

Responsibility of a Citizen

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[0 : 00] All right. Well, find your spots here. We'll get into Sunday school here. We got a lot of stuff to cover this morning. And hopefully in the next few weeks, I want to talk a little bit about being a citizen.

But we're going to start today by looking at something very important that's coming up that I wanted to cover before you guys start filling out ballots and getting those things, because there's a couple of things that as believers, we need to understand about even our, number one, our responsibility to vote, but also just how these things are going to play out in our society. Because as a good citizen, one thing I want to encourage you to do, God gives us a blessing of being able to vote to make a difference. You know, there's many places in the world that don't get that opportunity and the influence that we have in our system that God has given to us with our government.

And so let's go ahead and open in a word of prayer here this morning. Heavenly Fathers, we come before you today, Lord. We just thank you and praise you for this day. Lord, as we look at these very important topics and the things going on, Lord, that we might understand the truth of not only what things are, but Lord, to help us to see it in light of your word, of light of the scripture, of how these things, how you've put these things together. Lord, that we might apply them biblically and not just from opinion or conjecture, even as we've looked at this morning. Lord, we pray just have your hand upon each one today as we look at these things, that we might grab a hold of the truth of your word. And Lord, we ask all these things in your precious name. Amen. Okay. So we're 30 days from election. Okay. We're 30 days from an election and it will be casting votes both for and against many things. One of which is the conflicting initiatives that we're going to have here in the state. We're going to talk specifically about something. And this, there's two initiatives that deal with life. Life is an issue that as a Bible believer, you ought to be concerned about life entirely from the moment of conception, all the way to the time God takes somebody home. Life is important, but we're going to look at some of the conflicting initiatives that we're going to see here dealing with the topic of abortion.

We're going to spend a few minutes this morning to address these in light of scripture, in light of our part of citizens of the state of Nebraska, in light of your reality of being a citizen of our republic. Yes, I said a republic. We are not a democracy. Words matter.

The United States is not a democracy. We are a democratic republic. A republic is governed by rule of law. And so we need to understand the difference. A democracy, the mob rules. Whoever outvotes the other wins. A republic is by rule of law. Our nation was founded by rule of law, even though we have democratic input into the direction. It's a very good balance.

[3 : 34] It's a blessing that our founding fathers saw the insight to do so. And it's our responsibility to keep it.

I want you to understand there's six initiatives on the ballot this year. From 434 to 439. We have the first one up is to protect women and children.

We're going to talk about that this morning. 435 is private education scholarships. We won't get into that too much this morning, but that's, there's some biblical things regarding that one too we need to pay attention to.

You have paid sick leave on the initiative. You have medical cannabis and a medical cannabis board to be established.

And then you have 439, protect our rights. In other words, the right to kill an innocent. I'm just going to tell you what it is. It's the right, they want to have a right to kill an innocent.

[4 : 39] And we're going to look at some of this this morning. But before we go there, I want to lay out a groundwork a little bit from the Word of God, because I want you to understand that God has institutions and responsibilities that He gives to us.

Go ahead and take your Bible. Let's go to Matthew chapter 28 this morning. Matthew chapter 28. And we're going to look at the first thing that we need to pay attention to, because God gives a responsibility to the local church.

God gives a responsibility to the church. He lists out some responsibilities that we have. Some things that are set before us. And we see here in Matthew chapter 28, verses 19 and 20.

Who do I have this morning who can stand up and read that nice and loud for me this morning? Go ahead, James. Go ahead, James. Okay.

In this verse, we find some responsibilities. One is to proclaim and teach the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As a church, we have a responsibility to proclaim the gospel. We secondly have a responsibility to baptize.

[6 : 00] And that baptism identifies those that have called upon the Lord. Identifies them into His people. It doesn't say, but identifies His people and His purpose.

And then we have a responsibility to disciple and teach those that have identified with Christ to understand and do the will of God. Those are basically the three mandates of the church.

Proclaim the gospel. Get people connected into the local church. And then continue to teach them to observe the things that God has given to us. That's the summary statement of what's going on here.

And that's a whole message in itself. But we don't have time this morning. But I want you to understand, the local church, that's our primary responsibilities. To train and equip people for the proclamation of the gospel.

And to go forth. And we understand this principle. But the second institution that God had, and we talked about that, was the government. The government God gives responsibilities to also.

[7 : 03] Look over to Romans chapter 13 for a moment. Romans chapter 13, in verses 3 and 4. And who do I got? Read those nice and loud for me this morning. Lou, you got that?

Go read it.

Okay. So we see here that God tells us government sums up this way. The responsibility of government that God has established is very clear. One of the primary purposes we find there is to restrain evil.

Now I want you to understand, you cannot stop evil. The heart of an individual is desperately wicked and who can know it? Government's job will never stop evil.

Their job is to restrain evil. To cause an accountability in this present time for evil that people do. But also to allow for good to be done.

[8 : 16] In other words, to give a context where those that to do good have a context in which to do it safely. Government has a responsibility to establish a safe society.

Punish evildoers. Establish a safe society. And to promote that which is good. Because remember, you can't make somebody do good and you cannot prevent evil.

But you can set a stage to promote good. To do that which is right. And also restrain evil. In other words, hinder that which is evil.

That's government's responsibility. Now I want you to understand, as a citizen of the United States, you're part of our government whether you choose to be or not. A citizen is part of that whether you think you are or not.

It doesn't matter. You are. And God gives us a responsibility to be a part of our government. And have a voice and to do that. But let's look third because we have church, we have government, and then we have individual.

[9 : 20] Yes, God gives responsibilities to us as individuals, doesn't he? What is our responsibilities that God gives to us? You know, think about Micah 6.8.

He says, He had shown thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee?

Remember, this is what God's requirements are to an individual.

We're to what? We're to do justly. In other words, do those things that are right and proper. And to do things just, you know, we hear words today like fair.

Fair isn't as important as just. Justice. Accountability ties to justice. Justice will make things proper.

The idea of fairness says everybody gets the same thing, and that's not always the case. There's too many variables. But justice can be dealt evenly. Secondly, we ought to love mercy.

[10 : 21] We ought to love mercy for a couple reasons. One, because God was merciful to us. And as God's people, we ought to see other people have mercy upon others also. Thirdly, to walk

humbly with thy God.

We're to walk humbly with God. In other words, God is to be the primary focus. That's our responsibility. We find here, even at Solomon in Ecclesiastes chapter 12, verse 13, he sums it up this way.

He says, let's hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. He lays it out there for us.

So we have these three things that interconnect. Because you cannot separate the local church from individuals. We're individual members of this body of believers.

Each with responsibilities within it as a corporate as a whole. That God gives to us. But also corporately as individuals under government. That God has established.

[11:25] We have a responsibility. To understand and to help government do. We're blessed to be able to direct and guide and influence our government to do those things that are right and good and to restrain evil.

Those things are important. Because each of these plays a role in your life. So the question is how these apply to your responsibilities as both citizens of heaven and citizens of earth.

Because literally as a believer, you're a member of both places. You say, I'm a citizen of heaven. Yes, you are, but you're still a citizen here. Why?

Because you're still breathing. You're still walking. We have responsibilities that we can't just put away. In a few weeks, we're going to be called upon to cast a vote. And I pray you've taken measures to vote. I believe God has blessed us.

And I believe it's a God-given responsibility to do your part. I think we've laid that case out many times. And hopefully as we go through here in the coming weeks, those things will be clear.

[12:27] Because sometimes people want to separate and ignore government. But you know, the reality is we have a responsibility to it. Because God has given it to us and we're a citizen of it. And you'll find even in the most wicked cultures, the most wicked governments upon the face of the earth.

You'll be amazed when you study out, even look at the scripture. Daniel was cast into a very corrupt system. But yet God put him there and made a major impact in the government.

Joseph, God placed him there and made an impact in the government that he was under. No different than us to have an impact, Nehemiah. I mean, the Bible's filled with people who made impacts on the government that God had put them under.

And the influence that is there. While there are many things that we need to consider when we vote, I want to look specifically at the two measures before us this year because this is especially critical. Consider the question. Look over to Mark chapter 3 for a moment. Mark chapter 3 and verse 4. I want you to see here that Jesus makes a statement. He declares, it's almost a declarative statement you might say, but in the form of a question.

[13:49] But it's kind of a rhetorical question. Because when we look at it, we understand that it is rhetorical. Because when we understand it, look what it says. And he saith unto them, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day or to do evil.

To save life or to kill. What ought we to do? It's a rhetorical question that we already know the answer to, isn't it? We ought to do good and we ought to seek to save life.

When you study the scripture, you'll see that that's one of the principles that supersedes a lot of other things is the principle of life. We won't have time to get into it. If you want a good study on it, go study Rahab.

Principle of life is a major factor in that account. But as a child of God, we should be for life. God is the one that made man a living soul. He formed us even before your mother knew who you are, God knew who you were.

That's a scary thought. Because your mom, we often think, is the first one to know you because you let her know you're there when you kick her. But before that point, God already knew you. As a child of God, we need to understand the importance of it.

[14:57] Think about Proverbs 14. Proverbs 14, 34 says, Righteousness exalted the nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. I want you to understand that taking the life of the innocent is a reproach to God.

It's a reproach to God. Proverbs 15, 9 says, The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord, but he that loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

In other words, our direction ought to be to do that which is right, to try to direct and try to guide that which is right. The reason I usually don't delve this deep into this type stuff, but I think this is important and critical, for us to understand the biblical application of this.

Because what you're voting on here is a difference between promoting good and restraining evil. It's that critical.

Because as we're going to see and understand, because how you vote is a critical importance this year, even more so than other years.

[16:03] You might say, If I show up and vote for a candidate, you know, it doesn't really make a difference. You can do all sorts. I want you to understand these ballot measures this year, the way the law is structured, your vote matters.

And we're going to take some time and explain that. Because it's confusing, because a lot of times, I did a lot of research, I talked to a couple of lawyers on this, trying to figure out how does this fit? Because it is confusing. And so I think we need to talk about it, so we understand as God's people what's at stake and what's going on. Because when we understand this dynamic, it's critical.

And so, I did a Nebraska Family Alliance, did a little podcast by one of their lawyers and one of their policy guys, Nate Graz.

And we're going to play that audio here. And those handouts that I gave to you, he's going to talk about those handouts for a moment, and then we'll come back and we'll talk about some more.

[17:03] But I want you to hear him explain these things, because he's the expert. And I want to make sure that you understand what the best person is saying it.

So follow along and listen here, as he's going to cover some different things on the ballot. So go ahead and play that if you can.