

THE CASE FOR CHRISTIAN POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT #1

I. Introduction

I want to begin a new series tonight that will make...
“The Case for Christian Political Engagement”

I propose to prove, based on biblical evidence, that Christ requires Christian political engagement, and to fail to do so is nothing short of *sinful*.

I do not pretend to be a prophet but I believe this message is prophetic, because it offers us insight to what God is saying to us *right now* in our own present day.

Like the Old Testament tribe of Issachar, we must understand the times before can know what we ought to do.

1 Chronicles 12:32

The sons of Issachar had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do.

We need a Word from God that speaks to the times we are living in; the Apostle Peter referred to it as ‘the present truth’.

2 Peter 1:12

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, *that you may be established in the present truth.*

There is truth...the whole Word of God and everything in it; but there is also ‘present truth’, that truth we necessarily need to know *right now*.

Matthew Henry

We must be established in the belief of the truth...and especially in that which is the present truth, the truth more peculiarly necessary for us to know in our day, the truth which is especially being opposed (or attacked) in our time.

The truth most under attack today is God’s truth about politics and government.

Some, even within the Church, would have us stay silent on this subject; some of my Pastor-brothers tell me, “Just preach the Gospel. Leave politics alone”; but I would tell them the words of the great Martin Luther..

Martin Luther

“If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not professing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ.”

Martin Luther

“Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battlefield everywhere else is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that one point.”

Unless you have your head in the sand, you must know by now that the primary point of attack of the devil in our day is in the realm of politics:

In the Oval Office; in the halls of Congress; in our courts and judicial system. and if that is true, faithful Christian soldiers cannot afford to flinch on that one point.

So it is with that in mind, I would like to make...

II. The Case For Christian Political Engagement

A. Definitions

1. We will be using the term ‘political’ in the broadest sense; the dictionary definition:

“Political”

(from Gk. ‘politika’, meaning ‘affairs of the city’)

Relating to the government or the public affairs of a country.

a. Notice! Politics is not limited to the government; it relates to *all the public affairs of a country*; which means all of life is in a sense, ‘political’.

b. Politics are inescapable, because we feel its effects every day; political effects are “ubiquitous”.

“Ubiquitous”

Present, appearing, or found everywhere; existing or being everywhere at the same time

Merriam-Webster

***Ubiquitous* is a term often used to describe those things that it seems like you can't go a day without encountering.**

(Taylor Swift?)

2. Politics determine what you have left in your wallet after payday deductions; politics determine what is to be taxed, how much, and what's to be done with the taxes we pay; politics determine everything from the speed we can drive our cars to what is taught in our public schools.

a. Political policy determines the condition of our country, including how safe we are.

3. This is all good when the government is limited to its proper sphere; but the Covid Crisis showed us the dark side of political power:

- Executive orders from Washington shut down our businesses
- Unelected bureaucrats we never heard of determined which whether a business was 'essential' or 'non-essential'; restaurants were shut down while massage parlors remained open
- Politics shut down our public schools and even our churches
- Politics pushed the needles of an untested vaccine into the arms of millions of Americans; some who refused lost their jobs or were not allowed to travel

4. A few protested these policies and were blocked, banned, or canceled.

a. But most Americans went like sheep to the slaughter; looking back now...

Americans surrendered more personal freedom to the government during the first 3 months of COVID than in all previous American history combined.

b. Some of those who lived under Adolf Hitler saw the similarities to our own time...

Thomas Mann, German novelist

Spiritual intolerance, political inquisitions, and declining legal security, all done in the name of an alleged 'state of emergency' ...this is how it started in Germany.

c. Power hungry politicians 'create a crisis' It's interesting that 60 years before COVID, my favorite President warned us...

Ronald Reagan, 1961

One of the traditional methods of imposing statism or socialism on a people has been by way of medicine. It's very easy to disguise a medical program as a humanitarian project.

5. Last week we looked at the documentary film "Letter to the American Church"; how the choice of most of the German churches to stay out of politics opened the door for Hitler and his henchmen.

a. We have a similar situation today: even non-Christian thinkers like Italian political leader Marcello Pera warn of what happens when Christians leave their post.

Marcello Pera, "Why Should We Call Ourselves Christians?"

The apostasy of Christianity is exposing the entire Western world to the risk of a grave cultural and political crisis, and even to the collapse of civilization.

b. Western civilization was built upon Christianity; the most prosperous nations on earth were the Christianized nations; but that may not last.

Steven Yates

It's helpful to realize that history moves in cycles. Civilizations rise. Then they forget the attitudes, aptitudes, and values that made their rise possible. The

majority of their people grow soft, complacent, and entitled. That is when those motivated by power make their move.

6. One of the bright Christian lights in Europe is Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who says all of continent's crises have come from Christians who forgot how to be Christians.

Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary

The European crisis has not come by chance, but by the carelessness and neglect of their responsibilities by leaders who have questioned their Christian roots.

a. Under Orban, the nation of Hungary has had a complete turnaround; which he credits to Christianity.

Viktor Orban

Behind every successful economy, there is some kind of spiritual driving force; a Europe governed according to Christian values would be regenerated.

7. The same could be said for America—or any nation; Christianity is the only hope for the human race; the Kingdom of God, not the kingdoms of men; which is....

B. The 1st Case For Christian Political Engagement: It Is Included in the Kingdom

1. The most important topic in the Bible is the 'Kingdom of God'.

a. Jesus spoke of the Kingdom over 120 times in the Gospels. (He only mentioned the Church twice!)

2. The term 'Kingdom' itself is a *political* term because it defines a particular kind of Government.

a. Jesus did not come to bring a Democracy (ruled by the majority); or an Oligarchy (ruled by a few); or an Autocracy (ruled by one man); He brought forth a Kingdom with Himself as the King!

Isaiah 9:6-7

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder...and of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...

3. **The Kingdom of God is the government of God over all other spheres of government; self-government, family government, church government, and civil government.**

a. In Acts 10:36, the Apostle Peter declares that Jesus Christ is “Lord of all”- there earthly kings; but He is King of kings; there are earthly lords; but He is ‘Lord of Lords’.

b. Nothing is excluded from God’s government; nothing is outside His jurisdiction and right to rule.

Abraham Kuper

There is not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, “Mine!”

c. Christ’s claim to Lordship is covers all things—including politics.

4. After the resurrection, God confirmed the authority of His Son over all spheres of government in heaven and on earth in what is known as the ‘Great Commission’ of the Church.

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and *make disciples of all the nations*; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.

5. The mission of the Church is to ‘make disciples of all nations’; this is not limited to individual salvation (baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit); it includes ‘*teaching the nations to observe all God’s commandments*’.

6. This was how the early church understood the Great Commission!

Acts 17:6

And they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.

- a. Does this sound like anything that might be said about us today?
- b. Does this sound like a Christianity that confines itself to Sunday morning?
- c. No! And the next verse tells us it was a church engaged in politics!

Acts 16:7

Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king — Jesus."

7. The New Testament church was a turn-the-world-upside-down church that engaged in politics . But what's happened today?

Carl F.H. Henry

Whereas once the redemptive Gospel was a world-changing message, it has become narrowed down to a world-resisting message. In revolting against the Social Gospel, we have also revolted against the Christian social imperative.

8. The modern American church has somehow descended into a dualism that limits the Lordship of Christ and the authority of His word to so-called 'spiritual things'.

- a. Dr. Joe Boot says this corruption of the Great Commission must end.

Joseph Boot, "The Mission of God"

A reformed missiology must repudiate dualism in all its forms, bringing heaven and earth, present and future, world and church, under the authority of all of God's total word.

Joe Boot

Only in this way can we hope to see a recovery of gospel effectiveness and the extension of the Kingdom of God in our justly judged generation.

b. English theologian John Stott has written of his own awakening to the fact that Christ's Great Commission included the political realm:

John Stott

I now see clearly that Christ's Great Commission must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility, or else we be guilty of distorting the words of Jesus.

III. Close

A. Review: What is the Case for Christian Political Engagement?

1. We said that politics are an inescapable because we feel their affects in our lives every day; the Bible declares that the condition of a country is controlled by those in political power!

Proverbs 29:2

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan.

2. Today, most Americans are 'groaning'! Few feel safe or secure, even in danger. But take heart! We have been through this before.

a. Dr. Joseph Warren, one of America's founding fathers said this in 1773:

Dr. Joseph Warren, a Founding Father (1741-1775)

Our country is in danger, but do not despair. The fortunes of America depend on you. You are to decide the important questions upon which rests the happiness and the liberty of millions yet unborn. Act worthy of yourselves.

b. 200 years later, President Reagan said something very similar..

President Ronald Reagan

We have problems in this country, and many people are waiting on God to do something. I just wonder if maybe God isn't waiting for us to do something. And while no one is capable of doing everything, everyone is capable of doing something.

3. God has not saved us to sit on the sidelines! Every one of us has something to do...

Dr. Albert Mohler

As God's people, we are a people of scripture, and it is our responsibility to learn how to rightly apply scripture to our own lives and our own times.

4. In the weeks to come we will be making the case for Christian political engagement; we will be applying the present truth of the Word of God to what's happening in the news of the day.

5. In the meantime, here is a present truth for the modern American church:

Romans 13:11

The hour has come for you to wake from sleep.

Closing Prayer

Title