



Faith and Voting

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Introduction:

I know that we are all tired of the pollsters and the stump speeches and the spin on the candidates and this election, but our goal here at CLF is to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ within the context of the family of God. We have been talking about faith all month and this week I want to talk about faith and voting.

Let me begin by sharing some statistics with you this morning. Currently there are 24 million evangelicals who are not registered to vote. In 1996 less than 75 percent of the voting age population of America was registered to vote. In 1996 less than 50 percent of the population actually voted. Forty-nine million people are registered, but failed to cast their votes, even at presidential elections.

Jesus told his followers (**Matthew 5:13**) **“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.”**

I. You are the salt of the earth

If we think about the properties of salt we will understand more fully what Jesus meant when he used this word picture. Here are some of those properties. Salt preserves. It keeps things from spoiling. Salt brings out the flavor. Salt melts ice and snow. Directly or in the form of derivatives, salt finds application in more than 14,000 ways. If it lives up to its potential, it penetrates and impacts whatever is around it.

So Jesus is saying to His followers, you are to impact and influence the earth in which you live. You are to be my influence in the places I put you to penetrate the earth. You are to help keep society from spoiling, to bring out the flavor of Christ likeness and Godliness, to melt the coldness and indifference in people and generally to be effective as my followers in your daily lives, wherever you are.

If the salt loses its qualities and its characteristics, it is worthless. It doesn't work to flavor, to melt or to

preserve. If it loses that which makes it distinct from other compounds it is worthless and good for nothing.

There are many ways to be salt to our world. We influence our world by praying, by witnessing and by being an example, but this morning I want to focus on being salt through your voting.

What are the issues that are at the heart of this election?

They are much deeper than whether John Kerry was on a boat on Christmas Day or not while serving in Viet Nam, or whether George W. Bush was at a certain base here in America. The critical issues are not as much about taxation and jobs and health insurance, as important as those issues are. There are issues that are fundamental and core that are at the heart of this election. Those issues include:

1. The sanctity of human life

2. The protection of the institution of marriage
3. The effort to preserve reference to God in the public square

If you are not aware, you should know that next president who is elected will appoint between 2 and 4 justices to the Supreme Court.

These issues will directly impact you and me and our lives. The candidates have very different views about these issues and all one needs to do is look at the way they have voted on these issues to understand that. As Christian American citizens, we have a responsibility to be the salt that our Lord calls us to be when we go to the polls to vote on Tuesday.

II. Christians have a responsibility to participate in the political process

God established three institutions: *the family, the church, and civil government*. Paul states in Romans 13:1 that “the (governmental) authorities that exist have been established by God.” Therefore we are responsible to the divine institution of government. Christians should always submit to the governing authorities, unless the government forbids what God requires.

The principle of submission to governing authorities includes not only obeying the laws of the land, but it also includes participating in government at *all* levels possible. Think about it. Since God established government, would He then tell His people to stay out of it?

Some Christians think they should not vote and get involved in the political process because of separation of church and state.

Separation of church and state as established by modern courts is based on a misreading of a personal letter from Thomas Jefferson to a group of Baptists, written to assure them that there was a “wall of separation” protecting their religious liberty from government interference. It may come as a surprise, but the phrase “separation of church and state” is found nowhere in our U.S. Constitution and specifically in the First Amendment, which reads:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

James Dobson, Psychologist and Author says this. “It is unconscionable that so many Christians today have

concluded that it is somehow immoral to ‘get political.’ I don’t believe the Founding Fathers intended to exclude people of faith from the process. There is not a scrap of evidence to indicate such.”

The truth of the matter is that the vast majorities of America’s Founding Fathers were professing Christians and would have never agreed with how our modern courts have re-interpreted the First Amendment, which was originally intended to guarantee, not take away, our freedom of religious expression. The Speaker of the House for the First Federal Congress, Frederick Muhlenberg, also a Lutheran pastor, signed the very Bill of Rights that includes that First Amendment protecting those freedoms. Christians have been involved in government from the founding of our nation and God expects no less of us today.

Remember, we have a representative form of government. Ours is a “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” After all, if Christians retreat from this arena, then we have allowed Satan to prevail in a place where Christ commanded us to make an impact as salt and light.

“Let each citizen remember at the moment he is offering his vote that he is executing one of the most solemn trusts in human society for which he is accountable to God and his country.”

–*Samuel Adams*

“Elections belong to the people. It is their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters.” - Abraham Lincoln, U. S. President

III. Is there any real difference between the candidates?

It may seem that there’s not much difference between the candidates. However, many times there is a radical difference when it comes to a candidate’s position on life, family, and freedom issues, such as:

Abortion Rights (cleverly disguised as “pro-choice,” but in reality it’s “pro-death”).

Bio-Medical Issues (e.g., human cloning, harvesting stem cells from human embryos which in fact kills pre-born babies, etc.). Euthanasia (i.e., right-to-die movement, infanticide, physician assisted suicide, etc.).

Homosexual Agenda (i.e., the push to normalize, legitimize, and legalize homosexuality through same-

sex “marriage,” same-sex adoption rights, legislation declaring it a civil right, etc.).

Religious Liberty (i.e., freedom of expression in government institutions, public schools, etc., when it comes to Ten Commandments displays, public nativity scenes, voluntary prayer, religious speech, etc.).

There are voter guides in the foyer. If you are uncertain how the presidential candidates stand on these issues, please feel free to help yourself to a guide at the information center in the foyer before you leave this morning.

“A people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.”

- James Madison, U.S. President, Chief Architect, U.S. Constitution

Our nation’s first Supreme Court Justice, John Jay, said: “It is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation, to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.”

So we should be salt by being educated and vote for the candidate which holds to the values we feel are Biblical values. What else can you do?

- PRAY that all our leaders would come to know Christ and follow Him (1Tim. 2:3-4).
- PRAY that God would give our leaders wisdom and discernment as they govern (Ps. 72:1; Prov. 21:1).

Conclusion:

If America is to survive, we must elect more God centered men and women to public office; individuals who will seek Divine guidance in the affairs of state.

- Billy Graham, Evangelist

Voting is a simple act with a profound impact. Voting is the way that “we the people” elect individuals who will lead our government, make our laws, and protect our freedoms. It is also one of the ways citizen Christians can function as salt and light to bring about change in our nation. Voting is a privilege that many people in other parts of the world can only dream about, but it is also a great responsibility.

Exodus 18:21 (NIV) says, “Select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain— and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.”

It is a moral outrage that more Christians do not take their voting responsibilities seriously. If they did, this would be a very different nation, and a better one.

- James Dobson, Psychologist and Author

- PRAY that God will release those taken captive by Satan and give sight to those who have been spiritually blinded (2 Cor. 4:3-4).
- ASK Him to bring revival to the hearts and lives of the saved (2 Chron. 7:14).
- ASK God to soften all our hearts and make them open to the Lord (Ezek. 36:36).
- PRAY that the innocent, the oppressed, and those unjustly treated would be rescued and protected (Prov. 24:11).
- PRAY for policies that respect human life, the sacredness of marriage, the right to religious freedom, that compassionately care for the needy, and responsibly care for the environment (Prov. 29:2).

Remember the prescription God gave us: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

Our faithfulness in prayer will inevitably lead to action. As James put it, “faith without works is really no faith at all.” In other words, we are saved by faith alone, but a faith that saves is never alone. It involves action. Following Jesus’ teaching on our role as salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16) and our civic obligation (Matt. 22:21) has direct application to the culture and the realm of government. Our prayers and concerns for our nation should lead us to participate in government and engage the culture as often as possible. That participation includes voting.