

## Some Pastoral Thoughts on the Christian and Voting

The recent elections raise an important question: Does the Bible have anything to say about the Christian's role and responsibility in voting? The answer is both no and yes. The answer is "no" in the sense that the Bible does not specifically command us to cast ballots. The reason for this omission is that the types of governments that existed in biblical times were not the same type of participatory government that we enjoy here in the United States of America today. The authors of Scripture could have never contemplated the type of privilege that we currently enjoy. That is, the capacity to influence the direction of a country based upon our participation and involvement in government through the process of casting votes.

However, the answer is "yes" in the sense that the Scripture commands us to be the Salt and Light of the world (Matt 5:13-16; Philip 2:15). Salt acts as a preservative by preserving that which is corroding. Light shines in the midst of darkness. Such imagery conveys what the Christian's presence accomplishes in the midst of a fallen world. When we engage the culture, we help preserve it and shine the light of divine truth in the midst of spiritual darkness. Furthermore, the Scripture teaches that we are stewards over all of the various blessings that God gives us (Matt 25:15-30; 1 Cor 4:2). Stewardship simply means that we acknowledge God as the ultimate owner of our blessing and that we simply manage them on God's behalf.

Tragically, statistics reveal that very few Christians are registered to vote or take the responsibility to vote seriously. Yet, how can we fulfill our obligation as salt and light to the world when we have an opportunity to influence our country in a Godly direction through voting and yet fail to take the time to cast an informed vote when the opportunity arises? How can the salt do its job if it remains in the salt shaker? How are we being stewards over the marvelous participatory government that has been bequeathed to us when we fail to vote? While voting is not a substitute for the Christian's responsibility to pray on behalf of our governmental leadership (1 Tim 2:1-4), we are not adequately fulfilling our responsibility as the salt and light or as stewards if we fail to take the freedoms God gives us and use them for His glory.

Proverbs 29:2 says, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan" (NKJV). Throughout world history, most people have had little say over the selection of their political leaders. In other words, whether people groan under the authority of the wicked or rejoice under the authority of the righteous is a choice that most have little say over. Yet, in our country, we have the opportunity to decide if we are going to groan or rejoice depending on whether we elect the righteous or wicked to reign over us. We should make every effort to select the candidates best aligned with biblical principles as we cast votes for those who will represent us at the local, state, national levels of government. The issue is not so much party affiliation, but rather whether the candidates' lifestyles and ideology line up with God's priorities as revealed in His Word. Therefore, voting

is one of the core responsibilities of any American Christian. Thus, as the old adage goes, Christians should be the type of people who go to church on Sunday, work on Monday, and the polls on Tuesday.