



**Kingdom Over Culture, Pt. 5 – Billy Humphrey**  
**November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**

**I. Introduction**

- A. Over the last month we have covered complex and confusing subjects, including human sexuality, gender, race, abortion, adoption, and foster care from a biblical worldview, and how to intercede and engage the Lord in troubling and challenging times.
- B. Today we are going to speak to the following questions: How are Christians supposed to engage in politics? What is the biblical vision of how Christians are supposed to influence government? What role has secularism played in how we view civic duty and politics? How are we supposed to vote?
- C. Election seasons can be very confusing times for believers. If someone asked you, "What is it that Christians think about politics in a moment like this?" What would you say? Do we have a well-formed theology of God in politics? What is the vision that God has given Christians for involvement in politics?
- D. The goal of this message is to help you get a clear biblical vision for how Christians are supposed to view and engage with human government and politics.

**II. Understanding Secularism**

- A. Secularism is a social construct that separates religion from all other aspects of human life, especially politics.
- B. Secularism began in ancient Greece and was fully developed during the enlightenment in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Most advocates of secularism are atheists. Ironically, Augustine and Martin Luther were early Christian advocates of secularism, because they had a vision for the Church to exist outside of or above the order of the existing political structures.
- C. The basic tenets of secularism are separation of church and state, freedom of religion, and religious neutrality.
- D. As it relates to politics, secularism tells society to believe it can find the salvation we all long for through other means besides God. The faith that people put in God for deliverance and salvation is transferred to a political figure or a political party.
  - 1. A major outcome is that a society no longer bases the building of its culture on the Kingdom of God but on the whims and desires of men.
  - 2. The passion that we see in the political realm where there is incredible fervor and zeal over political issues is ultimately a religious passion applied to this secular segment of society.



**Kingdom Over Culture, Pt. 5 – Billy Humphrey**  
**November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**

3. People become more ideologically divided than ever under secularism, because removing God from the equation doesn't make us more united, and loving it makes us more divided and hateful.
- E. So where does that leave the Church? How is the Church supposed to engage in a secular system like government and politics?
- F. To answer that, we need to get a fresh reminder of the authority of the Church and where we stand in the hierarchy of governmental authority.

**III. Understanding the Authority of the Church**

**Matthew 28:18-19** – “<sup>18</sup> ... All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth, <sup>19</sup> go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...”

- A. All authority in Heaven and earth has been given to Jesus. He is above all, seated at the right hand of God, far above all principality and power, with everything under His feet. Therefore, He is above every political authority and every human government, and He is the head of the Church (Ephesians 1:20-22).
- B. Believers are strangers and aliens in this world (Hebrews 11:13, 1 Peter 2:11). Though we carry an earthly citizenship we have a citizenship that supersedes our earthly nationality. We are citizens of Heaven (Philippians 3:20). That's not to say our natural ethnicity or culture goes away when we step over to Heaven, because every tribe, tongue, people, and nation will be before the throne (Revelation 7:9).
- C. Jesus is the head of the Church and the king of the kingdom of God. When the scripture says He is the King of kings, it's speaking to the fact that His kingdom and His authority is exalted far above every other so-called king or kingdom.
- D. You and I are ambassadors for our high King (2 Corinthians 5:20). We are sent out by Him to help establish His Kingdom on earth. The word *church* comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which is the governmental assembly of the Kingdom, instilled with the authority of the King and gathers together to conduct Kingdom business. We are called to do business in this place until He comes (Luke 19:13). The finality of our Kingdom work is important, being that the kingdoms of this world are ultimately going to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever (Revelation 11:15).



**Kingdom Over Culture, Pt. 5 – Billy Humphrey**  
**November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**

- E. The Church is not meant to submit itself to any other institution. By *submit* I mean to give its authority away. When the Church endorses a political candidate or joins a political party, it cedes its authority to that person or entity and ultimately loses its God-ordained authority in the earth. When the Church is under the state she cannot operate in the authority of the Kingdom over the state, she will only operate in the power vested in her by the state.
- F. The Supreme Court of the United States is not the supreme court in all of creation. It's the highest court in America, but not the highest court in creation. That court is beneath the court of Heaven, just as every human throne is beneath the throne of God.
- G. The Church is to maintain its witness for righteousness and justice in the political sector and express its authority and influence in that sphere of society.

**IV. Jesus on Human Government**

**Mark 12:13-17** – “<sup>13</sup> Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words. <sup>14</sup> When they had come, they said to Him, ‘Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? <sup>15</sup> Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?’ But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, ‘Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see it.’ <sup>16</sup> So they brought it. And He said to them, ‘Whose image and inscription is this?’ They said to Him, ‘Caesar’s.’ <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ And they marveled at Him.”

- A. The context of this passage is incredibly important and reveals that there is much political tension around this moment and the question at hand was a huge controversy in that day.
  - 1. This happened during Jesus’ last week, after the triumphal entry. He had just cleansed the temple.
  - 2. The city was flooded with pilgrims from all over the region. Many of the people were believing that Jesus was the foretold Messiah who would ultimately overthrow the Roman government.
  - 3. At the same time, the Jewish leaders were looking for a way to arrest Him because they saw Him as a threat to their position of power over the people.



**Kingdom Over Culture, Pt. 5 – Billy Humphrey**  
**November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**

- B. The Pharisees and the Herodians hated each other, but they united so they could take Jesus down. The enemy of my enemy is my ally. The question they asked Him was a trap like a hunter traps an animal.
- C. The specific tax that the pharisees were asking about was the poll-tax. It was paid to Ceasar to declare that he owned each individual. This tax was inflammatory and brought about lots of conflict in Israel against Rome.
- D. If Jesus answered in the affirmative, He would have been against His people. If He answered in dissent, He would have been against Ceasar and would have been arrested.
- E. In Jesus' answer, He makes clear two key truths:
  - 1. That human government is established by God and doesn't have to be in covenant with God to be considered legitimate.
  - 2. That though there is legitimacy to human government, human government is required to give to God what God deserves.
- F. He never says that human government is above the kingdom of God, instead He maintains that human government is in submission to the kingdom of God. Christians are to offer to human governments the things that they ask while maintaining their allegiance firstly and foremostly to the government of the kingdom of God. We have lots of biblical examples of the people of God operating within the sphere of government while maintaining allegiance to the Kingdom of God. Daniel, Esther, and Paul's explanation to the Church at Rome are a few examples (Romans 13:1-7).

**V. What is the role of Human Government?**

- 1 Timothy 2:1-2** – “<sup>1</sup> Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”
- A. Good government creates space for the Church to do discipleship well. Paul's admonition to Timothy to pray for the governing authorities is so that the Church can lead quiet, peaceable, godly, and reverent lives.
  - B. Government is part of God's created order for human flourishing in at least five key ways:
    - 1. Order – without order there is chaos. Government allows a society to organize its resources in such a way that the ability of the society is enabled to prosper.



**Kingdom Over Culture, Pt. 5 – Billy Humphrey**  
**November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**

2. Justice – to set an agenda of law so that people can thrive in a system that espouses righteousness and maintains equity and justice.
  3. Cultivate Virtue – Benjamin Franklin said, that “virtue is required for there to be a free people.” Our constitution was made for virtuous people. We live in a democratic republic, which is a representative democracy. The strength of it is that the will of the people is expressed through the government. The weakness is that if the will of the people becomes corrupt, that too is expressed through the government. Our form of government requires virtue and self-restraint. Without virtue and self-restraint there must be governmental restraint. When virtue and self-restraint are lost, individuals are consumed by what they are able to get out of society instead of what they are able to give. Human lust without God will ultimately lead societies down this path. When virtue is lost among the people, the government loses its ability to cultivate virtue.
  4. Prosperity – Government is to set up a construct where the gifts and talents of a people in a society can be used so that the society can thrive and the people can prosper.
  5. Safety – The government’s job is to protect the populous and the nation. The inappropriate use of power by governments has caused many to fear the vehicle of government to provide safety, namely the police and military. Movements have arisen calling for defunding the police, but if you do that, you ultimately defund safety. Of course, reform is always needed, but the vehicle to provide safety is still required and essential for a flourishing people and a sound government.
- C. State authority is derivative or delegated authority in that comes from God and is subject to God. It is never supposed to override the authority of God or the Church.
1. When the government declares something as law that is morally wrong, the Church has an obligation to speak against it and resist it.
  2. Biblically speaking, the Church is on a collision course with the government as the government continually moves to legalize immoral activities and outlaw Christian speech and action.

**VI. How Should Christians engage?**

- A. The Church is supposed to have a witness in the political sector, not according to the worldview of the culture, but according to the worldview of the Kingdom. So, what role does the Church play in politics? Do we engage? How do we engage?



**Kingdom Over Culture, Pt. 5 – Billy Humphrey**  
**November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**

- B. We are strangers and aliens in this world (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11) There isn't a Christian nation and so Christians don't give our allegiance to any Caesar. We are owned by Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:20). We belong to God and God alone.
- C. As such, we are meant to bring our influence to the culture of the world in every sphere. This means we need to engage in a redemptive way in government and politics. As the people of God, Christians participate with a revelation of the authority the Church holds, faith for the break in of the Kingdom of God, and an eschatological understanding of the days ahead.
- D. Our communication should be humble, and our manner and tone should be distinct from those who don't follow Jesus. We should be aiming for the common good and in all things, bringing a clear Christian witness to the public. Civility with boldness is a manifestation of grace in public. This should be our perspective and tone.
- E. The first Christians conquered Rome by participating where they could and defying immorality where they had to. They out-loved, out-suffered, and out-served everyone until the authorities of the day had to remark of their unusual spirit and manner in the face of persecution and death. They kept their integrity and their witness strong with love, and after three centuries, instead of Caesar being lord, even the Caesars admitted that Jesus was Lord.
- F. We need to be delivered from our angst and fear around politics and elections and unashamedly committed to Jesus and His Kingdom so that we can stand boldly in peace and allegiance to Jesus.

**VII. Understanding Babylon**

**Revelation 17:1-6** – “<sup>1</sup> Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, ‘Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, <sup>2</sup>with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.’ <sup>3</sup> So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup> The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. <sup>5</sup> And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. <sup>6</sup> I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.”



**Kingdom Over Culture, Pt. 5 – Billy Humphrey**  
**November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**

- A. The longest prophecies in the Old and New Testament are about Babylon. They are found in Jeremiah 50-51 and Revelation 17-18.
- B. The message of Revelation 17 is that there is a satanic wickedness embodied in this grotesque image of a harlot riding a beast. This is Babylon. This wickedness will fill the earth at the end of the age. The influence of Babylon has been in the earth since Genesis and will corrupt every nation and government before the Lord returns.
- C. The story of humanity is the story of two figurative women: The Bride of Christ and the Babylonian Harlot. Jesus is raising up a bride and Satan is raising up a harlot.
- D. These two women embody the spirit of each system. The Harlot embodies the spirit of Antichrist, and the bride embodies the spirit of Jesus.
- E. The harlot system encompasses all the false religion, world economies, sexual immorality, murders, and martyrdom and is depicted as fornicating with the kings of the earth. All nations will come under this spiritual influence.
- F. Satan will use the spirit of Babylon to get all the nations engaging in the spirit of the age, and then at the end of the age, he pulls back the curtain and reveals that he is the one who has been empowering this spirit. He will then step forward and demand the worship of the nations.

**VIII. Should Christians Work in Government?**

- A. Five things a Christian brings into the Governmental Sphere
  - 1. A vision of human dignity - Christians value people over everything else, because of the *Imago Dei*. We value people because God does.
  - 2. An obligation to care for the poor and the vulnerable
  - 3. A proper understanding of human nature - Christians recognize that the human heart is sin-stained and bent away from God.
  - 4. A priority of the other - a broad inclusion of who our neighbor is. We do not vilify others. We look to embrace them. Our neighbor is not just our Christian neighbor, but any actual neighbor. We have an obligation to bless those who curse us and do good to those who hate us.
  - 5. The power and favor of God - Prayer and fasting is the primary biblical means of shifting government. Joseph, Daniel, Esther, and Nehemiah shifted government with their prayers and witness.



**Kingdom Over Culture, Pt. 5 – Billy Humphrey**  
**November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**

**IX. How Should Christians Vote?**

A. Prayerfully and thoughtfully:

1. Consider the biblical constructs of righteousness and justice.
2. Consider the ways that human government aids human flourishing.
3. Read the party platforms of each party and the positions of each candidate.
4. Consider the policies, the character, and the competency of the individuals running for office.
5. Pray and ask the Lord to speak to you.
6. Vote for the candidate that you believe can mostly closely accomplish the biblical vision for righteous, justice, and the biblical pattern for human flourishing.