

Lesson 504 – The Christian in the Voting Booth

THEME: The Christian in the voting booth.

TEXT: 1 Timothy; 2 Timothy; Titus

OPENING STORY:

In **1 Samuel 8**, Israel develops a turning point that will forever change the direction of the nation. Up until this point, every nation they have conquered has had a king, and yet the Israelites were king-free.

Lead by the direction of judges and prophets, they have, until this point in time, followed the 2nd hand word of God. But in Chapter 8, they are about to make several rapid 'sociological revolutions.'

They are going to be Democracy for all of about an hour or so, only enough to trade it in for a monarchy!

1 Samuel 8

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now **make us a king to judge us like all the nations.**

6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, **Hearken unto the voice of the people** in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

9 Now therefore **hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet PROTEST SOLEMNLY** unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

Notice in verse 19 & 20, the belief of the people is that the KING is for protection. He will fight the battles for them, ensure the victories are won, and will pass vindicate and punish (justice) as a law-giver.

But, we cannot help but take CAREFUL NOTICE that, while the people fully believed they were getting their own way, they were, in effect, passing judgment upon themselves, in perfect alignment with the Sovereign Will of God.

No matter how hard you try, you will never escape against the fact that ALL AUTHORITY belongs to God. It is His to do with what He will.

Consider:

1 Corinthians 15

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down **all rule** and **all authority** and **power**.

John 19

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that **I have power to crucify thee**, and have power to **release thee**?

11 Jesus answered, **Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above**: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

With this concept in mind, we can read **1 Samuel 15** and notice:

1 Samuel 15

1 Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to **anoint thee to be king** over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

11 It repenteth me that **I have set up Saul to be king**: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

17 And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and **the LORD anointed thee king** over Israel?

A BIT OF HISTORY:

While the United States is probably the pinnacle example of democracy, keep in mind that it is just over 200 years old, and in the face of monarchies and dictatorships, it is virtually an 'experiment'.

No, this doesn't mean it is doomed to failure, per se.

I simply mean it in this light, that when you try to research the history of voting, almost everything points to the United States of America. Yet, voting, clearly, had to have existed prior, as there is nothing new under the sun.

The first documented history of 'voting' as a concept that I could find was the Greeks in Athens, in which all eligible citizens could gather in an '**Ekklesia**' (*called out assembly*) and, in effect, 'vote' by casting their pebble in opposing baskets, and then counting.

The people of Athens reasoned that it would be dangerous for what we would call ‘politicians’ of their day to wield all the power, and thus a system of voting would keep them in check.

But, when Athens was conquered, the system fell along with the walls.

There have been small pockets of voting here and there in history, but I bet you didn’t know that the United States was not the first people to popularize voting here...

The Iroquois Indians were governed by a ‘GRAND COUNCIL’, which consisted of 50 representatives, one for each clan in the original five nations, both men and women casting their vote on what the Iroquois would do. Sadly, this also fell as you probably remember that the Iroquois voted to align themselves with the British during the Revolution.

When they lost their land in America, they were regulated to British-owned Canada. Incidentally, the great Iroquois Grand Council still exists today.

What can we learn from history? >> **Democracy**, and the republic are a powerful idea, but does not guarantee success, as bad decisions can be made as much as good ones.

INTRODUCTION:

It is not at all uncommon for political affiliates to rally around seemingly sharp candidates who promise to champion all of their causes... only to find that once they are elected, everything they had hoped for falls apart.

Is there anything a Christian should consider before giving his/her endorsement of a candidate?

QUOTE: “Everything rises or falls on leadership.” This goes for leadership OF the people as much as leadership BY the people.

LESSON:

Let’s start out by looking at a few popular misconceptions regarding your vote. These are commonly heard on many talk shows, used by many news commentators, and even by many otherwise intelligent people.

However, when they are examined closely, the logic falls apart, and what is left leaves much for consideration.

1. COMMON VOTING MISCONCEPTIONS

1. He Doesn’t Have to be Perfect/Moral

ILL – Saul – If you are about to lead a nation, what kind of a person do you need to run the 'Seat of the World.' Don't you want the strongest characterized, wisest, most diligent, lest-selfish, least given to anger?

Question: Who made a better Ruler – Jezabel/Ahab or Saul?

Answer: NEITHER! Both were horrible for the country as a whole and both led the Israelites away from their only hope of survival and protection – God!

2. He isn't a pastor, so he doesn't need any of those qualifications found in the N.T.

Sober – *Nah!* Rules his family well – *Nah!* Not a brawler – *Nah!*... Since when are these qualifications a BAD thing for someone running for office? How do any of these disqualify them from being an 'electable' candidates??!

These aren't just good qualifications for a pastor/bishop... These are good qualifications for ANYONE in leadership!

The last chapter of Ecclesiastes informs us that it is EVERY persons job to Serve God! If they are negligent in their primary responsibility to their Creator, how will this translate into them keeping their responsibility towards every American?

3. I Must Vote for the Lesser of the Two Evils

NEVER vote FOR evil!!! Not of anykind! Evil should never receive that stamp of endorsement of a child of God! Where is this precedent found in Scripture?!?

Would you vote to have all Christians electrocuted or just their children beheaded in front of them? ... Which is the 'better' of two evils?!?

When you vote for evil, you place the only bit of influence you have as a Christian on something anti-Christ, anti-God, and anti-Bible. That influence belongs to Jesus Christ and should be reserved for the things of God.

4. I can't Stand on Principle – The Other person might get in! Salt influences the meal, as long as it has retained its savor. Take a stand. It will be ok. Your endorsement is the only influence you have in the matter. What comes along with taking a stand? Obviously an explanation of that stand to everyone around you pressuring you to cave to one of these four mis-conceptions, right? THIS is a majority part of your salt-savor. This is your opportunity to go from being influenced BY others to INFLUENCING others.

Also, no candidate yet has lost by your ONE vote, but by thousands and tens of thousands of votes... Your one vote won't be blamed, nor will you be personally responsible for throwing the election results under the bus. It will be ok.

2. WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A CANDIDATE

In spite of what you will often read in the media, there are three candidates running for every position in office. There is the candidate people SAY they are. There is the candidate that the candidate himself SAYS he is. And then there is who the candidate ACTUALLY is.

People change their mind a lot. Many times, this is for the good. Yet, no political season has passed without an overwhelming bombardment of mud-slinging. It's almost as if a party puts forth the worst possible people (*according to everything we read*), and then turns around and tries to rally these very same people when the field narrows to ensure they 'win', as if it were a GAME OF BESMIRCHMENT!

1. PERSONAL Qualifications

1. Character – If a man cannot rule his own spirit, how is he to rule an entire nation?!
2. Sound Judgment (Sober)
3. Great Wisdom – The FEAR OF THE LORD is the beginning of Wisdom
4. Exemplary Self-Control (*In language, in actions, in re-actions.*)

5. Not Given to Substance/Flattery/High-Living/Taste/Anger/Vindictive... but patient and living in moderation.
6. Organized and orderly – In conduct, in speech, and in his home.
7. Respectful to elders & Watchful of Children – Gleaning wisdom from age/experience and mindful of the next generation who will need safeguarding and instillment.

2. JOB Qualifications – What are his Duties?

1. Serve & Protect the people – Not themselves or special interest groups.
2. Ability to Lead Others – Self-last, cause first! Lead by example.
3. One you can trust not to abuse/misuse his office/power/resources/tools/and talents

Makes the judgment call to go to war or declare war... made without hesitation, and without impairment of judgment.

If you can go down this list, and find your candidate smiling at the bottom, you will often find someone the world deems ‘un-electable.’

Q: Is someone ‘un-electable’ because no one will vote for him? Or will no one vote for him because he is un-electable? Could it be possible that the focus of ‘election’ has shifted to ‘winning’ as the goal instead of ‘voting’ as the goal?

CLOSING – *I've read the news and according to what we see in the papers and advertisements, we have a choice of two of the most corrupt, double-talking, self-serving, devious, and spite-filled candidates.*

... And I'm not sure why, but we seem determined on giving one of these people the highest position in the civilized world! Giving them control of the world's most powerful army and deadly destructive weapons!...

... and the general attitude of the people who can change this seems to be, “Oh well, how much damage can they cause in (4) years?!? Vote for the lesser of the two evils. If I don't vote, the other person will get in.”

We often see slogans such as, ‘Drink responsibly.’ ‘Drive responsibly’. ... why not VOTE responsibly?!?

Please let me challenge you, before you tune in to your favorite talk show or attempt to wade through the slew of political circulars and articles, PROMISE ME you will not do so without FIRST reading I & II Timothy and Titus.

Three books of the Bible that have much to say about a Christians responsibility towards righteousness. Especially consider the qualifications of a Christian or the qualifications of a Pastor... Why does all this need to apply to someone who ‘*highly recommends and reminds us of righteousness from a pulpit once a week*’ but not need to have any impact on our entire nation.

Deuteronomy 1

13 Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.