



Kingdom First

In a world dominated by power and oppression, the remarkably diverse early church was united by the teachings of Jesus. As heirs to this legacy of subversive, countercultural faith, we should be equally willing to put our faith filter ahead of our political filter and submit to the Kingdom of Jesus, which reshapes and reverses the politics of this world. Because it's the teachings of Jesus— not the temporary platform of a flawed political party— that has the power to create culturally disruptive unity.

Start Talking

1. Can you think of a time when you totally misread someone's motives based upon their visible behavior? What happened?
2. Has anyone ever completely misjudged your motivations? What happened? How did it feel?

Looking Back

1. When were you able to implement the self-sacrificing ethic of Christ into your political thinking this past week? Did it cause tension with the priorities of your political tribe?
2. Were there any times when you felt tempted to write people off based upon their political affiliations? How did you respond? Did it help to remind yourself that every person's beliefs are shaped by a variety of environmental factors, that none of us are perfectly objective thinkers?
3. Have you found opportunities to listen to people with different beliefs, experiences, and circumstances than you?



What About You?

1. If you had to describe the politics of the modern American church, how would you do it? How do they differ from the priorities of the early Christian church?
2. What mental obstacles do you feel yourself putting up when it's time to carry the burdens of people with whom you don't have much shared political belief?
3. Why do you think it's so tempting to sort people into cultural, political, socio-economic categories? What problems does this create? What's the problem with doing this?
4. Do you ever feel yourself holding out "agreement" as a precondition for love?

Look It Up

Read the Following Passages: Galatians 3:28, 6:2. Luke 16:16.

1. How does the command to "carry the burdens" of other people conflict with the thinking of our political factions?
2. What are the practical implications of Paul's words about unity in Galatians 3? How could these words shape the way you interact with people who think differently than you do?
3. Andy mentioned that in a culture that worshipped strength and conquest, Roman rulers found early Christian worship of a crucified God appalling, illustrating the profound conflict between the value system of the Roman Emperor and the value system of Christianity. Where do you see our own cultural values conflicting with the revolutionary ethic of Jesus?
4. What was it about the message of Jesus that allowed the early church to unite despite radical differences in culture and class?

Putting It All Together

1. How can you find unity with people who believe differently than you this week?
2. What are ways you can begin to move past the need for agreement and start proactively seeking to serve other people out of your conscience and convictions?
3. What people and perspectives do you tend to ignore in your political thinking? How can you seek to understand why those people think and feel the way they do?
4. What would it look like to make the law of Christ your operating principle in every interpersonal interaction? Political issue? What might change?

