

Trinity V

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[0 : 00] You've probably noticed that Father Paul and I have been speaking out against the zealous agenda that seeks to redefine marriage and sexuality.

There has been a movement to promote chaos and lawlessness in our culture in order to deconstruct the traditional views of family and Christian theology.

The goal of the postmodern cultural crusader is to extinguish any remnant of that which does not conform to this radical agenda.

And that's why the traditional Catholic beliefs could well be considered hate speech in the very near future. Now you need to know that Father Paul and I are not bound to any one political party.

We do not preach the politics from any one political movement. As a matter of fact, our formation as Anglican priests prohibits us from wholeheartedly buying into the Republican or Democrat platforms based upon the teachings and traditions of the church throughout the ages which is rooted in Holy Scripture.

[1 : 21] You see, the church is the visible manifestation of the kingdom of God here on earth. And that is our ultimate allegiance.

And as shepherds, that is what we are to be focusing you on as well. This means that our convictions are governed by Christ and his church throughout the ages.

Not by choosing a particular political side. There are times when one particular party can get something right. And we applaud that.

There are times when they both can contradict the church's teachings and we have a duty to speak out against that as well. As Christians, we are called to speak out against all evil and all wickedness, no matter what strife.

We are to speak out against the unfair treatment of people based solely on their skin color. We are to speak out against violence against women and children.

[2 : 27] We are to speak out against greed in the name of progress. We are to speak out against all slothfulness and people who are able but unwilling to work.

We are to speak out against the killing of children and the unborn. We are to speak out against the abuse or neglect of the mentally challenged or mentally ill or the elderly.

These are not red or blue issues. They are kingdom directives to love God and to love our neighbor. The reason why we are being a bit more vocal these days is because of what we see coming down the pike for the church and what has already begun.

Allowing people to choose what sex they are and then to use the bathrooms of their choice, folks, that's just insanity. And if that offends you, you're in the wrong church.

[3 : 34] It's absolutely irrational. It's unscientific. It'll make children and women less safe. Defunding police departments will bring a rise in violent crime that will pave the way for a world that is completely chaotic and dangerous.

And yet, any police officer that violates his or her duty to protect and serve the public good, they should be held accountable for such actions.

But what we are seeing today is the utter loss of all human reason and common sense. So what are we to do in a country and in a culture that seems like it is spiraling out of control?

I want to offer some insight based upon the epistle text of 1 Peter chapter 3 this morning. And the first thing we learn from 1 Peter chapter 3 is that we as baptized Christians are to live a life that is obedient and fully dedicated to Jesus Christ as Lord.

Period. That trumps all political affiliations. Our allegiance is to Christ first and foremost.

[4 : 59] It's not to any country nor to any current cultural trend. To put Jesus on par with any country or political movement is to commit the sin of syncretism.

Trying to combine Christianity with other ideas, especially false or heretical ideas. And that is nothing more than idolatry.

St. Peter says here in verses 11 and 12 of 1 Peter chapter 3, St. Peter is echoing what we heard from Psalm 34 this morning.

Now remember, St. Peter is speaking here in our epistle text to Christians who are being persecuted. Persecuted for their allegiance to Jesus Christ.

He is speaking to those who are living in hostile territory as Christians, surrounded by unbelief and paganism. That context is quickly becoming the situation for all of us here in this country as well.

[6 : 31] But we do not advance the cause of the kingdom by trying to overpower evil with human force, nor by lashing out at the wicked. That is the Lord's domain.

It's not ours. We overcome evil by turning away from the evil in us. The evil that is present in our own lives.

And by seeking the way of peace with God through the cross of Jesus Christ. You see, the Lord is going to deal with all evildoers in his own time.

But now is the time for mercy. People have been given the choice of either following the Lord and learning his ways found in Holy Scripture, or they can become mindless puppets.

Being controlled by those who manipulate the media and all information in an increasing senseless world. We don't even know what's true anymore.

[7 : 43] But to all who follow Christ, we do know what's true. We know the way, the truth, and the life. And the Lord desires us to be peacemakers.

There are no revolutionaries in his kingdom. Therefore, we trust God to be God. To act in his own time.

And we do so knowing that he is merciful, but his justice will not be mocked. So we seek to do good. Seek peace with others that stand on truth.

But not only are we to turn away from evil, the evil in our own lives, we are to turn away from being fearful people. What's happening in our country is very scary.

I'll be the first to admit that. Not only as a priest, but as a husband and father. We do live in what seems to be some fearful times.

[8 : 50] But I have to remind myself, and I'm going to remind all of you, the people to whom Peter was communicating with here were living in even greater adversity.

Therefore, we are called to live lives of trust, not fear. And that's why St. Peter goes on to say here in 1 Peter 3, verses 14 and 15, But even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you are blessed.

And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.

It is not fun living in such hostile territory that says, Good is evil and evil is good. But if we suffer for righteousness sake, not due to our own impropriety or stupidity, but if we endure hardship for the sake of the cross of Christ, we are blessed.

And the main thing is that we set our hearts apart and unto Christ Jesus as Lord and live for him.

[10 : 13] This is your patriotic sermon this morning. Love God more than country. Serve him more than country. And do not be dismayed.

It's interesting that Peter is instructing the church not to be fearful when we think about our gospel reading this morning from Luke chapter 5.

Remember, Peter was with James and John, and they were fishing all day, but they were catching nothing. Now, these fishermen were not merely casting out their lines for sports.

Their whole livelihood was bound to catching fish. The way they cared for their families was by catching fish. And yet, they had caught nothing.

That was until Jesus showed up and told Peter to cast his net into the water. It was the most inopportune time to make a catch, and Peter reminded our Lord of this point.

[11 : 16] But Peter reluctantly listened to our Lord, and so he cast the net into the water. And what happened?

Suddenly, the net started breaking as the fish were too numerous. Peter went from faithless apathy to great fear. Fear of what had just happened.

Peter realized that he was standing before the God who made the seas and everything in them.

And Peter did what all men, all people will do one day.

He fell on his face before the God who had come in human flesh, in the person of Jesus the Christ. Peter's fear was because he was standing before God Almighty.

We are called not to be afraid of the world, but the fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom.

We are not to fear the unstable and chaotic times that we are witnessing.

[12 : 22] Long after there are no flags with stars and stripes to wave, long after the deconstruction of our culture where beauty and virtue has been abandoned, Jesus Christ will still stand as victor and as judge.

He is the one that reigns supreme. Our calling is to live lives of faith, putting our hope in him and serving him all the days of our lives.

And you can rest assured, dear people of God, with a quiet confidence, you can rest assured because the Lord's goodness and grace will have the last word.

So with that in mind, let us be mindful of the words of our collect we heard and we prayed this morning. Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance that thy church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.