

The Church, Culture, and Politics

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[0:00] I want to start by referring to a number of scriptures as the scriptures will serve as kind of our starting point and also our foundation for the things that we're going to be talking about today. The things that we'll be talking about have a biblical basis. These are biblical principles for how we can be a biblical basis for how we can be a biblical basis.

How we are to be involved, engaged in the political sphere, in the sphere of participating in our government. Several of these will come from the book of Proverbs we'll see today. Proverbs chapter 14 verse 34. Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to any people. This is a verse that I think kind of speaks to where we're currently at today as a nation. Proverbs 31 verses 8 and 9. Open your mouth for the mute. For the rights of all who are destitute. When I think of the mute I think of those who cannot speak for themselves. I think of keenly I think of children in the womb who cannot speak for themselves. The rights of all who are destitute. The word destitute literally means the Hebrew word here is talking about someone who's close to death. So basically someone who's elderly and again maybe cannot speak for themselves. I think of the tragedy that we have happening in the nation of Canada which grieves me. My parents are from Canada. I have some of that as my heritage. But Canada right now is euthanizing not only aborting children but also putting people to death just because they want to be put to death. And even recently someone, an older woman who had a difficult time speaking for herself but they ended up putting her to death even though she was protesting at the time that it was happening. It's remarkable the gruesomeness of what people are saying is good.

Open your mouth. Judge righteously. Defend the rights of the poor and the needy. Micah 6.8. He has told you, O man, what is good and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness or mercy and to walk humbly with your God. All of these things speak into the necessity for us to participate in the sphere of government. 1 Timothy 2. Written by the Apostle Paul Paul to young Pastor Timothy when Nero was the emperor of Rome. Think of it. Nero the one who's going to put Paul to death here shortly. And certainly they don't have a type of government where participation is encouraged. It just didn't exist for them. It does for us. It speaks to the privilege that we have and I would say the stewardship. We'll talk about that later that we have as believers to engage in this area. Paul says, first of all, then I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high position.

We're told to pray for those who are in authority over us. And so our form of government also then includes for us to participate in that. That's a part of it. If we're going to pray for someone, we're going to participate. That we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. People talk about how that's, I just want, I just want, you know, the government to leave me alone. I just want to, you know, go about my business. I want to be in freedom and liberty and et cetera, et cetera. Well, the way you get there is by praying for those who are in position of authority over you and by participating in the process. This passage in Jeremiah 29, 7 probably speaks to the idea of being involved in civil or civics in our country. Jeremiah 29, 7, again, Jeremiah the prophet speaking to the nation of Israel while they were in exile in Babylon, city, the nation state of Babylon. Talk about a wicked, terrible, pagan culture. And he says to them, seek the welfare of the city, the city of Babylon, where I have sent you into exile. God intended for them to be there because of their own wickedness and to pray to the Lord on its behalf for its welfare. You will find your welfare. You want to do well, then you need to seek the welfare of the city, of the community, of the state, of the nation that you live in, that God has called you to be a part of. And we might even say, well, we live in a pagan nation. It's not what it used to be anymore. That may be true. But as believers, we are called to participate. We are called to seek the welfare of the people that are around us and the people of our communities, the people of our nation.

And then in Matthew chapter 5, verse 13, you are a salt of the earth. But if the salt has lost its taste or its usefulness is probably the better translation there. How shall its saltiness be restored?

[6:01] Salt, in order to be effective, has to be in contact with whatever it's touching. It's no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. I would say that for us as believers, if we refuse to participate, then according to this verse, you have become worthless in terms of seeking the welfare of the community of the nation that you live in. You're not participating. And so you're not being the salt that God has called you to be by just sitting back. And we have seen survey after survey that in recent years, in recent decades, Christians, large numbers of Christians are just not even voting, not even participating. And we're going to see the danger of that as we make our way forward today. And then last one for now, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus talking about the second of the greatest commandments after the first to love the Lord with everything that we have, and then love your neighbor as yourself. And I would say that voting is an expression of loving your neighbor, because you're going to vote in a way that will prosper not only yourself, but your neighbor as well. And if you refuse to vote, or if you vote in a certain way that promotes the degradation of the nation, you're not loving your neighbor. That's not how that works. And so we are called as people of

God to participate, that when we step into the voting booth, you're not just acting as citizens of an earthly nation, of an earthly republic, but you're also stepping into that voting booth as an ambassador of the kingdom of heaven, and seeking the welfare of the neighbors, and also the glory of the one true king. Now, I want to start with a question that you have on your notes here. And I want to, in asking this question, I want to say, would you put your name on this? Would you endorse this statement that you're going to hear in just a moment? And here's the statement. We don't follow a red elephant or a blue donkey. We follow a slain lamb. This was made popular a couple decades ago, and even into the last few years. Preachers, particularly someone like Tim Keller, was famous for following this kind of philosophy and a number of others as well. The idea that we don't commit to one particular party over another. We follow a risen king, or we follow a slain lamb. It's not a red elephant. It's not a blue donkey. We're above the fray. We don't work like that. We don't think that way. Let me ask you a question. What do you think of that? Would you sign up for that kind of a statement? Would you put your name on it? Another expression that's kind of similar is that we need to be prophetic, not partisan.

It was an encouragement that was given to pastors for years. As pastors, we need to be prophetic, but not partisan. When I was growing up, my dad was a proud union member. Worked for the Ford plant for 30 years, retired from them. And all throughout my growing up years, when it came to elections, it was just clear.

You voted a particular way, and there was no questions asked. That's just how it was. But let me ask you a question. That was in like the 60s and 70s, even for us, the early 80s.

Anything changed since then? Has our world, has our nation changed at all in the last few decades? Yeah, it's gotten pretty bad. It's gotten pretty bad. And so then we ask the question, what do we do with this? So I want to address the idea here of discernment in the voting booth and kind of tackle this head on today. We must rather reject when it comes to this, this idea of not participating, of not speaking into it. We must reject this rather significant false equivalence between the two parties here. The above statement, you have this on your notes, that statement about a red elephant and a blue donkey, but we follow a slain lamb. It makes the two parties sound like equal but opposite errors. That they're both just as bad or just as wrong or just as immoral, but just in opposite ways. One is at the one extreme, one is at the other, and they're both flawed. They both have their issues. And so how do we do that? How do we deal with that?

[11:23] Um, but basically I would tell you that it's bunk to say that both parties are equal and opposite.

It's just not true. I think the statement is well-intentioned. The idea that, that we should stand above the fray and, and, and so on and so forth. But I think it's nonsense to, to just look at the issues in both parties and then just determine, well, they're both equally bad. I, I, I don't, I don't think that it's, it's, uh, that it's right or it's discerning or, or, or correct to say that that's, that's the case. Now it's true. Both parties have immoral leaders and personal flaws. We see that candidates all, all the time. Yet the published platforms of each party are not morally symmetrical.

They're not the same morally. And so that's why I would say the statement is, is bunk. So you have this on your notes as well. There are immoral leaders and flaws in both parties, but only one party

advocates for catastrophic national sin and its publicly stated policies.

One party above the other is endorsing and promoting what I would consider catastrophic national sin.

Now, how do we do with that? How do we deal with this then? So a guiding principle going forward then is this. We need to look past the flaws of individual candidates and focus instead on the lasting impact of each party's philosophies because you're always, always, I don't care how much you'd like your candidate. You're always voting for someone who's flawed in some way or another. I don't care if your favorite person, your most godly person that you know is running for office. They are flawed in some ways. And certainly there are some that are quite a bit flawed and have some immoral things in their past or maybe even in their present. But I would say that the thing to look at has to go back to the policies. The policies. Policies outlast personalities. That's what we have to keep in focus here. And it shapes the inheritance that we leave our children. We're called as believers in the book of Proverbs. We're going to look at this a little bit later. We're called as believers to leave our children and our children's children, our grandchildren, an inheritance. That's just not money.

[14 : 29] It's also the kind of the shape of the country that we're going to leave them, leave to them. And so we have to be mindful of this as we make our way forward in this. So policies are more important than personalities. And so what I want to do now is I want to pass out a paper that I've written and I need some some guys that would help me pass this out. Everyone needs to get one of these. And then when you're done, all the rest of them can go on the counter in the foyer. These are going to be made available for you if you want to take some and give to a friend or family member.

These are going to be available on the information counter out in the foyer afterward. These are also available on our sermon resources page under the sermon notes.

You can get a PDF version of this and you can forward that to someone if you would like. But we're going to make our way through this and basically see the differences between the two party policies, the policies of each of these two parties. And see when I talk about national catastrophic national sin, what I mean by that.

The phrase we don't follow a red elephant or a blue donkey, but we follow a slain lamb pretends that both parties harbor equal and opposite errors as though the distance between them is merely a matter of degree than it is direction. But not all platforms carry the same moral weight.

And treating them as interchangeable itself, I would say, is a moral failure on our part. And so one through, what is it, different policies. I've got one through seven here of different policies and the stated platforms of each party on each of these issues.

[16 : 43] The first is the sanctity of life. The Democrat platform centers on restoring the full right to abortion nationwide. In a militant way, they want to overturn the idea of stopping abortions.

They want that gone. So they want to repeal the Hyde Amendment, which is basically the federal government paying for abortions, protecting abortion drugs that are dangerous, opposing state restrictions.

Any state restrictions, any state that has restrictions on abortion, they want to eliminate those completely. And it's all framed as women's health care and women's equality.

That's their stated platform. They are endorsing this wholly. Republicans, they've at least given us the repeal of Roe versus Wade.

And for the most part, their policy is better in terms of life and being against abortion, certainly than the Democrat Party.

[17 : 49] And I would say that this issue alone, abortion is a stain on our nation's collective soul. The number of children that have been put down have been killed, slaughtered in the womb over the last, well, since abortion became legal in the 70s, is staggering.

When it comes to marriage and sexuality and gender, the Democratic policy is to defend same-sex marriage, push the Equality Act, which we'll talk about in a moment what that is, to add sexual orientation and gender identity to the Civil Rights Act, to protect gender-affirming care for minors, the idea that a minor can have gender-changing surgery without parents' permission.

They want to enact that as law, as protected, and oppose restrictions on transgender participation in sports, in public bathrooms, in locker rooms and facilities.

They want transgender men and boys who basically have decided, no, I'm a girl, to be able to participate with your young daughters in their sports.

They want to encourage that. Republicans, on the other hand, are fighting to keep men and boys out of women's and girls' sports, locker rooms and bathrooms. I will admit, the Republican Party is becoming more and more friendly towards the idea of gay marriage.

[19 : 28] That's upsetting. But it's certainly not as severe as what we see from the Democrat Party. Ultimately, biblical reality, same-sex marriage is something that's just not possible.

Same-sex and marriage, they don't... Marriage is... The definition of marriage is a man and a woman. It is not two of the same gender. That's not a marriage.

It can't be a marriage. You can call it that. Our nation has gotten to the point of calling it that, but that's not what it is. The Equality Act is the greatest threat to religious liberty in a generation. Pediatric transitions are just child mutilation by another name and are a rebellion against God's order of creation. Absolutely true.

The third issue is public morality, schools and children. The Democrat Party normalizes pornography and campaign messaging.

[20 : 25] It resists removing explicit materials from schools. We just had that issue recently at a local school library. Promotes LGBTQ-inclusive curricula in the schools.

Republican Party official platformers to restrict those things. The biblical reality of the state is basically catechizing children against the created order and they're grooming the next generation of our children.

And it's an assault on them. Number four, religious liberty in the public square. The Democrats' approach expands anti-discrimination rules in ways that override conscience protections and advances aggressive secularism.

They're willing to pack the Supreme Court and or end the filibuster in order to pass the Equality Act. I mentioned that earlier. The Equality Act is a proposed federal bill that would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to add sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of protected classes. Understand what will happen. If the Democrats gain majority in the presidency once again, what will happen is that this will pass.

[21 : 41] And it will become against the law for you to say, No, I don't want someone in a same-sex marriage to be involved in teaching children in a church setting.

If a pastor counsels someone to say, No, being gay is not acceptable in God's sight, that pastor then or that counselor would be subject to arrest.

And this is what they are promoting and what they are willing to drastically change constitutional order in order to succeed in doing that and packing the Supreme Court or doing away with the filibuster.

The end result, the biblical reality of this, from what Democrats are proposing, will force churches, pastors, counselors, and parents to affirm what Scripture forbids. Parents, what's happening in Massachusetts, parents refusing to acknowledge the new trans identity of their daughter the state took them away from the parents.

That's happening already. And if we just continue down this same path, it's only going to get worse and worse and worse. Number five, when it comes to law, order, and immigration, the magistrates' role, their policies, Democrats' policies and rhetoric, have tolerated reduced prosecution of crime, defund the police movements, porous borders with expanded amnesty, and accommodation of ideologies, including elements of surreal law that conflict with constitutional order and biblical justice.

[23 : 30] It is truly has become a party of lawlessness. You see it happening all over the country. We're somewhat insulated in our little corner of the world here in West Michigan, but in other parts of the country, particularly in bigger cities where you have some of these prosecutors and DAs that are in charge, they're letting criminals just go free even after committing violent crimes, and they're committing violent crimes over and over and over again because they're just being turned right back into the street.

And so people are suffering as a result of this. This is not loving your neighbor. Loving your neighbor is law enforcement. And putting those behind bars who need to be behind bars for the crimes that they are committing.

Republicans, their policies emphasize support for law enforcement, for border security, for the rule of law. Biblical reality, Scripture honors the legal immigrant's dignity, but we're not talking about legal immigration here.

We're talking about illegal immigration. While upholding the magistrate's duty to restrain chaos, Romans 13 assigns government the task of bearing the sword to punish evil and praise good. Two more. Number six, socialism, Marxism, and the public square. Among the Democrats, there's a growing acceptance within the party for democratic socialism and Marxist ideologies.

[25 : 05] We have this happening in the state of Michigan with a candidate that is running for Senate who has expressed all of these ideas, the idea of defunding the police, the idea of socialist or communist activities.

All of these things are part of class warfare, state seizure of property, a materialistic view of man that replaces God's sovereignty with estates and violates the Eighth Commandment, thou shalt not steal.

And Democrats are starting to mainstream these ideas. And that's become very, very dangerous. Listen, we've tried socialism, right?

In the world, thankfully not here. But if we vote for Democrats, we are voting for socialism. Make no mistake about that. We're voting for an anti-God, secular, socialistic platform to become what our country associates with.

These ideologies are part of a broader rejection of the biblical order that cannot produce human flourishing.

[26 : 25] And then number seven, anti-Semitism and Israel. This seems to be a somewhat newer issue of our day. And again, among the Democrats, there's been a marked rise in anti-Semitic incidents, rhetoric, and movements that reject Israel's right to exist.

In recent years, with notable tolerance coming from, again, the Democrats. This is evident in campus activism, failure to clearly condemn certain protests that cross into Jew hatred, and voices within the party distancing from historic alliances.

I remember growing up thinking, we'll never see the Holocaust again. We'll never see this kind of hatred towards Jews again. We're here. We're here. We shouldn't be surprised. The Bible tells us that this is how the world's going to operate.

Hatred for God's chosen people. And that includes Christians, by the way. They're voicing it vociferously against Jewish people right now. But make no mistake, Christians are right behind. And once they have a foothold, once they have power in such a way, your rights as believers will start to go away and shrink and shrink over time.

[27 : 43] These things matter to God. Well, the Republicans, first of all, have more consistently affirmed Israel's security and opposed these disturbing trends. These things matter to God because God's promise to Abraham still warns that those who curse Abraham's descendants invite opposition from God.

And hatred of Jews as image bearers contradicts the gospel that went first to the Jews. Rising anti-Semitism and the delegitimization of Israel is further evidence of a platform at war with the covenants of Scripture.

Do you think God is going to bless a nation that continues down this path? And listen, there's a lot of other policies worth considering.

The issues outlined, and you see this on the page here, the issues outlined above strike at the very character and moral integrity of a nation. Even if a nation achieved perfect economic policy, if the economy was going great and immigration was held up, not immigration, starts with an I too, inflation, man.

If the economy's going great and inflation is held in check and jobs are booming and wages are, and everything's just going well economically, it's still, our nation would still ultimately fail if God withheld his blessing due to the people's unrepentant sin.

[29 : 24] We are naive to think that I just need to vote to protect my wallet. As Moses warned Israel, disobedience to God's law leads to national ruin regardless of economic metrics.

We cannot vote for economic comfort while legislating moral decay. Now here's where we're going to get some pushback, and some people, and maybe even in your circle, might push back top of the last page.

Some may argue, neither candidate is good, so I'm going to stay home. Sound familiar? Maybe even some here would have that kind of a mindset because if any of you are like me, you're sick of watching TV or scrolling through social media because the commercials are over the top, and I'm talking both sides.

It's ridiculous. The claims, the lies, the accusations, it's bad, which is why we focus on policy, not the candidates.

But withholding your vote is not a neutral act. I would say it's an abdication of your calling. We're commanded to be salt and light, to actively seek the welfare of the city that God has placed us in.

[30:48] So when deciding between flawed candidates, look past the flaws of those individual candidates and focus instead on the lasting impact of each party's policies.

That's what I'm suggesting we need to do going forward. And I want to show you now some examples of some races and some candidates that people are facing.

The first one I want to show you is right here in the state of Michigan. We've got a candidate for Senate, Abdul El-Sayed, who is running as a Democrat for the Senate here in the state of Michigan, next to, and here he is with his buddy, Hassan Piker.

I don't know if you people know who Hassan Piker is. He's a streamer. That's what they call him. He's got a huge following. And lots of people listen to him.

He has an influence over a lot of people. And Abdul El-Sayed is in bed with him. They campaigned together. And they're both Muslim, which is another aspect of this whole decision, I think, needs to be calculated here in terms of what is the Muslim agenda here in the United States.

[32:04] It is not peaceful. I will say that. But I want to show you a clip from a news person. This is from CNN. This is not exactly a conservative bastion of news.

But listen, listen to the, and there's going to be, your ears, they're going to, they're going to say a couple of things that, just watch. Here's some of what he actually has said about the depravity of the October 7th terror attack, the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust.

Quote, it doesn't matter if effing rapes happened on October 7th. Like, that doesn't change the dynamic for me. The Palestinian resistance is not perfect. Now, let that sink in.

Hassan Piker is excusing sexual violence by Hamas terrorists. He also claims Hamas is, a thousand times better than Israel. Hamas is a designated terror organization, not just by the U.S., but by the EU, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, just to name a few.

And here's what Piker said about the horrors of September 11th, 2001. America deserved 9-11, dude. And I cut it off there because it gets pretty disgusting and vulgar after that.

[33:15] He starts effing this and effing that all over the place. But basically he's saying that us as a nation, we deserved what happened on 9-11. We deserved that. That the terrorists basically were, were righteous in what they did.

in flying those planes into the trade center and the Pentagon, potentially the Capitol building. This is who Abdul El-Sayed is in bed with and shares these kinds of thoughts, these kinds of philosophies.

He has said we need to defund the police, the police carrying guns is ridiculous, that this is what we're going to vote for because it's how we've always voted.

Now, I don't, I don't trust the polls. I'm going to show you polls for these three races that I'm going to talk about. I don't trust them. I certainly hope that these are wrong. But today, in the polls, El-Sayed is, is ahead here by five points.

Really? We're going to do this? The state of Michigan? Now, I don't know, I don't know who Mike Rogers is. I haven't paid a whole lot of attention.

[34:31] I've read it. I know his positions. I know his policies. Okay? That's what I'm going to be voting for. I'm not necessarily voting for Mike Rogers, the candidate. Might be a fantastic guy.

I don't know. I'm voting for the policies which he signed up for, which match what I would say is a biblical perspective. He may not be a Christian.

He might not be a good husband or a good father. I don't know these things. But I'm going to vote for the policies that matter. That's who I'm voting for. And I'm certainly not going to vote for the policies that are going to tear our country down.

Here's another one. When Jesus healed the sick, he didn't ask for a deductible. So, so when I fight for universal health care, I'm doing it on biblical grounds.

When Jesus fed the hungry, he didn't price gouge to turn a profit. So, when I say that no child in the state of Texas should go to bed hungry, I'm doing it on biblical grounds.

[35:42] Right. Now, he goes on from there. This is James Tallarico. He's running for senate in the state of Michigan. I'm sorry, in the state of Texas. He is a seminary graduate.

attends church faithfully. Sounds good. Looks good. Oh, my. Even this argument.

It's interesting that a year before this, he preached a sermon talking about how, as believers, we need to stay out of politics. And then he did this a year later.

So, which is it, James? Which, which is it? Now, he's, these arguments that he's making are not biblical.

He says they are from a biblical grounds, right? He's, he's making these claims. Listen, the things that we're commanded to do, like for instance, as believers, we are commanded to be generous, to help those who are in need.

[36:48] Absolutely. He wasn't preaching to the government. It's not the government's role to do those things. It's our responsibility as believers to help those who are in need, not the government.

So, when we see someone in need, yes, we need to be generous. Yes, we need to help. We need to, to pursue those kinds of things. But when a government starts, let me, when, when is the last time the government has done anything well?

I might say the military, but even in the military, there's huge amounts of waste, huge amounts of fraud there. I'm just glad they fight wars well. But I would say that that's a blessing of, of the rank and file, not the, the leadership that we have.

Now, talk about him being a quote-unquote Christian. I want to show you the kind of Christian this guy is. I want to show you a little clip from one of his pastors. It's, it's not the lead pastor of his Presbyterian church in Dallas.

His, his lead pastor is James Rigby who is famous decades for being so, he, he basically is gonna, he preaches what this next pastor, her name is Babs Miller.

[38:09] She's one of the pastors on the staff of the church that he attends. Do we really believe that like a virgin gave birth to a baby? Yeah, okay. I just don't want to offend my own, my own common sense.

Yeah, no, don't. Yeah. Absolutely don't. Part of what we encourage here is for people to think for themselves and take what makes sense.

It's kind of like what they say in 12 Step Prophets. Take what you want and leave the rest. So you, and I know that that would greatly offend your relatives who want to hang on to these archaic rules. Mary and the virgin birth comes out of the pagan belief that the gods came down and impregnated people. Yeah. That people were still hanging on to during that time.

We have no way of knowing if Jesus really existed any more than we have of knowing that the original Buddha ever existed. It gets worse from there.

[39:15] I mean, it's just, now, one of the pastors that I follow, James, or Josh Howerton, showed this clip and talked about it.

What she is doing, in the Gospels you have this particular sin called the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, which is attributing the work of Jesus to Satan, to demonic forces.

That's what this woman is doing. She's saying that the virgin birth is not real. that what it's carrying over is this idea that the gods, pagan gods, came down and impregnated women.

That's demonic. This woman is a demon in the pulpit. pulpit. And the phrase that he said, and he, you know, caught a little flack for it, but I'm going to say it too, so watch your ears.

When it comes to people like this and James Rigby and James Tallarico as well, get the hell out of the pulpit because that's what she's doing.

[40:32] She's bringing hell into the pulpit. It's all she has to offer. It's all he has to offer. These are not Christian people at all. Be aware of that.

State of Texas. Again, I don't know if I believe the polls. I don't think I do, but James Tallarico is ahead in the polls. Now, here's another instance where people are going to struggle because this Ken Paxton fellow is a real creep.

Can I say that? I think he is. He's got the right politics. All of his policy positions, I'm right there with him. And if I were a citizen of Texas, I'd be voting for him.

But just last year, he cheated on his wife, and his wife divorced him. We're not talking about distant past, we're talking about last year, 2025.

Slept with a Senate aide, and disgraced his marriage. That stinks.

[41:50] It's not the kind of character you want in your political candidate, is it? I don't. Not at all. I'd vote for him because to vote for Tallarico would be to vote for the ruin of our country.

To vote for Paxton would be me saying, I'm voting for the policies, not the candidate. That's the trouble that's going on in the state of Texas.

That's why he's so far behind. Because he's just not that morally upstanding. But what do you do? Listen, when it comes to these kinds of things, you vote for the people that vote for the primaries. So many of us don't even vote in the primaries.

Well, that's who you select who's going to run in the general. And if you're not voting in the primaries, you end up with this. So be aware of that.

[42 : 49] And even if you end up voting in the primaries and you don't get necessarily the guy that you want, it's still going to be infinitely better than what Tallarico is going to bring to the state of Texas and to the country, being in the U.S.

Senate. one more I want to show you, and this is out of Ohio. This is Vivek Ramaswamy running for governor in the state of Ohio. Republican, Buddhist, and has had a few gaffes along the way.

That's just all they are. Everyone's going to have gaffes. They're going to say things that they wish they could have phrased differently, that kind of thing. But he's struggling in the state of Ohio running for governor there because he is Buddhist.

And you have a certain mindset among Christians who would say, well, I can't do that. I can't vote for someone who's Buddhist. He's not going to support what I want to have happen in the state of Ohio, so I'm not going to either vote or I'm going to vote for the other person or I'm going to nobody ever remembers nobody gets the memo when we make protest votes and vote for a third party or a third candidate.

And so what do we do as believers when someone who is of a different religion the same thing happened with Mitt Romney who was Mormon back in 2012. I mean he had his own issues but he certainly was better than the alternative.

[44 : 27] What do we do with that? Well, if you look at the polls in the state of Ohio, he is behind this wonderful woman, Amy Acton. I don't know a lot about her.

I'm not paying attention to Ohio very much because I don't live there. But if you look at the policy positions of both candidates, guess where I'm going with my vote?

If I lived in the state of Ohio, it's cut and dry. It's an easy decision. Vivek Ramaswamy may be Buddhist but many of his policy positions reflect Christian principles.

It's kind of odd. I don't know how to describe it, but that's who he is. That's what he's espoused.

He's consistent with that down through the years. We've seen him on the national stage. He ran for president back in 16.

So understand these are the issues that are at stake in all of this. And there may be some people, again, I don't know if I want to participate. I don't know. Well, understand, a blank ballot is not neutrality.

[45 : 36] It's a gift to the other side. I get it. Some people are like, I'm so fed up with the whole thing, I'm not even going to participate. Well, by not participating, you are participating, whether you want to or not, in the ruin of your own country, and what you're handing to your children and your grandchildren is going to be a mess.

You just don't want to leave behind? Be aware that that's what's happening.

That is what is at stake. So, a few more things on your notes and then I'll be done, let you go.

Biblical mandate, Christians are not called to be silent.

No, we're called to be salt. So, participation is required of us. to be involved in the culture that we're in, to seek the welfare of the city.

We're called to do that. On your notes again, the idea of using evangelism or the need to be seeker sensitive as excuses for a pastor to avoid providing political guidance is an abdication of his calling and his duty.

[46 : 52] It just is. We're called to preach the whole counsel of God. God is sovereign over all of it, including the politics. So, we're called to do that.

We can't do that because you're going to have Democrats and you're going to have Republicans in your congregation. Amen. And I hope that they hear very well.

I remember the first time that my dad and I would talk politics before he died. Died in 93. 83. 1980, he voted for Jimmy Carter.

1984, something happened to him. My dad got saved in 81. 84, he went into the voting booth. He said he held his nose and pulled the lever for Reagan because he had no choice.

He was going against everything he'd ever learned. but he recognized that there's more at stake than just economic policy or whatever you think about foreign policy or whatever it might be.

[48:08] That these issues of integrity, of sin, of righteousness need to be something that we talk about.

Well, you're not going to build a church if you're not seeker sensitive, you're not aware that there are people there and they might be turned off by your message and I get it.

But what you're also then saying is that I shouldn't preach about sin because people are going to be turned off when I preach about sin. I'm not going to do that.

I'm going to preach God's word, I'm going to preach the whole counsel of God. It's what we need to do. And I want to give you a historical warning here.

If the church refuses to influence the government to slow societal decay, the government will inevitably interfere with the church.

[49:15] We're already starting to see that. Remember anything about 2020? Anybody remember what happened in 2020? It's coming.

We keep voting for the candidates that want to shut down churches. Well, they'll never say that. But when push comes to shove and they get power, that's what's coming.

Another way of saying that is this. If godly people refuse to influence the nation, guess who will?

Satan does not need Christians to vote for evil.

He only needs them to stay home. Civic engagement is not a distraction from the gospel.

It is an expression of it. is an act of good stewardship. Let's talk about that stewardship.

[50:34] Practical takeaway, a clear stewardship. Let's talk about what stewardship is. 1

Corinthians 4.2, moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

who is he talking about? He is talking about us as believers. As a believer in Jesus Christ, you are a steward of the gospel, you are a steward of what he has given you, you are a steward of the nation that he has placed you in.

in Luke 12, verse 48, Jesus said, to everyone to whom much was given of him, much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

Let me ask you a question. In the United States of America, we have something that's pretty unique, in that we're encouraged to vote and to participate in elections and in local government and federal government, state government.

We're encouraged to be involved. That for us is a privilege that the majority of human history has not been able to enjoy. It is unique in world history.

[51:41] Certainly the people that Jesus was speaking to, the people that Paul wrote to in the gospels, there was no democratic governance or republic governance.

You just had a king and you did what he said or you died. Pretty simple. But we've been given so much more. And you're going to answer for the stewardship that you provided over these issues. Did you handle that stewardship well? Each has received a gift. Use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace and order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. He has dominion over all of it. And we're called to serve. We're told again, a good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children.

It's not just finances. It's everything else in terms of our government. government. So do not underestimate the weight of your single ballot. History and recent elections alike demonstrate that monumental shifts in national policy often hinge on razor-thin margins.

[53:09] If the body of Christ fulfilled its duty to vote, the impact would be enormous. We've got to participate. we're called to do that.

So what do we do? We act and then we rest and we pray. that is what we do.

How do we act? Well, the first step, not the only step. Participating in governance is always something that we can do. But I would say the minimum is to vote, to vote with purpose, vote for the policies that will prevent societal decay, defend liberty, and protect the vulnerable.

people. This is our calling. When the godly are in authority, the people rejoice, but when the wicked are in power, they groan.

And then once our vote is cast, we trust in God's sovereignty, and then we continue to pray for genuine revival in our nation.

[54:33] Because that ultimately is the only thing that will change our nation, the trajectory of our nation. If there's no revival, if believers aren't sharing the gospel, churches aren't growing, if people aren't getting saved, the hope for our nation just continues to diminish and diminish and diminish.

I want to end with one more thing, and this is, if you are a student of history, one thing to keep in mind here, a note from Baptist distinctive, this goes back to in history in Europe to the Anabaptists. The Anabaptists, Anna is just a negative in front of the word Baptist, no Baptist. What that meant was Anabaptists were saying that the Catholic infant baptism wasn't acceptable, so no baptism. you had to be rebaptized when you became a believer. It's how we ended up where we're at today, what we call believers' baptism. I think that goes back to the scriptures. People got saved and placed their faith in Christ, that's when they got baptized.

But the history of this goes back to there. We have a long history of insisting on the separation of church and state. It predates our own country. the separation of church and state is something that we hold dear.

[55 : 59] It's one of the Baptist distinctive. Certainly, people other than Baptists hold to this idea of the separation of church and state, but we strongly believe in it. But, in what is the original definition of it, not the changed definition, what people today say that separation of church and state is.

Separation of church and state is not so the church becomes silent about politics, or being involved in government. That was never the idea of the separation of church and state. Never. It was always so that the state won't attempt to control the church.

That's what the separation of church and state is. And so, if we choose to remain silent, if we choose to continue to vote for policies that are going to come after our rights and our liberties, we're going to lose control of the church.

And they're going to start putting us in jail. You might have to come visit me in jail because I'm not going to give counsel to people that is not godly or not biblical. I don't know if I'll live to see that day, but if so, come see me.

Put some money in my account so I can get a candy bar. I don't think a quarter will buy me anything. anyway, let's pray.

[57 : 22] Lord, we thank you so much for the opportunity that we have, that you've given us, Lord, that we have the privilege of having an influence in the world in which you have placed us.

The idea that we can participate in our government, that we can vote for candidates and policies that, Lord, that we believe would lead to more flourishing and prosperity.

Policies that would promote your values and the righteousness that you called us to uphold. Help us to be clear-minded as we approach the polls.

Help us to be mindful of these things when we go and we vote. And yes, Lord, it might mean that we have to hold our nose when we vote for certain candidates.

It might mean that voting in a way that's so different from the way I was taught or positioned for years or even decades.

[58 : 38] But Lord, the times that we are living in are not the same. Things have changed. Our nation is under threat.

The church is being threatened. And Lord, we're not worried about the church. The church is going to prevail. That's your promise. But Lord, we do care about our nation and we want to see it flourish. We want to see it flourish because we want to see the gospel flourish. flourish. We want to see our children and our grandchildren flourish. So Lord, I pray that we would take these things into mind as we go into the voting booth here this month and on November 3rd.

Lord, give us your wisdom, your discernment. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. All right, thank you all for coming. Have a great week.