name> hates America" and "If you vote for <candidate's name>, you hate America."
- "The America we know will no longer exist if <Candidate's name> is elected."
- "There is only one issue that should matter to Christians and <candidate's name> is the one that says they align with our side of that issue"
- "Aren't you afraid that if <candidate's name> wins, you'll lose your <right to ...>?:"

Discussion questions:

1. Why does it – or does it not matter –
 - a. If I vote at all?
 - b. For whom I vote?

2. Can there be a particular candidate who is the 'correct' choice for all Christians? Why or why not?

If the answer is "yes":

- a. How do I discern which candidate that is?
 - b. What happens if I don't vote for that candidate?
3. Should I be concerned that the outcome of the election could jeopardize my ability to be Christian? Why or why not?
 4. How should I act if the candidate I support does not win?

BONUS QUESTIONS:

- Does God favor or bless nations (nations being an entity in and of itself)?
- Should the United States declare itself (by charter or amendment) a Christian nation?
- Can, and if so, how might participating in our election be sinful behavior?

Romans 13 (ESV)

Submission to the Authorities

13 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Fulfilling the Law Through Love

8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

11 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.