



love where you live

Love Where You Live

Part 7 – *Loving Our Neighbors After an Election!*

November 8 | Speaker: Rajendra Pillai, Senior Pastor

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE:

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him,
“Are you the king of the Jews?”
“Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”
“Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”
Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.
If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders.
But now my kingdom is from another place.”
“You are a king, then!” said Pilate.
Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king.
In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth.
Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”
~ John 18:33-37

We will study two scenes from Scripture that will serve as windows through which we see into two kinds of kingdoms that are in existence in our world today. And the way power and authority and leadership work in these kingdoms couldn't be more different.

On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes,
sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people.
They shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man.”
Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God,
an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.
But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.
~ Acts 12:21-24

Very interesting story. There are all sorts of leadership books out there. My personal opinion is that Acts 12:21-24 is one of the greatest leadership texts. Imagine what could happen if all leaders were required to regularly read this text?

Contrast that with the kingdom Jesus established. The world has never seen another kingdom quite like this one. He wears a crown of thorns, is mocked by His people, is betrayed by His friend, is condemned to die, has His inauguration on a cross and sets up His Oval Office inside a tomb.

And here we are, part of His Kingdom, expanding into every nation and tribe, one day it will be fully realized, a kingdom that will never end.

“Often, we are told that the rule of God upon the earth will be fulfilled in a great act of violence, in which multitudes of people are slain by God, followed by a totalitarian government of literally infinite proportions, headquartered in Jerusalem... I believe, to the contrary, that the coming rule of God is to be a government by grace and truth mediated through personalities mature in Christ.” ~ Dallas Willard, Spirit of the Disciplines

Our biggest challenge to living in this greater and better kingdom:

Words and images and voices that project the picture of the Kingdom of the world.

So, in the midst of all this, how can we live in the greater reality of the Kingdom of God? Especially in these days when the intensity of opinions and words and images are at an all-time high.

Two action steps:

1. God before phone daily.

When you start your day with prayer and in God’s Word, it is a re-orienting of your mind and your life toward the reality of the Kingdom of God. Every time you pray, something happens. Prayer is an all-involving way of life. As Christians, our lives are immersed in God. Prayer is the language of the Kingdom of God.

2. Keep church a top priority on weekends.

The reason why we have gathered here is not just so we can have more information, but that we will have our imaginations recaptured by the Spirit of God. It is not just an examination of what has happened in the past, it is an immersion in what is happening now. We will continue to submit to the powers of our God, and fully commit to partnering with our God to build and expand the Kingdom of God using the means of the Kingdom of God.

When we gather like this, when we worship, we are responding to God’s work among us. The work that redeems us and restores us. Our voices are not just our voices, we are joining all of creation in praise of our Creator. When we worship, we correct all of the misspoken and misconstrued words and arrange them in speaking the truth about our God and about ourselves.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

(for personal and small group discussion)

1. Read John 18:28-19:27 and Acts 12:21-24. What can you learn about the Kingdom of God versus the kingdoms of our world from these two passages? How is power used in these kingdoms? Where do you see the contrast between the puffed-up pretense of the Herods of our world versus the powerful meekness of the Lamb of God?
2. Make a commitment to start your day with God. This isn't a formula. Do what works best for you but stay away from the phone and other distractions until you've spent at least a few minutes in prayer and in the Word. Do this for two weeks and ask yourself, how has this impacted you? Are you experiencing more of the reality of the Kingdom of God? To make this even more practical, make yourself accountable to someone for two weeks!
3. Join us on November 19th at 7 pm for the congregational prayer and meeting. Details are at Damascus.com/events
4. Make church a priority over weekends. None of us can go through this season (or any season) alone. We need each other.

NOTES
