

A Word from Woody. . .
“Have We Done Our Pre- and Post-Election Prep?”

There are two things for sure about the November 3rd presidential election. There will be a winner, and there will be consequences. Christians need to be prepared for both.

Who will the winner be? No one knows for sure. But one thing we do know—the winner of the presidential race will be a Republican or a Democrat! Thus, assuming you have not voted already, pre-voting prep is essential.

While I cannot—and would not—tell you how to vote, I believe it is my responsibility as your pastor to remind us that Scripture guides us on some key issues in this election. In last month’s sermon series “The Bible and Some Election Issues” we looked at the issues of abortion, racism, gender/sexuality, and Marxism/Socialism. The Bible gives strong evidence that the Lord is against abortion, racism, and Marxist Socialism, and He has designed marriage to be between one man and one woman and designed human chromosomes to indicate that we are either male or female. If you missed any of these sermons, they are recorded on Lake Vista UMC’s Facebook page as well as our website Lakevistaumc.org.

It is noteworthy that last month respected pastor, theologian, and author John Piper posted online an article on this presidential election entitled, “Policies, Persons, and Paths to Ruin: Pondering the Implications of the 2020 Election”. Piper’s point in his article is basically that good policy cannot overshadow bad personal character. He states, “I find it bewildering that Christians can be so sure that greater damage will be done by bad judges, bad laws, and bad policies than is being done by the culture-infecting spread of the gangrene of sinful self-exaltation, and boasting, and strife-stirring. . . How do they know this? Seriously! Where do they get the sure knowledge that judges, laws, and policies are less destructive than boastful factiousness in high places?” Thus Piper has stated that he is committed to voting for neither the Republican nor Democratic candidate.

I reject Piper’s argument and conclusion for at least three reasons. First, no candidate is perfect, but, as we have seen, each is a complex combination of both virtue and vice. True, some candidates appear to have more weighty moral

failings than others, but I know of no current presidential candidate whose character would be immediately disqualifying for the Christian, such as an Adolf Hitler or David Duke. Second, we do well to remember that we are not voting for a pastor-in-chief, but a commander-in-chief. Of course, it would be wonderful if a candidate were a committed biblical Christian, but this is not a necessary qualification for a secular office. And third, it is the policies—especially the four major issues mentioned above on which I preached—that have lasting power in our culture and will indeed affect the Church for good or ill. For a more thorough critique of Piper’s article, one can do a Google search for theologian Wayne Gruden’s, “A Respectful Response to My Friend John Piper About Voting for Trump”. Also, I encourage you to see Dr. James Dobson’s and Catholic priest Father Ed Meeks’ thoughts on the upcoming presidential election at the link, <https://mail.yahoo.com/d/search/keyword=james%2520dobson/messages/AA0uPL4DWcUzX5xpFw7Q-MmqWQw?.intl=us&.partner=sbc&.lang=en-US>.

We also need to do some post-election prep prior to election day. Before the Lord, we should ask ourselves: If I do not find my candidate(s) in office after election day, will I be devastated, without hope, and in an emotional spiral downward? If so, then our sin of idolatry needs to be confessed, and we must repent. Whenever some person, or some object, has the power to devastate us, we have allowed ourselves to violate the first commandment, “you shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). Jesus loves us so much that He warned His followers not to store up earthly treasures, which are impermanent and susceptible to theft, but rather it is necessary to store up treasures in heaven, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). Our Master also instructed His listeners, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). This abundant life is fortunately not dependent on the volatile vicissitudes of political fads, fancies, and factions. On the other hand, I can think of an even more vulnerable state for us to fall into idolatry-- if our candidate wins! That type of euphoria could easily threaten to provide a counterfeit joy, satisfaction, and hope, which only Jesus can truly provide.

Beloved, if we do our pre- and post-election prep, we will be ready to face whatever follows in the future. To aid us in this, I am calling for a fast from 7:00 PM Monday, November 2nd to 7:00 PM Tuesday, November 3rd, when the election will be officially over on the east coast. We can feel confident we made our vote

count as we stand before the Lord, and we will be able to avoid the pitfalls of misplaced reliance on the election results. And most importantly, we will be able to minister to a lost world in need of the Savior, to those on both sides of the political aisle.

Yours in Christ's Love and for Christ's Cause,

Woody