

# VISION FORWARD



## MAY THE MIND OF CHRIST BE YOURS

### 1 Chronicles 12:32

*“Of the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do.. Jesus also said, if we can discern the weather, we should be able to discern the times as well.”*

#### OVERVIEW:

How is it that people of good will, and a common faith, and love for God, can be so oppositional when it comes to the realm of politics? I have pondered this for months now and would like to offer my observations as to where some of these disconnects arise. There are so many aspects to this, and only a few of the more poignant aspects can be highlighted here.

#### CHURCH & STATE:

Some of the differences are caused by differing understandings of the Government’s purpose with correspondingly different expectations. Beyond the government itself, there is the dynamic between the Church and State, and the expectations of the Presidency. For example, I see voting for a President not so much as endorsing an individual, nor a specific personality, but more as endorsing a worldview or platform. As a citizen of heaven, I look how closely a platform aligns with heaven’s will. In the end, for the believer, party affiliations should mean little.

Both Church & State are ordained by God. The State is to maintain law and order, and punish evil. See Rom. 13:1-7. In this environment, the Church can do its work of proclaiming the gospel and ministering to those in need. Both authorities are created by God and are not to promote evil. In the days of Martin Luther King, it was state and local authorities that enforced illegal segregation. Rightly, then and now the Church had/has a responsibility to

oppose such injustice. We see the same today with different mayors and Governors allowing anarchy. This is an abuse of power as see from heaven.

Another stumbling block for Christians is failing to see the Kingdom of God, that its purposes and desires is over and above any political affiliations or agendas. God wants His message preached, and any **platform** that works against or hinders the propagation of The FAITH should not be supported. Today, one can clearly see in the U.S. (and in history) that extreme leaning ideologies are diametrically opposed to the gospel of Christ. These extreme beliefs make the Church subservient to the all-powerful State. This is not God's design or heaven's will. It is also a clear violation of the First Amendment.

Ultimately, the State is accountable to God, and voting in America is a way to help support God's will here on earth. (See Psalm 2) This is because U.S. policy has a tremendous influence in the affairs of the world. Having an Executive administration, that can be influenced or is open to the Church, is consistent with a historic pattern found in the Scriptures. The positioning of godly people, for the influencing of their government leaders, is God's desire as well. This yet another reason why we are told to pray for those in authority over us. The goal here is to support the Gospel of the Kingdom. (See Matt. 24:4)

#### CHARACTER:

As one looks throughout history, which God shapes for His purposes, we see Him using many imperfect people to accomplish His WILL. It is a given that even the "best" people are flawed. From Abraham to David, from the various Kings of Israel and throughout "secular" history, every President in U.S. history had real flaws. The same is true today.

Politicians are not pastors, but they are accountable to God. Even David, a man after God's own heart, committed adultery, murder and other questionable acts. Yet, God loved Him and used Him. Why? History is replete with many such examples. Today in America, every single political figure has said and done questionable things, **no exceptions**. This is another reason why platforms, and/or what has been done previously, is the way to proceed in decision making.

But what about character? In the political realm I would offer the following. Does the candidate fear God? Is he/she hostile to the faith? Does he/she acknowledge evil in the world or the fallen nature of man? One of the best indicators here is their view of human life. Usually, those who respect and or fear God will respect human life. They typically will also respect people of faith.

#### THE MIND OF CHRIST:

So we need the mind of Christ. **It is not enough to wear the label Christian**. A disciple is called to wear the yoke of His teacher. Christ clearly said that He only spoke and did what the Father showed Him. I believe this applies to political thought as well. It is really not about my wants, my desires or my preferences.

In Matthew 6:10, we are told to pray that God's will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. We are told to pray so that our hearts and minds can be **aligned** with God's. Our focus and desires are to be on the things that God loves. This is no small task, but we as believers are called to this task, to see the Kingdom of God at work on the earth. We also need to pray, because **God's ways are not our ways**. Inherently, we do not think like God. His ways are higher, because HE sees all, He knows all, and in trusting Him, we bring about His ends.

*"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways. And My thoughts than your thoughts."* (Isaiah 55:8-9)

In the end, I am saying that our logic, reason, emotions, and experiences are insufficient. For we see in part only. I offer an example here. Because I believe, or have the conviction, God wants to overturn Roe vs. Wade (resulting in 60 million deaths), and also wants to end human trafficking, I pray and will vote for an administration that will work to this end. Like Joshua before us, we need to be on the Lord's side. Are we? (See Joshua 5:13-14.

#### WHAT TYPE OF "MAN" ARE WE?:

1 Corinthians 2:14-16 says, **"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him."** Are we ready to hear some foolishness?

Consider for a moment the prophet Jonah. The prophet, like Cain, was angry. Jonah was **angry** unto death! Why? In simple terms, he didn't get his way. God didn't do what he wanted. Though a prophet of God, who spoke for God, **he was not in agreement** with God. Wow! In Jonah 4:11 we see God appealing to the prophet over his decision to forestall judgment on Nineveh, **"Should I not have compassion....120,000 persons?"** Jonah was allowing his personal biases to cloud his thinking.

James 4 also speaks about sources of quarrels and conflicts. About lusting (wanting) outcomes and when they are not realized people get **murdered** in our hearts and minds. He warns that bitter jealousy and selfish ambitions of the heart can even lead to **speaking against the truth**. I have seen all of these things amongst believers, because like Jonah, people want what they want! Please read the the warning found in James 3:13-18 and the contrast between our will and God's wisdom. His wisdom is from above. Are we seeking Gods will in the political realm? Or our personal wants?

**In theory, the common ground in our faith in Christ, and the truth of God's word, should be sufficient for believers to converse and discuss anything with God's greater desire for unity and His purposes in mind.**

MEDIA:

Finally, let's talk about everyone's favorite, the media. Much of it has nothing to do with news or facts these days, it's more fear and manipulation than anything else. Rhetoric, sound bites, and emotional manipulations have little to do with reaching sound judgements.

Unfortunately today, the mainstream media embodies the very things that God hates. It causes strife among brothers by **uttering lies which divide**. I have never in my lifetime observed such an assault on facts, and the knowingly and purposeful propagation of outright misinformation in the 40+ years of following "political thought". No wonder why people are confused. God hates haughty eyes, lying tongues, shedding of innocent blood, wicked plans (hit jobs), and liars that cause strife. (Proverbs 6:16-19)

Likewise, in Deuteronomy 19:15-19 we are told outright not to listen to malicious witnesses, but on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter is to

be confirmed. As believers we are called to righteous judgments, and these are not to be based upon hearsay. "Judges" are called to research and investigate a matter thoroughly (Job 29:16). This effort begins by validating news sources that are neutral, ethical, and honest. This is a tall order today, but can be done. (As an example, I strongly recommend considering The Epoch Times as one sound and ethical news source.)

As to "malicious witness," I would say those sources committed to the demise of an individual, or those refusing to report on all the facts, or unwilling to print any good news, who demonstrate an agenda, are not to be listened to. Echo chambers that confirm or reinforce a consistent theme regardless of the news at hand likewise are to be suspect. On the testimony of 2-3 witness let every fact be **confirmed**.

We are encouraged to walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers. (Psalm 1)

NO LIE IS OF THE TRUTH:

In closing I would reference Pastor Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 prison letter, for there is great wisdom here for us day. He would not have embraced the anarchist methods of the day. He knew that one does not use evil to promote the good. He was fearful then that evil would hijack his peaceful protests for change. He knew that real change begins in the heart of the individual, and only the power of the Gospel was able to accomplish this. He believed in the law of love and so should we. May the God of all peace and comfort be yours today.

## NOVEMBER PRAYER TARGETS

Take out your phone, set a 2-3 minute timer, and pray daily:

1. Whatever the election results, that the church would unite in prayer and intercession for our country
2. That God would continue to protect Elim Grace and our people from COVID
3. For the Holy Spirit to dig a deeper well of praise and worship during our corporate times together