



[Note: During the last election cycle it was clear that division is very high within our country. As Christians voiced their convictions and beliefs, I witnessed many people who were very unhappy saying things like, “If a pastor promotes a candidate, the church should lose their tax-exempt status,” among other things all pointing back to the concept of the “Separation of Church and State.” Seeing this type of behavior, the division that is present in our country, and the realization that some of our students will be voting in the next midterm election, and certainly in the next presidential election in four years, lead to some research and study on the topic of separation of church and state, and civic duties and responsibilities of Christian. These ultimately led to this sermon. This is not an attempt to push one political party or candidate in any way shape or form.]

We have just been through a few years of campaigning for presidential election as well as other offices. Many of you not yet being old enough to vote may try to avoid most of the publicity of the elections and campaigns, however, many of you will be old enough to vote the next time that we have an election. Does Jesus really care if we participate in elections? If He is our supreme authority, does it really matter who wins? Even if I were to vote do I really have a voice and does it matter?

These may be some of the questions that you have had. We have all heard the term “Fake News” and we know that at times we hear news stories that have been manipulated to demonstrate certain angles of the story to convince us to think or act a certain way. This happens on both sides of the political spectrum. When they own the information, they have the power to bend the truth or share only partial truth which is ultimately a lie. One place that will never only share part of truth is God’s Word. As we dig into His Word and search out answers of how we as Christians should navigate today’s politically charged environment, we will find absolute truth.

#1- The Root of the Division

There, of course, are the candidates and the policies. It is easy to point fingers are different aspects of a candidate and their attitudes or demeanor. Maybe we just really are not a fan of their policies. Certainly, there are always big topics that cause a large divisive topics like abortion,

immigration, taxes, etc. The truth of the matter is there are Bible-believing Christians on both sides of all those arguments and maybe even within our individual churches there are divisions in regard to policies and ideologies of how government should operate and function for the people. When we look to Scripture, we can see there is a Christian mandate.

And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:39 NKJV

To Love our Neighbor as ourselves. Notice the passage does not say "Love your _____ Neighbor.

[Fill in the blank with whatever words fit for you: Republican, Democrat, Straight, Nice, Pro Life, Christian, etc. Making the point here that when he says that we are to love our neighbor it encompasses EVERYONE.]

The Scripture tells us that we are to love our neighbor and this is an unconditional command. It is not affiliated with political party, church denomination, social status, or policy opinion. We have a duty to love others even when they think differently than we do, look differently than we do, and vote differently than we do.

#2- The Failure to Live out the Love of Christ

Too often, loving others becomes selective in practice. It is so easy to love the people who look like us, act like us, like what we like, and the truth is we struggle when it comes to loving others who maintain competing ideologies and political views. This selective love contributed to division.

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, [a]how can he love God whom he has not seen? 1 John 4:20 NKJV

Rather than engaging with those who think differently than we do, we tend to retreat to echo chambers where our views are reinforced. In doing so, we miss out on opportunities to be salt and light.

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden." Matthew 5:13-14 NKJV

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