

First Wednesday – We are the Hope of the World

January 6, 2016

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Resource: Politics According to the Bible, Wayne Grudem

Read: Matthew 16:13-19

Five Wrong Views about Christians and government:

1. Government should compel religion.

- Romans Empire, Constantine, 300 A.D.
- Crusades, wars sanctioned by the Pope, in the middle ages
- Thirty Years War, Conflict between Protestants and Catholics

Explain: People cannot be compelled by laws or force to follow Jesus. God created us to be free. Free to follow Jesus and free to reject Him. Furthermore, it is not the role of government to promote or compel religion. Jesus said, **“I will build”** not the government should build.

Luke 9:52-55, “He sent messengers ahead to a Samaritan village to prepare for his arrival.

⁵³ But the people of the village did not welcome Jesus because he was on his way to Jerusalem.

⁵⁴ When James and John saw this, they said to Jesus, “Lord, should we call down fire from heaven to burn them up?” ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned and rebuked them.”

Explain: John 6, feeding of the 5000, they want to make him king. Jesus refused. Jesus did not come to be king of Rome or America. Jesus said his kingdom was not of this world. (John 18:36) Jesus refused to get involved politically. Jesus is not a Republican, Democrat, or Independent.

- **Who is Jesus?** Jesus is the messiah, the Christ, the anointed one.
- **Anointed to do what?**
 - **Build His Church- body, bride, kingdom**
 - **Luke 4:18-19**, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come.”
 - **His kingdom transcends government.** It is bigger than the United States not smaller. We serve a better King and are members of a better kingdom.
 - **Isaiah 9:6-7**, “For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.⁷ His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies will make this happen.”

2. Government should exclude religion.

Explain: Government should not attempt to promote the spread religion but neither should the government attempt to exclude or separate religion from public life. As believers this is not possible. We do not have a religion we can leave at home. We have a personal, life changing relationship with the indwelling Spirit of God through the finished work of Christ. If you can leave it at home then you don't have it. However, even if the government were to declare Christianity illegal because it is exclusive and teaches moral absolutes Jesus said, **Hell would not prevail against the advancement of the kingdom of God.** The true church cannot be stopped. The church cannot be stopped by Hell or government. Jesus came to build a church that would break through the gates of Hell in order to set captives free. This is what is happening in India today, and China today.

- **Separation of Church and State** was not intended to protect government from the influence of religion but to protect religion from the influence of government. Separation of church and state was intended to prevent the church from ever being run by the government which always leads to a corrupt church. However, when you protect the government from the influence of religion you end up with a corrupt, impotent government which is what we are experiencing now.
- ACLU, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State and most of secular society has worked very hard to remove the influence of religion from culture all together.
 - o **Ten Commandments, Prayer, history books**
 - o **Clip- David Barton, White House Tour, youtube**
- **What is the problem with excluding religion from government?**
 - o **Failure to distinguish between the reasons for a law and the content of the law.**
 - The reason behind a law does not establish a religion. **Stealing/murder/marriage**
 - o **Changes freedom of religion into freedom from religion.** Again that was never the purpose. **"In God we trust, One nation under God."** If we exclude religion from politics it would invalidate the reasoning behind the constitution. The first two sentences mention God twice and argue that God's laws justify our declaration of independence.
 - o **It limits freedom of religion.** The first amendment protects the free exercise of religion. Keeping government and religion separate prohibits my freedom to exercise my religion in political matters. Colorado Murder trial declared a mistrial because it was discovered a couple of jurors quoted the Bible in deliberation which was determined to be juror misconduct. This position wrongfully assumes I can separate my religious life/beliefs/convictions from my public life.
 - o **Freedom of Speech.** Why was I not allowed to mention God in my commencement prayer. Christmas not a Winter Celebration.
 - o This position was never adopted by the American people through the democratic process but was forced on us by a liberal judicial system.

3. **All government is evil and demonic.** The Myth of a Christians Nation, Boyd
- **Luke 4:5-7**, "Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶"I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them," the devil said, "because they are mine to give to anyone I please. ⁷I will give it all to you if you will worship me."
 - **John 8:44**, "For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies."
 - **Daniel 4:17**, "For this has been decreed by the messengers, it is commanded by the holy ones, so that everyone may know that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world. He gives them to anyone he chooses even to the lowliest of people."

4. **Do evangelism not politics.**

- Evangelism is not just getting people to heaven. **Matthew 28:19-20**
- The gospel includes helping people live in freedom and prosperity. **1 John 3:8**
- For believers these issues are not political issues but spiritual issues.
- God says our desire and willingness to help others is a distinguishing characteristic of a true believer. **Matthew 25, James 2**
- God established the church and government to restrain evil. **Matthew 5:13-16 and Romans 13:1-7**
- **1 Peter 2:13-14**, "For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, ¹⁴ or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right."
- Christian influence on governments has led to the spread of the gospel and the blessing of all people.
 - o Missions- 95%, Tax Exempt Status
 - o Social programs- Difference between America and India
 - o Natural disasters- who shows up
 - o Humans rights- Bible/Jesus
- Although the government does not promote religion, religion is the basis, the reason behind moral law.
- **One thing to always keep in mind is that we live in a republic.** Rome was an empire. The people did not have any power. In a republic the power is supposed to be in the hands of the people. Therefore, Jesus and Paul do not utilize the political system to the degree that I think we can and should.

5. **Do politics not evangelism.**

Explain: That was not the approach Jesus took. Consider the context of our passage. Jesus refused to be king and chose to lay down his life to build the kingdom. There are a few dangers here:

- Who do we vote for?
- We cannot make politics a shortcut. I will vote for someone who will pass laws to make everyone behave so I do not have take responsibility for the great commission.
- We cannot criticize the government for failing to accomplish its purpose if we fail to fulfill ours
- We may be persecuted

Jesus has given us the keys to the kingdom. How can we set people free?

- Passion for God's presence. Our strategy this year for prayer
- Passion for God's Word. Our strategy for this year.
- Passion for God's mission. Our strategy for this year