

RADICAL POLITICS

Scripture used: Matthew 5:13-15 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

In the face of the recent presidential debates, we face an election of unpopularity. In this time of divisiveness, fear, anger and disappointment, how should we as Christ followers engage in this election? Matthew 5:13-15 tells us that we are the salt of the earth. This salt referred to is used to strengthen and solidify roots in the earth. We are also the light of the world, a city on a hill. We can have feelings and perspectives during this election time, but those should not be the last word. We need to hold onto the core of our identities and represent Christ, even in our politics. We simply need to act like Jesus.

KEY POINTS

Jesus calls His followers in this election season to...

- 1) Respond with a radical commitment to Him. - In the time of the New Testament, Christ followers proclaimed Jesus as Lord rather than Caesar, even though they knew it meant their death. There has never been a perfect or ideal president, and there never will be. Leaders of our nation may not be willing to go as far as giving their lives for us. Because of this, we have to ask ourselves, "Where is my ultimate trust?" God has given us the King above all kings and leaders through Jesus Christ. And this God will work His redemption regardless of what the nation's leaders do. It is Jesus in whom we have to put our trust.
- 2) Think deeply about "what are His values?" - In this day and age, we have a tendency to look towards leaders to save us. But Christ's values tend to contradict the values of this world with values that say blessed are the poor, blessed are those who mourn, blessed are the humble, blessed are those who hunger and thirst to do what is right and just, blessed are those who are merciful and who have pure hearts (Matt 5:1-12). These are the values that Jesus defined as values of the kingdom of God. And the unity of God's kingdom is greater than political divisiveness.
- 3) Pray for His heart to be in you. - We need to pray for something radical. We need to pray for the heart of Jesus. We need to break the cycle of violence and hatred. Instead, we should repent of our natural wicked ways and ask for God to change our hearts!
 - a. Refuse to vilify the "other" candidate and party. Rather than do what feels natural like attack or put down opposing parties, exercise Matt 7:12 "Do to others what you would have them do to you."
 - b. Refuse to attack, blame, label others who disagree with you. We tend to pursue what the "truth" is in issues. But rather than just truth, we should pursue love. We should learn to love in the midst of disagreement.
 - c. Refuse to rejoice over the pain of others. We should pray for others instead of celebrating when others are in pain.
- 4) Release His love and power into the world. We are the salt and light of Christ. We represent Christ, not any given political party. We should work towards peace, not divisiveness. We simply need to act like Jesus.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - As was mentioned, Jesus' time was rife with political unrest. The fact that Jesus was proclaimed as "King of the Jews" caused divisiveness in itself. Yet Christ stood firm in His character throughout His ministry. Without discussing your political stance, share and identify some of the challenges you have had in your discussions over politics with others? Was Christ in the midst of your discussions?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - When we think about the values that Christ defined on the sermon on the mount (Matt 5:1-12), He clearly laid out what it takes to be a citizen in the kingdom of God. What areas are you called to repent before God and change as a representative of God's kingdom?
- 3) **DO** In the midst of particularly contentious elections, identify that area that you need to repent before God so that the values you portray are of Christ. Also, set aside time each day to pray over the process so that in the end God's redemptive story will have the last word.