

The Bible 20/20 Week 42: "Kingdom Politics" (10-25-20)

Reading this week: Acts 15-28

Introduction: The Leaves are changing, it must be everyone's favorite time of year - Election Season!

1) Paul and Politics

- Paul is warned that he will be arrested in Jerusalem, and that's exactly what happens
- From Acts 22-28 Paul is bounced around from one place of political power to another.

The Jewish Mob in Jerusalem (22:1-21) - Paul speaks his testimony and call to the Gentiles

The Local Roman leader of Jerusalem & the Jewish Leaders (23:1-10) - Paul speaks on resurrection

Acts 23:11 (ESV)

The following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome."

Note: God tells Paul - your faithful witness at home, will take you to Rome where you will do the same

Paul was Faithful & Focused

In every opportunity he was given, he shared his testimony and the gospel of Jesus!

His imprisonment was an opportunity - He could use this as a platform in places of power to share about another, greater, kingdom. That's exactly what he did . . .

Paul & Felix (Roman regional governor) - with the Jewish Leaders again present

Acts 24:14-16 (ESV)

(14) But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, (15) having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that **there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.** (16) So I always take pains to have a **clear conscience toward both God and man.**

Note: Paul speaks of the higher kingdom that we answer to, and therefore making it clear how we are to live

Felix kept Paul in prison for 2 years by Felix for political gain . . .

Acts 24:24-27 (ESV)

(24) After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. (25) **And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment,** Felix was alarmed and said, "Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you." (26) **At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul.** So he sent for him often and conversed with him. (27) When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

Note: Paul is being used, but he refuses to be a pawn, instead he boldly speaks truth!

New governor Festus replaces Felix - now he's got to decide what to do with Paul. Paul appeals to Caesar!

Festus has no legitimate reason to keep him imprisoned and send him to Ceaser, so he seeks out the guy who sits on Herod's old throne - Agrippa

Festus (Roman Regional Governor) & **Agrippa** (Jewish Figure Head King) (26:1-29) . . .

Festus thinks Paul is crazy, but Paul appeals to Agrippa . . .

Acts 26:25-29 (ESV)

(25) But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. (26) For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. (27) **King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.**" (28) And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?" (29) And Paul said, "**Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.**"

Note: Paul is not concerned with how he is perceived, only with sharing the hope & truth of Jesus!

Now in Rome . . . Paul invites the Jewish leaders there to come visit him, and he shares the gospel. As most of them reject it, Paul makes it clear that the gospel of Jesus will go forth to all who will hear . . .

Acts 28:28-31 (NKJV)

(28) "Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!" (29) And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves. (30) Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, (31) preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

Note: Our allegiance is to Jesus Kingdom, and our motivation is the salvation of all who will hear . . .

So how does this affect our world of politics today?

2) Application

How do we as Christians approach politics?

a) Jesus' Kingdom First

Our Lives (including our politics) should first, foremost, & always be about Jesus Kingdom!

Whatever platform or influence we have (both small and great), we should use it with this same mindset.

b) Communication & Action

What we speak & how we speak it are essential . . .

Paul - writing while a prisoner in Rome, knows what he is talking about . . .

Colossians 4:2-6 (ESV)

(2) Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. (3) At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— (4) that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. (5) Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. (6) Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

- Pray regularly
- Speak gospel clearly
- Consider outsiders
- Speak graciously

This should then lead us to action - kingdom focused and fueled by prayer!

- Our politics don't need to just be shouted about on social media, or kept only to the voting booth.
- We may at times be compelled to act. How do we decide what to do and when?
- God initiated (not shamed or manipulated into it by man)!

c) Decisions & Voting

Consider the whole ballot prayerfully - President, National, State, and Local level

Consider the Person & the Policies:

Person - Character & Competency

Policies - How do they align with the Full Gospel of Jesus?

Go Vote!

Conclusion: Let's pray for our country, let's participate in it's improvement. but ultimately lets' remember where our true hope is.

Let's pray and act for Jesus' Kingdom to expand - That is our only true hope!

Let's Pray!

Discussion Questions:

- What stood out to you from these examples in Paul's life? How did he use his platform in front of political leaders? What can we learn and apply from that?
- Why is prayer such a central part of our political speech, action, and decision-making? How much time in prayer do we spend before speaking up on an issue, or choosing who to select in the voting booth?
- Do you agree with the statement: "we should consider the Person and the Policies when voting"? Why is the person's character and ability important when voting? How can we accurately and biblically consider policies of different candidates and parties? What about when we disagree with at least some of each party's policies, how should we then decide?
- Close by spending sometime praying for our country during this election season. Pray for each other, our leaders, and for God's will to be done.