



Matthew 17:17-22 is also valuable in considering these issues. Jesus taught to “**render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.**” Was it participating in evil to pay taxes to a pagan government that supported idolatry from those taxes? No, but taxes are not like votes. First-century Christians had no vote regarding

the behavior of the Roman Empire, or its use of revenue. If one has that privilege, he or she expresses influence for good in how a vote is cast. I think Paul’s use of his citizenship is also instructive (see Acts 22:25-28; 25:11). This refutes a separatist view that completely avoids any association with or participation in civil government. Paul used

his Roman citizenship for protection (Acts 22:25-28) and likely also as a way to extend his spiritual influence (Acts 25:11). Yet he also affirmed that Christians must recognize our heavenly citizenship (Phil. 3:20). This world is not our home. That must temper our anxiety over political turmoil as well as the degree of allegiance we hold to any human government. Our bond to Christ’s kingdom must outweigh any (and all) national or political allegiance.



Faithful Sayings Issue 22.41 October 11, 2020

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ISSUE

22.41

October 11, 2020

Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF
THE OL-
SEN PARK
CHURCH OF
CHRIST

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM
10:00 AM
11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Ryan Ferguson
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McAnear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Justin Smiley
Kevin Wise
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

Some Questions about Christians and Voting

by Kyle Pope

Recently, I was asked to participate in a podcast addressing the issue of Christians and voting. With the upcoming election, this is certainly a topic that has been on the minds of many of us. In preparation for the interview, Lance Taylor, a gospel preacher in Athens, Alabama sent me some questions he will ask me when we record the discussion next week. Please allow me to share with you these questions and some points I plan to address.

1. With an election coming up, many Christians are thinking about if they should vote for either candidate. Many are wondering who they should vote for if they do choose to vote. How would you respond to Christians that are concerned about voting for a man that they do not agree with on some moral issues? Prior to World War II, it used to be a common conviction among some Christians in America not to participate in civil government in any way—even voting. The thought was that Christians should view their allegiance to the kingdom of Christ as foremost and avoid all entanglement with the “**things of this life**” (2 Tim. 2:4). Most brethren no longer hold this view, but when we face complicated moral questions, I understand why some held that view.

Not all Christians are blessed to live under governments that offer voting as a way to influence the direction a nation goes. There are Christians who live under tyranny, and oppression who have no way whatsoever to have any impact upon the direction their government takes. If we, as Christians, are to let our light shine before men (Matt. 5:16), I believe that voting is a way to do that. That is not always an easy choice. No politician is flawless. While we should look for candidates that serve as good examples in lifestyle and political views, votes do not necessarily condone personality (or personal conduct). A vote supports the position for which a candidate stands. I

do not believe Christians can vote for those who espouse positions that run counter to Scripture. 2 John 11 speaks of the one who would “greet” (or morally support) one promoting error as sharing in evil deeds. I believe there is surely some application to these questions. A vote in support of one who promotes evil conduct is sharing in evil conduct.

2. How would you respond to the Christian that is concerned about voting because he does not want to potentially vote against God’s will? I would say, “Don’t vote against God’s will!” Now, in a representative democracy, we must understand that the best we can do is put one in office on the basis of how he or she represents his or her convictions and platform. If the politicians act differently than they said they would, that is not the voter’s fault. Yet if they affirm a platform that is contrary to Scripture, the Christian cannot vote for them.

I understand abortion as a defining issue like this. I see no way that a Christian can be pleasing to God and cast a vote for any candidate that believes abortion is acceptable. Scripture affirms that the conceived life in the womb is a “child” (Luke 1:41, 44) and the taking of innocent life is murder (Exod. 20:13) and among things abominable to God (Prov. 6:16-18). If abortion is murder, a vote for one who supports abortion is a vote for murder.

3. With news outlets pushing agendas, where might the Christian go to make an informed decision before casting his or her vote? I don’t want to endorse any particular network, publication, or commentator, but I would say, check sources. Test and research issues for yourself and be willing to listen to different views and wade through complicated issues. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 teaches, “test all things, hold fast what is good.” 1 John 4:1 commands, “do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits.” These words have specific application to spiritual matters, but they teach principles that should govern how we view all things.

We live a lazy age. I learned this some years ago while working on a commentary on Matthew. I found quote after quote that is attributed to the wrong source, taken out of context, or misapplied. In religion, politics, or even personal relationships, it’s easy to hear something from one source, believe it, spread it abroad, and even fight over it. As Christians we should be committed to truth in all aspects of life.

4. We know that God tells us in Proverbs 14:34, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” What is the Christian’s responsibility to the nation of which he or she is a citizen? Is voting an answer? Is voting the only answer? I do not believe, as I mentioned earlier, that it is wrong for Christians to vote. If we have that right, and we can do it in good conscience, we should use it. However, we must never imagine that political involvement is the primary vehicle of a Christian’s influence. Have you ever noticed that the New Testament never records Christians taking political action in order to influence the world of the first century? Yet they “turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6). How

did they do that? By teaching. By influencing hearts, souls, and minds. By, “casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Cor. 10:5). Whether we vote or not this is what we must do.

5. Are there some resources and Scriptures that Christians can study and grow from on this subject? I would recommend Romans 13:1-7, which teaches that Christians must submit to civil authorities (whether they are good or not). Paul tells us they are God’s servants. We can also study 1 Peter 2:13-17 which teaches us that as Christians we are to submit to ordinances imposed by those authorities. Christians don’t break laws or support those who do, even as a way to protest wrongdoing. We can’t do wrong to make a wrong right. Acts 5:28-29 offers the only conditions under which we can Scripturally break human laws—if they require us to violate God’s laws.



Olsen Park Church of Christ