

Politics vs Priorities

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Preacher: Pastor Wolski

[0 : 0 0] of God are not called to advance a political party or agenda, and we're not called to defend a political party or any earthly kingdom. There's something greater than that, and there's something greater than the American dream that he promised the American people last night.

There's something from our text that's eternal. And I want to just put this little title on this tonight, calling this Priorities vs. Politics. And I hope you'll just consider what I say here, give you several points from this passage right here and these neighboring chapters.

And I want to say some things, and I'm going to say some things over and over again. And what they're going to be is just the same points repackaged so that you get it. So before we do that, let's pray about this, and then we'll go forward.

Father, I pray, Lord, you'll give me liberty to say what I need to say, and that it'll be the Scripture, and that your Spirit will bear witness to the Scripture. And, Lord, that we'll be on the same page, and that our focus and our goals and our attention will be on Jesus Christ and what He wants us to accomplish.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. I want you to look at 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and go back to the beginning of that chapter.

[1 : 1 8] I want to say tonight that we've got something greater that we need to be focused on. It's a priority for us as believers. And first thing I want to say is we have a greater ministry. And take a look at verse number 1 of chapter 4.

The Bible says, therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not. What ministry is that a reference to? Let's take a look at it a little bit earlier in this Bible here, in chapter 3, and look at verse number 6.

Chapter 3, verse 6, the Bible says, Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

And as he gets into verse 7, he talks about those Old Testament tables of stone that Moses had, the law, and describes in this passage how that was done away in Christ, and we have a New Testament.

And we're ministers of that New Testament. And in chapter 4, verse 1, we have this ministry. Now, I'll show it to you again. Look at chapter 5, and verse number, I'll start in 17, and then verse 18.

[2 : 2 2] Chapter 5, verse 17 and 18. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

We have a greater ministry. Today, candidates and politicians claim that they can make agreements, and they sign deals with other countries.

They sign treaties and pacts, and they make peace with other nations. And they have these interests in, we're all interested in global security and in stability.

And I want to say that while they sign their name to those things, we have a greater ministry. A greater ministry. In chapter 5, verse 19, look at the very next verse where we stopped.

It says, the ministry of reconciliation. To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

[3 : 25] We have a greater ministry because this ministry we've been given, the effects of it are global, but they're not just global, they're eternal. They're eternal. It says in that verse that he's reconciling the world unto himself.

It's not isolated to one country. The gospel ministry of Jesus Christ, it reaches to all the lost souls in all the nations of the world. Men, women, children.

God's interested in reconciling them to himself forever. And he's committed this ministry to us. It's a greater ministry than any political party stands up and boasts and proclaims, I'm going to do this, I'm going to fix that, I'm going to make an agreement with them.

We have a greater ministry. And that is the ministry of reconciliation. We are to tell the world, chapter 5, verse 20, that they don't have to be enemies with God anymore, that Jesus Christ did something for them.

And verse 20, now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. We can be in part of a ministry where there's no negotiations necessary.

[4 : 32] Part of a ministry where this covenant or this connection that God will make, a new birth with a lost soul, to where it's unbreakable, where they don't have to sign their name to it, and then find out a little bit later they sinned and messed up and don't have it anymore.

This thing's established forever. It's a greater ministry. And we can tell the world about it. Not only is it a greater ministry, this ministry of reconciliation, it's a ministry of liberation.

And take a look at chapter 3. Back in chapter 3 and verse 17, you probably know this verse. Now the Lord is that spirit, and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Often that verse is used to describe a license that believers have to do things.

No, it's a liberty. It's a freedom. It's a release. It's a rescue. It's liberation from the law in that passage, from the administration of death.

And where the spirit is, there's liberty. And we have a ministry of liberation, that is reconciling or rescuing and freeing sinners from the bondage of sin, freeing them from religion.

[5 : 42] I want to read a verse. I'm just going to grab it quick here in Galatians chapter 5 and verse 1, where Paul says, Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

I don't know if you can recall, and if your mind can go back to when you were lost, if you had any form of religion, you didn't have liberty, you had bondage. You had to do this, you had to do that.

You didn't have any release from that. You could only just feel good for a short time until you messed up. And when you messed up, all the good feeling is gone forever, because now you're in this state of, I messed up.

But Christ can make you free from that. We have a ministry, a far greater ministry than any political party has. We have a ministry of liberation. In this ministry, look at chapter 3 and verse 12, where the lost person has the bondage of sin and religion.

They have fear and they have uncertainty. But we have hope. Verse 12, chapter 3 says, Seeing then that we have such hope, we have something. They can have that hope and replace their uncertainty with a true hope.

[6 : 53] In place of the wrath of God that they're under from John chapter 3, they can obtain mercy like we read in chapter 4 and verse 1. Therefore, seeing we have this ministry as we have received mercy, they too then can receive that mercy.

Where they only know the old man, and he dwells in his corruption and his wickedness, we can tell sinners how they can be liberated from the old man's reign, and now a new man can exist.

The indwelling Jesus Christ, chapter 4 verse 7, describes we have this treasure in earthen vessels. And look later at chapter 4 verse 13, we having the same spirit of faith, according as it's written, I believe.

We also have faith. And so what I'm pointing out here is that this liberation, we can liberate sinners from the old man's reign, from the wrath of God, from the fear that they live in, the uncertainty they live in, from the religious bondage they live in.

And this is a great ministry. It's greater than freeing some refugees from some country. It's greater than assisting the nations, the NATO nations in their global conflicts.

[8 : 04] It's a greater ministry to be releasing sinners from bondage to the glorious liberty of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not just a greater ministry of reconciliation, liberation, but there's another one.

It's a ministry of predestination. You realize when a sinner gets saved, you're changing their destiny for eternity. It's not just fixing their homes or their schools.

You're not just fixing or giving a cut on taxes or boosting their economy. You're changing the direction of their soul forever. And in that predestination, they're predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son, a sinner that gets saved, predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.

You get to minister something that's eternal. It's not for four years. Eternal. It's a greater ministry. You get to introduce sinners not to capitalism, but to the riches of his grace.

The Bible says that God is rich in mercy. A sinner gets to taste that mercy. And they get to be predestinated to an inheritance in Ephesians chapter 1.

[9 : 16] You know, people could stand for hours at polls, and they can hand out pamphlets, and they can endorse candidates. Or, with that same time, they could stand in public with gospel tracts and endorse the Lord Jesus Christ.

Which one do you think is the greater ministry? When I was a teenager, I went to a Christian school where there was the history teacher. I think it was a government class that we had, and he was just an adamant political guy.

He was just all over it. He loved it. He just breathed it. And so the day of voting a particular thing locally, he got his students certain classes to go to the polls.

And so he drove me around with a couple other kids, dropped us off at this place, and dumped all this material on us, and he took off and went to the other ones, and he was just loving it. And we kind of liked it because we were out of school for the day, but we had to get up really early, and we had to go to this place and dress nice and put on a smile, and he told us, you know, gave us the routine of just handing out.

And as I look back on it, I had no idea, not none at all about who this person was. I didn't care. I mean, I was just a teenager getting out of school, just doing what I was told to do. And probably the parents and all that probably thought it was a great thing and, you know, doing that kind of thing, get the kids involved and all that.

[10 : 38] But I look back on it and think, I had no clue what I was doing. That person could have been one of the most horrible people in the world. I was just doing what I was told. Here you go. Would you consider this? Would you read this before you go cast your vote?

Would you just give them the one line back and forth? And I thought, boy, if I would have spent my day that day handing out gospel tracts to all those people going in there and trying to tell them about the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you're honest, which is a greater ministry? Which one bears the greater importance? And which one's going to bear the greatest fruit in eternity? I believe we have a greater ministry.

A greater ministry, and it's not the one here that's temporal. There's something else I want to say about this in light of this thought here is we have a greater message. In chapter 4 and verse number 3, take a look at that.

The Bible says, But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

[11 : 43] For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. We have a greater message. It's called Our Gospel in verse 3.

And I'm glad that I'm part of the Our, that I know that gospel, and it's part of me. And so that's my gospel too. But it's also in verse 4 called the glorious gospel of Christ.

It's the same one. Now we know from the Bible, we've studied this, I'm sure you've seen this, that the word gospel means good news, or it also from the scriptures means glad tidings.

Has there ever been, in human history, a better message declared than the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ?

Has there ever been a greater message? I think we have the greatest message there is. Which message is better? Donald Trump's running for president, and if you vote for him, he's going to fix our nation.

[12 : 45] Or, Jesus Christ died for your sins, and if you believe on him, he'll forgive you, and save you for eternity. Now I realize there are two different things, there are two different messages, but do you realize that you can really put yourself into one of them, or the other one, and sell yourself to go all out, to repeat it, and to tell it, and to make sure everyone understands it?

Which one's the greatest message? I should say, which one's the greater of the two in comparison? This message that I'm talking about tonight, that we're reading from the word of God, declares that salvation's a free gift, that forgiveness of sins is obtainable, it's yours for the taking, because Jesus Christ paid it all in full.

The Bible says in Titus 1 verse 3, So God made a promise.

We're going to hear a lot of promises. And there's one promise that God made, that he promised eternal life. Now, Donald Trump, or any, any of them, political leader, or somebody who throws their hat in, none of them have the power, nor the resources, to promise you the free gift of eternal life.

They can lower your taxes, they can claim to make health care affordable, they can balance the budget, or give you better roads, maybe better education, better infrastructure, maybe they can offer you more jobs, but everything they can offer you is temporal.

[14 : 18] Verse 18, it's temporal. It's not eternal. But we have a better message. We have a greater message. In chapter 4 and verse 5, we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

We preach Christ Jesus the Lord. It's a greater message, because Christ Jesus the Lord, can fix the problems of every man. He can fix the problems of every nation. He can redeem a sinner.

He can rescue a ruined life. He can soften a hard heart. The Lord Jesus Christ that we preach, can restore a broken relationship. He can recover an addict.

And he can reach to the farthest soul away. You're never outside the reach, no matter how far. And you know what? If you want to put a sign up in your yard, you should put one up that talks about the Lord Jesus Christ, because if you're saved, he's done more for you than anybody ever will.

Greater than a red wave of Republican politicians is the message of the cleansing wave of the blood of Jesus Christ. That's a song in our hymnal, the cleansing wave.

[15 : 23] Oh, now I see the cleansing wave, the fountain deep and wide. I forget the rest of that verse, but it rhymes with wide. Points to his wounded side.

Now I see the cleansing wave. Amazing grace, 'tis heaven below, to feel the blood applied. And Jesus, only Jesus, no, my Jesus, crucified.

Greater than getting out of a recession is getting out of sin. And only Jesus Christ can make that happen. And in Christ, the Bible says, you're washed, you're justified, but you're sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus.

It's a greater message. It's a greater message than any politician, Republican, Democrat, any one of them ever preached. Christ Jesus the Lord. The preaching of the cross.

Thirdly, I want us to think on this, we have a greater mission. This Sunday, Sean Holes stood up here and he said, I just want to make Christ famous. That was his little line, his goal with his life.

[16 : 28] He sees that as his mission, to make Christ famous. Look at chapter 4 in verses 10 and 11. Consider we have a greater mission. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

Verse 11 is going to say it again. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

We've got a greater mission to manifest and to display the life of Jesus Christ through us. To declare to the world that God has saved us.

That God has changed us. That God is in us through his son. That he fills us and strengthens us and leads us and guides us and motivates us and teaches us that we have passed from death unto life.

That we possess eternal life. Shouldn't you tell somebody that? If you possess eternal life, it's our mission. To live life in such a way that displays to the world the Lord Jesus Christ.

[17 : 37] Look at Galatians chapter 1. We're going to come back, but come to Galatians chapter 1. Look at verses 15 and 16. We've got a greater mission. Galatians chapter 1 as Paul is kind of giving his testimony.

Verse number 15. He says, But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace to reveal his son in me that I might preach him among the heathen.

A greater mission. Look at Philippians 2. Another verse here similar. Philippians chapter 2. To display to the world the life of Jesus Christ.

Philippians chapter 2 and verses 15 and 16. Where the Bible says that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world holding forth the word of life.

That Bible said back there in 2 Corinthians 4 that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ it described that light shining and it describes it in verse 6 and there it is again that we're supposed to be that light shining.

[18 : 59] It's the Lord Jesus Christ the light of the world in us. We have a greater mission. It's to preach Christ to the world to display the life of Christ to the world.

Paul calls our great mission the fight of faith and he says this about that fight he said no man that woeeth entangleth himself in the affairs of this life.

Why? That he may please him who hath called him to be a good soldier. That's why. Don't get entangled with the affairs of this life because you've got a God to serve and to please.

There's a fight that's raging in American politics. It's just going to grow worse and stronger and uglier. But you were chosen to enlist in a different fight in a greater battle armed with the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit.

A battle that's not against flesh and blood. A battle where you're called multiple times to stand. It may be public it may be private it may be in your home it may be at work it may be just wherever you are you're called to represent the Lord Jesus Christ and the glorious gospel of Christ.

[20 : 06] We have a greater mission. One more thing I want us to think on in this passage back in 2 Corinthians in chapter 4 is that we have a greater motivation. We have a greater motivation than just making this land great again.

A greater motivation. There's quite a bit of that in this passage these next two chapters. One motivation is we can be motivated by the condition of the lost. And we read that in verse 3 but if our gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost in whom the God of this world blinded the minds of them which believe not.

He's blinded their minds. Think on the condition of the lost and let it motivate you that they're deceived about their condition. They're deceived about the truth and we know for a fact that they're going to be damned to hell.

That ought to motivate you. You have what they need. You know what they need and how badly they need it. The motivation for them is not their poverty not their unemployment not their hunger not the inequality that exists but it's about eternity and it's about the damnation of hell that they deserve.

And incidentally what Christ already died for. It's a shame Christ already died and already paid for all of their sins. It's so easy for them to trust the Lord Jesus Christ.

[21 : 33] It needs to be made available. We ought to be motivated to make it available. In chapter 4 in verse 15 at the end of that verse it says that the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God for which cause we faint not.

For which cause we faint not. Think of this also. We ought to be motivated by God receiving glory. Knowing that we're glorifying Him. Something that ought to motivate us better than making America great and glorious again is making our God great and glorious in the sight of sinners.

Lifting up the name of the Lord Jesus Christ glorifies God. Whether they take it or not it will glorify your Father if your mouth will talk about His Son. In chapter 4 verse 17 it says for our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal way to glory.

And I've already taught in Sunday school I believe that's literal. That eternal weight of glory is a reward and that ought to motivate you. That for your faithful service to this mission you can be rewarded.

Another motivation is in verse 18 at the end the things which are not seen are eternal. And you can be motivated by eternity. By understanding eternity. That this thing that you're doing for Christ is going to last.

[22 : 50] Have lasting effects. It's worth engaging your life in something that's not temporal. You can remember King Solomon. King Solomon had everything and he gave his life to just investigate and to analyze and to know and to prove and explore all things under the sun.

And as he did it he found that all of it was vanity vanity and vexation of spirit. All of the temporal things in this life he just could spit on and away with.

He determined it was all vanity. He understood he'd leave it all behind him and wouldn't take a bit of it with him. What Solomon needed was to have something that would fulfill himself.

Something he could take with him. something that would last. A greater mission that we have. And we we have that very opportunity to get what he couldn't get his hands on.

To get our hands on something that will last. We ought to be motivated by the eternality of the gospel of Christ and what it can do. Of its effect and of its worth.

[24 : 05] Faith. Chapter 5 and verses 10 and 11 speak of the judgment seat of Christ. That ought to motivate you. Motivate you that Jesus Christ that died for you is going to judge you on the spot and it's coming closer.

Every day that goes by is a day closer to the judgment seat of Christ. He's going to try our works judge our lives. That ought to motivate us to get into this ministry.

In chapter 5 and verse 14 it says the love of Christ constraineth us. I think that's another motivator right there is the love of Christ. We love him so we choose to do what he desires.

We choose to seek and fulfill his will. Politicians are going to implore you and they're going to beg you to do some things for the love of country. I think Christ is a greater motivator.

We have a greater motivation to do something because we love Jesus Christ. Now how many Christians care so much about social issues and care so little about spiritual matters?

[25 : 14] How many of them are going to get online and get on their platforms and just pump out certain social things and political things but rarely if any will you see them talk about the Lord Jesus Christ publicly?

How can Christians show up to support a candidates rally but can't show up to support their local church's revival meeting? I know why because their motivation is their own comfort and their own ease and they want to keep themselves stable.

They want their country to be successful so they can be successful. They're concerned about their own wealth and their own peace of mind and they'll say well it's about our country and it's about the future but it's supposed to be about Jesus Christ.

That's what I want to remind you about tonight. The Christians priorities tonight are not to be entangled in the affairs of this life but rather to be engaged in a greater ministry. A greater ministry that proclaims a greater message of a greater mission with far greater motivation than any political party can summon.

Church we have the real thing. We have it. We have it. Let's not overlook it and become so dead and lay it to see in that we don't care but that we're distracted with the drama and excited with all the yapping.

[26 : 32] Please don't get distracted by other Christians and by the debates. I want to turn you to one more verse and I'll close. Look at Philippians chapter 3. Philippians chapter 3.

These two verses are dynamite. Look at verses 20 and 21. The Bible says for our conversation is in heaven from whence also we look for the Savior the Lord Jesus Christ who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body according to the working whereby he's even able to subdue all things unto himself.

Amen. I hope tonight that you'll consider that because this land is about to explode if it hasn't already with just jabber and jargon about politics and it's going to be two years until it hits its crescendo I suppose.

And I want to warn you and caution you and you can say I told you so. As your pastor I definitely want you to be thinking on Jesus Christ. And I want you to think am I talking more about this stuff than I am about him?

What's wrong with me? It's going to be easy for you to do that because it's all set up to do that. And you can get distracted and sucked into it. Don't let it take you away from the word of God.

[28 : 01] Don't let the television, don't let the talk, don't let the drama, don't let the debates, there's going to be a thousand things that are going to come up between now and then. Don't let that take you away from the time you spend with God and the time you spend in prayer and the souls that you seek after that need to be saved.

We have a greater ministry. It's the gospel ministry. And we're not called to promote some earthly kingdom but a heavenly one, the kingdom of God. Amen.

Let's close in prayer. Lord, I take this subject serious. I pray that it was received and that it would be considered and thought on and that everybody here would be on board and that they'd be on board with promoting Jesus Christ before anything else.

And God, our land is in a mess and it's ripe for something. And I don't know what that is yet. I don't know if time will tell. We'll see. I don't know if this is just preliminaries or if this is your hand or what you've got going on.

But God, help us to be about your business, what we know is your business from your book. Lord, please, I pray seriously, God, that you wouldn't let us be distracted, but that these thoughts would be on our hearts and minds that we would seek to please you.

[29 : 17] And God, let the things fall where they may and may you do with this country as you see fit. We pray for the return of our Savior. We pray that you'd come back and take us out of here.

And God, that's my first and foremost prayer is that you'd come quickly. And Lord, if you do, Terry, then help us to be faithful and help us to stand for righteousness, to not be cowards, to not to blend in and fit in with the rest of them.

Help us to please you according to your truth. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, amen tonight. Then we'll be dismissed.