

As We Prepare to Vote

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 May 2017

Preacher: Cedric Moss

[0 : 00] Well, please send your Bibles to Daniel chapter 4.! Daniel chapter 4. In three days' time, we are going to be heading to the polls!

and registered voters all over our country and I'm pretty sure that almost everyone in this room has predictions and desires for the outcome of the elections including some of our minor children who cannot vote.

Abby wishes she could vote. She is missing it by just a couple of days. And although there's been a lot of abusive and unhelpful talk among candidates on all sides and there have been reports of campaign paraphernalia being destroyed and we all heard about the deficiencies in the voter registration process and the chaos in the advanced poll.

Here's the undeniable reality. In spite of all that, we have an enviable democracy and we should be grateful for that.

We should be grateful that apart from isolated, crazy things that some people tend to do, we don't have to fear going to the polls on Wednesday to exercise our constitutional right to vote.

[1 : 47] That is a gift from God. Many countries don't have it and we should be thankful. For those of you who are visiting us this morning, we have been in a sermon series in the book of Galatians and I thought that rather than continue the sermon series in Galatians, we would all be better served by taking some time to think about our general elections in light of God's word and in particular in light of this passage in Daniel chapter 4.

So if you have not yet turned there, please do so. And we're going to be reading a lengthy passage of scripture this morning. But that is what we do when we gather.

We gather as God's people. We read his word. As a matter of fact, we are commanded to read God's word when we gather as God's people. So please follow along as I read Daniel chapter 4 beginning in verse 1.

King Nebuchadnezzar, to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth, peace be multiplied to you.

It is seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders, his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

[3 : 23] I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed, the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me.

So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, the astrologers came in and I told them the dream but they could not make known to me its interpretation.

At last, Daniel came in before me, he who was named Belshazzar, after the name of my God and in whom the spirit of the holy, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.

And I told him the dream, saying, O Belshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and the interpretation.

The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these. I saw and behold a tree in the midst of the earth and its height was great. The tree grew and became strong and its top reached to heaven.

[4 : 54] And it was visible to the end of the whole earth. Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches and all flesh was fed from it.

I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed and behold a watcher, a holy one came down from heaven. He proclaimed aloud and said thus, Chop down the tree and lop off its branches. Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from under its branches. Leave the stump of its roots in the earth bound with a band of iron and bronze amid the tender grass of the field.

Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. Let his mind be changed from a man's and let a beast's mind be given to him.

And let seven periods of time pass over him. The sentence is by the decree of the watchers and the decision by the word of the holy ones. to the end that the living may know that the most high rules the kingdoms of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.

[6 : 24] This dream I, Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belshazzar, tell me the interpretation because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation that you are able.

For the spirit of the holy gods is in you. Then Daniel, whose name was Belshazzar, was dismayed for a while and his thoughts alarmed him.

The king said, the king answered and said, Belshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you. Belshazzar said, answered and said, my lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies.

The tree you saw which grew and became strong so that it reached, so that its top reached to heaven and was visible to the end of the whole earth whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant and enriched food for all under which beasts of the field found shade and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived.

It is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven and your dominion to the ends of the earth.

[7 : 59] And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field and let him be wet with the dew of heaven and let his portion be with the beasts of the field till seven periods of time pass over him.

This is the interpretation, O king. It is decreed of the Most High which has come upon my Lord the king that you shall be driven from among men and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven and seven periods of time shall pass over you till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.

And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that heaven rules therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you.

Break off your sins by practicing righteousness and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.

[9 : 32] All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of 12 months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon.

And the king answered and said, Is not this great Babylon which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?

While the words were still in the king's mouth there fell a voice from heaven, O Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken, the kingdom has departed from you and you shall be driven from among men and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field.

And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox and seven periods of time shall pass over you until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.

Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagle's feathers and his nails were like birds' claws.

[10 : 48] At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven and my reason returned to me and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored him who lives forever.

For his dominion is an everlasting dominion and his kingdom endures from generation to generation and all the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing and he does according to his will among the hosts of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay his hand or say to

him what have you done?

At the same time my reason returned to me and for the glory of my kingdom my majesty and my splendor returned to me my counselors and my lords sought me and I was established in my kingdom and still more greatness was added to me now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the king of heaven for all his works are right and his ways are just and those who walk in pride he is able to humble let's pray together father we are so grateful this morning that we are able to gather in this place we are able to lift our voices in song to the God of our salvation we are able to petition your throne and make our requests known and now lord we are able to sit under the preaching of your word father father I pray that even the very reading of your word would build up our hearts and cause us to hear the truth that you would have us to hear as we prepare to vote on Wednesday god give us all ears to hear god help us to recognize that more important than any political party's message that we have heard any candidate's case for being elected lord what we need to hear this morning is this word from you so speak to our hearts

I pray and lord grant me grace to be faithful to your word recognizing that I am your voice to your people these are your people help me to care for them lord through your word the preaching of it in Jesus name amen the original purpose of the book of Daniel was to give god's people divine perspective in the midst of circumstances where divine perspective could easily be lost it was the purpose of the book of Daniel the nation of Israel was in Babylonian captivity and they were subject to the oppressive rule of the king of Babylon Nebuchadnezzar the most powerful man in the world at that time and even though they were living in captivity living under great oppression there was an important message that god did not want them to forget and this message is repeated throughout the book of Daniel especially in chapter four and the message is simple but the message is profound and the message is this god's kingdom rules over all god's kingdom rules over all this is the divine perspective that god wanted his people to have as they lived in exile in

Babylon being oppressed by this powerful king and friends and brothers and sisters it is the divine perspective that god wants us to have as we live in this world and yet it is a perspective that we can easily lose in the midst of all that goes on it's a perspective that we can easily lose in the midst of this election cycle that we find ourselves in all the excitement all the activity we can lose sight of the perspective that god is sovereign in the affairs of men and his kingdom rules over all and since it is true that god's kingdom rules over all here is what we know about what will happen when we vote on wednesday when we vote on wednesday god will be bringing his sovereign plans to pass and the government that we will get is the government that he in his sovereignty gives us and this is not to say that the choices we make on wednesday will not be real choices as voters we get to participate in the elections we do have a real role to play but god will bring his sovereign plans to pass voting is an excellent example of human responsibility and divine sovereignty because they work out in history from start to finish on wednesday we will vote that's human responsibility and on wednesday god will determine that's divine sovereignty and we may not be able to reconcile that we may not be able to reconcile how we can have real votes and god can be truly sovereign but it is the truth of scripture is the truth of this passage that we have come to this morning the reality is though that many people including followers of christ are not mindful of god's hand in the outcome of elections but by god's grace we who are gathered this morning we who will be looking to god's word we can be among those who after the polls have closed after the results are in we can say amen and it matters not what those results are it matters not whether we would have personally voted for them or desired them if we truly accept the word of god this morning we will say amen and we will trust the sovereign lord now there are many ways that this very lengthy passage of scripture can be subdivided in a single message but i believe that for our purposes this morning it be best to subdivide them into two parts and they are number one a political lesson taught a lesson i believe that we see in verses 1 through 33 and second a political lesson learned which i believe we will see in verses 34 through 37 so first of all let's consider the political lesson that this passage teaches it's a quite lengthy passage but the lesson that is taught in this passage is very clear and to the point the political lesson that is being taught in daniel chapter 4 is stated three times in three verses and they

[18 : 38] are verses 17 verse 25 and 26 notice again what it says in verse 17 the sentence is by the decree of the watchers the decision by the holy ones and here's here's the the point to the end that the living may know that the most high rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men again in verse 25!

6 as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that heaven rules those two words heaven rules just a succinct summary of what he has already said in verses 17 and 25 that's the political lesson that is being taught that heaven rules in the affairs of men God didn't leave us to ourselves to just do whatever we want to do in the earth no he owns the earth he owns everyone in the earth and he presides over it as the sovereign lord and he brings his purposes to pass and think about it if God is not able to bring his purposes to pass then he really isn't God if he is not able to bring about that which he desires if somehow what

God wants is able to be frustrated in the earth he doesn't deserve to be served but the witness of scripture is true that he is sovereign over all things and no one can frustrate his plans or his purposes I want us to do a quick review of King Nebuchadnezzar starting in Daniel chapter one and so if you would just turn back a moment to Daniel chapter one verses one through two we read in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it and then verse two says and the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand I want you to see that because what it does verse two gives us the divine perspective for what we read in verse one

Nebuchadnezzar did not defeat Jerusalem and king Jehoiakim because he was more powerful he did it because the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand that is the divine perspective and what we know from history is that Nebuchadnezzar defeated another king and another kingdom the Assyrian kingdom and he did so because God gave the Assyrian king into his hand if you turn over to chapter two in Daniel chapter two Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and in this dream God shows him the history of world powers in advance in his dream Nebuchadnezzar dreams that he saw this huge statue that had a head of gold chest and arms of silver midsection and thighs of bronze and legs of iron and feet of iron and clay and then he saw a stone that was cut out without human hands and this stone struck the feet of this great image and the entire statue was broken to pieces and it became like chaff and the wind blew it all away and

Nebuchadnezzar felt this dream had significance and it terrified him and he was determined to get it interpreted he called all the wise men of Babylon they could not interpret it and then he said I'm going to kill you all starting with Daniel and his friends and Daniel pleaded with the king's captain for time to be able to interpret this dream for the king and they prayed to God he and his three friends and God revealed the dream to him and he gave the interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar and in the interpretation Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar he said the statue that you saw with these four metals these four materials they represented four kingdoms he said you Nebuchadnezzar you the head of gold he said and after you there's going to come a second kingdom the one made of silver is going to overtake your kingdom and then there's one made of bronze is going to overtake that kingdom and then there's one made of iron is going to overtake that kingdom and then he said and then there's going to come another kingdom look at verse 44 or read verses 44 and 45

[24 : 18] Daniel chapter 2, 44 through 45. Daniel then tells him, And in the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to other people.

It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever. Just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, a great God has made known to the king what shall be after this.

The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure. Daniel tells King Nebuchadnezzar that all of these kingdoms of this world will eventually pass away, and they will be overtaken by the kingdom of God.

But God's kingdom, unlike those kingdoms, will endure forever. Notice what Nebuchadnezzar says in verses 46 through 47.

Then Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and paid homage to Daniel and commanded that an offering and incense be offered to him. The king answered and said to Daniel, Truly your God is God of gods and Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.

[25 : 44] Now based on Nebuchadnezzar's response here at the end of chapter 2, the account that we find in chapter 3 is most surprising. In chapter 3, we see Nebuchadnezzar doing something that is inconsistent with what he says in verse 47.

Nebuchadnezzar goes, he makes this huge statue, 90 feet tall, 9 feet wide, and he commands everyone to worship it. And he doesn't make it out of silver or bronze or iron. He makes it out of gold. Why? Because he's the head of gold. And it's almost to make the point that, no, I don't want my kingdom to end, and I want everyone to pledge allegiance to my kingdom. Now just imagine the amount of gold that it would take to make a statue that large. Tells you the kind of wealth that he had.

But not everybody was impressed with Nebuchadnezzar. So when he made the statue and even gave a threat that who didn't bow and worship the statue was going to be thrown into the fiery furnace, Daniel's three friends didn't bow.

[26 : 56] They refused to do so. So Nebuchadnezzar threw them into the fiery furnace, and God miraculously preserved them, and they were not even touched by the smell of the smoke that was in the fiery furnace.

And notice in verses 28 through 30, Nebuchadnezzar's response. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him and set aside the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own god.

Therefore, I make a decree. Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.

And then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. Now clearly, Nebuchadnezzar only sees God as a stronger god than all the other gods he worshipped. He still did not see him as the living God who rules in the affairs of men. Nebuchadnezzar is a better God of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar is a better man than all the other gods he has. And we know that because of what we encounter here in chapter 4, what we have just read.

[28 : 33] Nebuchadnezzar did not truly repent. He did not come to a true conviction of who God was. And so here in chapter 4, we see God judging him and humbling him in a most dramatic way, reducing him to act and live like an animal.

And so what we have here in chapter 4 is the testimony of a humbled Nebuchadnezzar who testifies of what happened to him. It's important to see that.

This is his testimony. This is his account of what happened to him. Again, he has this troubling dream. He saw this tree that was so tall it reached to the end of the earth.

And it was beautiful. Fruit was abundant. It provided food and shade for all. And then one whom Nebuchadnezzar calls a watcher comes down.

And in a loud voice proclaims, Chop down the tree. Cut off its branches. Strip off its leaves. Scatter its fruits. Let the beasts flee from under it. Let the birds from its branches.

[29 : 38] Leave a stump. And let the roots be in the earth bound with a band of iron and bronze. It's interesting when you consider these words as you progress through the words of this watcher.

In the latter part of verses 15 and 17, you see the language change. And it's clear that he's not talking about a tree. He's talking about a person. When he says, Let him be wet.

Let his portion be with the beasts of the field. Let his mind be changed. Let seven periods of time pass over him. And if that's not clear enough, Daniel makes it very clear that the dream is really about a person in verse 22, when he tells Nebuchadnezzar that Nebuchadnezzar is the tree that is being cut down.

And again, remember, what's the whole point of this account? The whole point of the account is in verse 17. That Nebuchadnezzar and all the living might know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it even the lowliest of men.

And again, that's repeated in verses 25 and 26, that he would know that heaven rules. Now, I think it's important this morning to recognize that this passage is written to every single person in this room.

[31 : 15] This passage is written to every single human being on the face of the earth. And see, this is not always true with Scripture. All of Scripture is not written to everyone.

There are some parts of Scripture that are exclusive to the people of God. But there are other parts of Scripture, like this passage of Scripture, it's written to everyone.

And again, we know this from verse 1. We know this from verse 17. In verse 1, we're told that these words are addressed to all peoples, nations, and languages.

And verse 17 tells us that they are written to all the living. So this is God's word to all of us this morning. And he has a point that he wants all of us to understand this morning.

And for us, as we prepare to vote, these words should shape our minds. They should shape our thinking. Above and beyond our voting, we should remember that heaven rules.

[32 : 23] Above and beyond our voting, we should remember that there is a sovereign God in the heavens who determines governments in the earth. God will give the government of the Bahamas that he wills.

It does not matter if political power comes through war as it did for Nebuchadnezzar. And it doesn't matter whether it will come through the ballot box as it will come for us on Wednesday.

Still at the end of the day. Either way, heaven rules. That's the point of this passage that we are considering this morning. And this is written to all people.

Everywhere. Get this in our heads. This is what is going to happen on Wednesday. God will be the one who ultimately is determining, for his own reasons and purposes, who will be our government on Wednesday.

Well, that's the political lesson taught. Let's now consider the political lesson learned. The political lesson learned is in verses 28 through 37.

[33 : 44] It's interesting that as troubling as Nebuchadnezzar's dream was and the fact that the interpretation prophesied judgment against him. And Daniel in verse 27 appealed to him, saying, you know, you should repent.

And perhaps the judgment, God's judgment may be deterred if you would repent, if you would renounce your ways.

But instead, what we read in verses 28 and 29 is that all those foretold in the dream happened to Nebuchadnezzar one year later. And even in that one year, we see the mercy of God.

I want to say that God is long-suffering. God could have said, this is going to happen to you, and it happened to him. But he has this one-year probation. And I feel impressed to say to some of us this morning, who, like Nebuchadnezzar, have heard God's voice.

God has spoken to us in some particular way, in some particular set of circumstances. God has warned us. And we carry on as if it's business as usual.

[35 : 01] We live as almost as if we didn't hear what we heard. And I say to us this morning, let us not take God's mercy and God's long-suffering as slackness.

Nebuchadnezzar did. For a whole year, he disregarded the word that was spoken to him to say this was going to happen. He disregarded what Daniel said, say, perhaps if you would turn, if you would break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquity by showing mercy to the oppressed, then perhaps there might be a lengthening of your prosperity.

He didn't heed it. And I say to you this morning, Scripture says, if you hear God's voice, don't harden your heart. You don't harden your heart. We don't know what tomorrow brings.

And so, we see in verse 30, Nebuchadnezzar in his prideful boasting, boasting, is not this great Babylon which I have built by my mighty power, and a royal residence for the glory of my majesty. And Scripture says, even as those words were in his mouth, God executed the judgment on him. And then for seven years, Nebuchadnezzar had his mind and his actions to be that of an animal living outdoors, eating grass like an ox, sleeping on the ground, not caring for himself.

[36 : 36] And then we see in verses 34 and 35, after seven years, we read that God graciously restored Nebuchadnezzar, restored his senses.

And Nebuchadnezzar does seven years later what he should have done eight years earlier. He blesses the Most High and praises and honors him who lives forever and ever.

Nebuchadnezzar finally learned the political lesson, heaven rules. Heaven rules in the affairs of men.

The most powerful man in the world at that time came finally to that conclusion after living seven years under the judgment of God.

And notice in verses 34 and 35 how Nebuchadnezzar recounts the lesson that he learned in his own words. Here's what he says. God's kingdom alone lasts forever from generation to generation.

[37 : 46] It doesn't matter who's elected on Wednesday. It won't last. The kingdom won't last.

There's one eternal enduring kingdom and it is the kingdom of God. He says God does according to his will among the hosts and the inhabitants of the earth.

He says no one can stop what God does and no one can question what God does. Not even powerful King Nebuchadnezzar who had been severely humbled.

And notice now what Nebuchadnezzar does in verse 37. He began to see and praise God as the king of heaven. Interestingly, this is the only place in scripture that we find this title for God, the king of heaven.

And it's a title that is ascribed to him by the most powerful king who had been powerfully humbled. Nebuchadnezzar recognized the point that the king of heaven rules the kings of earth.

[38 : 58] And so he blesses God the most high and he praises and honors him who lives forever. Nebuchadnezzar no longer sees God as just another God who's stronger than his gods.

But he sees him as God over all other gods. On Wednesday, based on past history and what we are able to generally observe, about 90% of the greatest voters will cast ballots to determine a new government in our country.

And such high voter turnout in our country has traditionally shown us that Bahamians take a very keen interest in politics.

However, many of us have not learned this fundamental political lesson that is taught in Daniel 4, that heaven rules.

And ultimately, it is the king of heaven who determines, who is politically exalted in terms of winning and who is politically humbled in terms of losing.

[40 : 14] But friends, those of us who accept these words from Daniel 4 know that beyond our voting, God will sovereignly decide the outcome of Wednesday's elections.

And if the party that you are supporting or the candidate that you are supporting wins, it's fine to rejoice. But don't rejoice to the degree that it can make it appear that your hope is more rooted in who is in parliament than who sits on the throne.

And if your candidate or your party who you are supporting loses, it's okay to be disappointed. But don't let your disappointment be such that it makes it appear that your hope is more rooted in who is seated in parliament than who is seated on the throne.

And in particular, if your party loses, be careful that you do not silently protest what the sovereign Lord does. That you don't soberly protest how heaven determines the affairs in our nation.

God is all-knowing. God is all-wise. He makes no mistakes. And He has all kinds of reasons for setting up governments and bringing down governments. And so we should remember that when an individual or party wins, God is not necessarily showing His approval for them.

[41 : 53] The reality is that some candidates who are followers of Jesus Christ will win and some will lose. Some unbelievers will win and some will lose.

The same sovereign God who allows godly men to govern, men like Abraham Kuiper, a pastor and politician who served as prime minister in the Netherlands, also allows ruthless men to rule. Men like Adolf Hitler who ruled in Germany and exterminated six million Jews. Again, for His own reasons, reasons He does not disclose, God raises up and brings down leaders and kings and kingdoms.

And so let us not make the mistake by attaching God's approval to people and parties who win on Wednesday and His disapproval on those who lose.

It's neither here nor there. Some Christians will win, some will lose, some unbelievers will win, some unbelievers will lose.

[43 : 05] Without taking away anything from what I have already said, I also want to say this. In the raising up and bringing down of leaders in whatever sphere, pride and humility are key issues.

And what we see is that God humbles the proud and He exalts the humble. Not necessarily in our time and our way, but God does so.

And this is what happened with Nebuchadnezzar. He began as a little seed planted by God. And under God's sovereign hand, he grew in power and his empire expanded.

And he became proud, so proud that he ignored God's warnings and in so doing he ignored God himself. And so God humbled him. And after being humbled, he repented.

and God graciously restored him. And so all political candidates and parties would do well to follow the example of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4.37 by praising and extolling and honoring the King of Heaven because all His works are right, all His ways are just, and those who walk in pride, He is able to humble.

[44 : 29] Now I have no way of knowing, but I have no doubt that there would be pastors, perhaps on our island, certainly around the Bahamas, who are telling congregations this morning how they should vote or really who they should vote for.

I've never done that and I certainly don't plan to start this morning. I will never tell you who you should vote for.

But I am going to tell you how you should vote. Vote your conscience. We should never violate our conscience.

No matter what the circumstance, we will live with our consciences. And I'm not one of those who believes that you are obligated to vote for a candidate even if all the candidates are bad choices or represent bad parties.

I don't believe that. I believe that you could come to a place where you face that crisis. I've never faced that crisis. I looked at one constituency where if I did live in that constituency I would have that crisis and I wouldn't vote.

[45 : 38] And there are perhaps others I just didn't look at them. But we should vote for candidates and parties where our consciences would not be violated.

And so on Wednesday I said you vote your conscience before God and vote in a manner that you are able to do so with a clear conscience. You know my father I was thinking about my father recently.

My father died in June of 2000. and I appreciate so much being able to hear my father explain to me the political positions that he has held through the history of our country.

And I said to him I said daddy if it was any different I couldn't have respected you. See because I have gone back to read some history I know our history. and I've been able to see him align himself in a way that is certainly appropriate and certainly one that he doesn't have to be ashamed about. And I think about that for myself as well. How I would want to be able to say to my grandchildren and I can say now to my children this is why I will vote in this particular way.

[46 : 55] And I vote as a believer I vote as one who follows Christ and I would vote with a clear conscience not with a conflict in my conscience. And you know I say to all of us this morning we're aware of the realities in our country.

We're aware of the options that we have. Vote with a clear conscience before God. Not being swayed to violate your conscience in any particular way.

In the Old Testament two entire books are dedicated to kings. They're first and second kings. And what we see in these books is that even the good kings failed.

Kings like Jehoshaphat and Josiah and David good kings but they failed. And if you wonder why we have these two books in our Bibles first and second kings the point of it all is to point us to the king of kings who does not fail.

The king of kings who did not fail who came in the person of Jesus Christ and lived on this earth lived a perfect life satisfied every requirement of God and then died a substitutionary death on the cross for sinners.

[48 : 23] He is the king who was not voted for. He is the one whom God approves. He is the one about whom Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 9 6-7 when he wrote for unto us a child is born to us a son is given and the government shall be on his shoulder and his name shall be called wonderful counselor mighty God everlasting father prince of peace of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and uphold it with justice and righteousness from this time forth and forevermore the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this and friends we all live in this kingdom if you want to call it the Bahamas we are citizens of this kingdom

Jesus is king over the kingdom of God and scripture teaches us that we are born into that kingdom we have to get a birth into that kingdom we are born again into that kingdom and then we are translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son I pray that as we vote on Wednesday as we prepare to cast ballots let us remember that Jesus Christ is the only king who keeps his promises Jesus Christ is the only king who will never fail he is the only king who will never disappoint us may our voting on Wednesday remind us of him may our voting on Wednesday point us to him and when the results are in let us remember the truth of Daniel 4 God's kingdom rules over all therefore rulers on earth are determined by and subject to God in heaven let's pray God