

FAITH-FULL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

THE KINGDOM OF GOD | VARIOUS TEXTS | OCTOBER 4, 2020 | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

SERMON OUTLINE:

"Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn." (Isaiah 60:3)

Two Insufficient Ideas about Political Engagement

- "Faith has no place in politics!"
- "Politics has no place in faith!"
- Our faith in Jesus Christ has political implications.

Four Theological Truths that Should Shape Our Political Engagement

- Creation calling: Human beings are called by God to exercise dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26-28)
- Sin's complication: Sin and the fall from grace has impacted every aspect of society (Romans 8:20)
- Jesus is Lord: everything is subject to Him, and we will reign with Him (Philippians 2:10-11; 2 Timothy 2:11-12)
- Love and truth: God's kingdom agenda must guide us (John 3:16; 1:14)

Six Questions for Faith-full Political Engagement

- Am I living out of a growing life with God that brings the fruit of the Spirit into my politics?
- Have I taken steps to be informed on the issues at hand or am I taking action out of lack of knowledge?
- Am I approaching this issue rooted in my kingdom citizenship and the agenda of God's kingdom or from my earthly citizenship and political agenda alone?
- How will my activity cultivate love for my neighbor and promote love, justice, truth, and moral order as God defines it?
- How will my action serve the common good, not just for me and people like me but for all people?
- How will my action promote the glory of God and the kingship of Christ both in the church and the broader world?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think faith and politics have anything to do with one another? Why or why not?

2. This week we conclude our series "The Kingdom of God" by looking at how we can bring our faith into the public sphere, particularly in relation to politics. Begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak to you through His Word and this study.
3. Read Genesis 1:26-28. What do you think it means that human beings are made in the image of God so as to rule or have dominion over the earth?
4. What do you think this has to do with politics in the present day, if anything?
5. In Genesis 3 we read about how Adam and Eve decide to rebel against God by asserting their own will, known as sin. Read the curse of God upon humanity in Genesis 3:16-19. In what ways do you think sin impacts humanity's calling to rule over the earth?
6. What are some examples you have seen in the world during your life that speak to the tension of humanity being "made to rule" but also subject to frustration and complexity through the impact of sin?
7. When Jesus came incarnation into the world, He inaugurated the kingdom of God, displaying what God's kingdom was like. Read Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:16-21; and John 1:14. What would you say is the essence of God's kingdom according to these verses?
8. Read 2 Timothy 2:11-13 and 1 Corinthians 6:1-3. In light of both God's original calling for humanity to rule over the earth and the saving work of Christ, what do you think is the significance of Paul's words here about Christians reigning with Christ?
9. Review the six questions for political engagement from this week's message. What do you think about these questions? What would you add or change as you reflect on your own situation in light of Scripture?
10. What is one thing God is speaking to you through this week's study or through the entire series on the kingdom of God? If you are on your own, write that down. If you are in a small group, discuss your answers with one another. Close in prayer. Choose one person in your life with whom you will share something you learned through this study.

DIG DEEPER:

This week dig deeper into the theme of the kingdom of God in one or more of the following ways:

- Study the lives of Joseph (Genesis chs 37, 39-47), Esther (Esther chs 1-10), or Daniel (Daniel chs 1-6) through the lens of public engagement. Ask this question: how did these character's faith shape the way they engaged with culture and government?
- Watch the upcoming presidential debates on your own or with friends and evaluate the candidates and their platforms in light of God's kingdom agenda of love and truth. What stands out to you as you evaluate them in this way?
- If you want to read more about faith-full public engagement, consider reading one of the following books:
 - Justin Giboney, Michael Wear, and Chris Butler, *Compassion & Conviction: The AND Campaign's Guide to Faithful Civic Engagement*
 - James W. Skillen, *The Good of Politics: A Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Introduction*
 - Vincent L. Bacote, *The Political Disciple: A Theology of Public Life*