Church & State (Part 2) Discussion Questions

The sermon suggests we must be more certain of our allegiance to Jesus and his church than of our own political conclusions -- in what practical ways does your daily life reflect that priority ordering?

Peter describes believers as 'temporary residents and foreigners' in this world, as referenced in 1 Peter 2:11 -- how does genuinely embracing that identity change the way you engage with political outcomes and cultural shifts?

The early church in Acts 4 responded to government opposition not by seeking political influence but by praying for boldness to keep preaching -- what does that reveal about where the church's true power lies, and how does that challenge your own instincts in difficult circumstances?

The sermon points out that the church has historically flourished more under persecution than under favorable conditions -- what does that pattern suggest about the relationship between comfort and spiritual vitality in your own faith life?

Peter calls believers a 'royal priesthood' in 1 Peter 2:9, meaning every follower of Christ has direct access to God -- how does truly believing that change the way you approach prayer and your sense of spiritual responsibility toward others?

The sermon draws a distinction between being freed from sin and being freed to do whatever we want, describing Christians as 'God's slaves' -- in what areas of your life do you find yourself misusing freedom as an excuse rather than redirecting it toward obedience?

The believers in Acts 4 began their prayer by declaring God's sovereignty over everything that had happened to them -- how does starting from a place of God's sovereignty, rather than your own circumstances, reshape the way you pray about situations that feel out of control?

The sermon challenges listeners to consider what their prayers reveal about their priorities and who they truly trust -- if someone examined only your prayer life from the past month, what would they conclude about where your deepest confidence actually lies?

Peter instructs believers to 'live honorably among unbelieving neighbors' so that even accusers might eventually give glory to God, as described in 1 Peter 2:12 -- what specific habits or attitudes in your life might currently be undermining rather than supporting that witness?

The sermon emphasizes that the church's mission does not depend on political power but on heavenly power -- in what ways might a dependence on favorable political conditions actually weaken the church's faith and reduce her reliance on the Holy Spirit?

A Christ-Centered Approach to Identity, Allegiance, and Mission

Day 1: You Belong to a Greater Kingdom

Reading: 1 Peter 2:9-10 -- A passage declaring that believers are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation who now possess identity and mercy through God.

Devotional: Before Christ, we were defined by our circumstances, our failures, our earthly affiliations. Peter writes to people living as exiles under Roman rule, and yet he reminds them that no government, no election, and no political outcome could strip them of who they truly were. The same is true for you. Your identity is not shaped by who holds office, what your bank account says, or how the world labels you. You are God's own possession. Walk today as someone who belongs to a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Reflection: In what areas of your life are you allowing earthly circumstances to define your identity rather than your standing before God?

Practical Application: Write down three truths about who God says you are. Return to that list whenever anxiety about the world around you begins to take hold.

Day 2: Living Honorably in a Divided World

Reading: 1 Peter 2:11-12 -- A passage urging believers, as temporary residents of this world, to resist destructive desires and live in such a way that even those who oppose them might ultimately glorify God.

Devotional: Peter does not call believers to withdraw from the world in bitterness or to engage it with hostility. He calls them to live honorably among those who do not yet share their faith. This is not passive silence -- it is active, visible, Christlike conduct. When the world is watching, and it always is, our behavior either draws people toward the light or confirms their suspicion that faith is just another form of tribalism. The most powerful political statement a believer can make is a life that looks unmistakably like Jesus.

Reflection: Think about your interactions this past week. Did your conduct among unbelievers reflect the kingdom you belong to?

Practical Application: Identify one relationship with someone outside the faith. Commit this week to one intentional act of kindness or honesty that reflects the character of Christ.

Day 3: Respecting Authority While Fearing God Alone

Reading: 1 Peter 2:13-17 -- A passage instructing believers to submit to governing authorities as part of their witness, while reserving ultimate reverence and allegiance for God.

Devotional: Peter's instruction to submit to governing authorities was written under the reign of Caesar -- hardly a government sympathetic to the church. Yet Peter calls believers to respect those in authority, not because those leaders are always right, but because God is sovereign over all of it. Respecting authority is not the same as worshipping it. We hold earthly ties loosely and kingdom ties tightly. We obey the laws of the land as long as those laws do not require us to disobey the laws of God. Our ultimate fear and reverence belong to one King alone.

Reflection: Are you placing too much hope in earthly leadership, or too much despair in it? How does God's sovereignty reframe your perspective?

Practical Application: Pray today specifically for those in governing authority over you, at the local, state, and national level, asking God to grant them wisdom and to accomplish His purposes through them.

Day 4: The Church Thrives When She Prays Boldly

Reading: Acts 4:23-31 -- A passage describing the early church responding to government threats not with political strategy but with unified, God-centered prayer that resulted in boldness and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Devotional: When Peter and John were released from custody and threatened into silence, the church did not call a meeting to devise a political response. They prayed. And notice what they prayed for -- not comfort, not favorable circumstances, not the removal of opposition. They prayed for boldness. They anchored their prayer in the sovereignty of God, acknowledging that even the opposition they faced was within His sovereign will. The meeting place shook. They were filled with the Holy Spirit. The church does not need political power to fulfill her mission. She needs heavenly power. That power is still available today.

Reflection: What do your prayers reveal about what you truly trust? Are you praying for comfort or for boldness?

Practical Application: Set aside ten minutes today to pray specifically for boldness -- boldness to share your faith, to speak truth with grace, and to live in a way that points others to Christ.

Day 5: Preaching the Word With Boldness Wherever You Are

Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 -- A passage in which Paul declares his determination to focus entirely on Christ and Him crucified, relying not on human wisdom or eloquence but on the power of the Spirit.

Devotional: The sermon's central conviction rings clearly here: the answer to political divides, to cultural darkness, to personal despair is Jesus. Not a platform. Not a policy. Not a party. Paul made a deliberate choice to know nothing among the people he served except Christ and Him crucified. That singular focus did not make him irrelevant -- it made him powerful. You do not need a stage or a microphone to preach the word with boldness. You need the Holy Spirit, and if you belong to Christ, you already have Him. Your home, your workplace, your neighborhood -- these are your mission field. Go.

Reflection: Where in your daily life are you withholding the gospel out of fear of what others might think?

Practical Application: This week, look for one opportunity to speak about what Christ has done in your life. It does not have to be elaborate. Faithful and honest is enough.