



DOES THE GOSPEL AND POLITICS INTERSECT?

Pastor Chris Williams

Politics is an important issue that Christians need to understand. Some believers claim, “I’m all about Jesus; I do not deal with politics.” For others, everything they talk about is politics. It is a delicate subject.

The truth is that, to some extent, every aspect of your life is affected by politics. Your goal as a Christian is to learn how to contend for the faith in the public square in a manner that is gospel-centered and grounded in truth. Jumping with too much passion might compromise your witness. Yet, you need to engage in some way. There is a really fine line there.

Politics is not a foreign thing to the Bible. You have laws, governments, politicians and countries, all sorts of political things going on. Jesus said that you ought to be salt and light in your community. At the same time, He went to great lengths to not get pulled into the politics of his day.

How does the gospel intersect with politics? Mark 12 presents an account of a relevant event in the last week of Jesus life. It’s Passover, a massive celebration. The population of the city is multiple times what it normally is. The Romans are on high alert; it is tense.

It is in this context that the religious leaders send Pharisees and Herodians to trap Jesus with His words. Verse 14 *“When they came, they said to him, Teacher, we know you are truthful and don’t care what anyone thinks, nor do you show partiality, but teach the way of God truthfully. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”*

The word “tax” here refers to a poll tax. This tax was used to finance the occupying Roman army, and among the Jews it was the most hated of all the many Roman taxes.

This was a trick question. If he said, “Yes, it’s lawful to pay taxes to Caesar”, then all the Jews would have turned against him. If he had said “No”, Roman soldiers could take him to prison or worse.

Verse 15, *“But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, why are you testing me? Bring me a denarius. They brought a coin. Whose image in inscription is this? He asked them Caesar’s, they replied. Jesus told them, Give the Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and the God, the things that are God. And they were utterly amazed at him.”*

Here’s what Jesus is trying to say, “Politics are important, and you should be involved as a as a good Christian citizen who is living for the good of the community to the glory of Christ and the flourishing of all.”

Romans 13:1 says, *“Let everyone submit to the governing authorities since there is no authority except from God and the authorities that exist are instituted by God.”*

It is interesting how the first thing Paul talks about, after giving a good theology of the gospel in Chapters 1-12, is about a Christian’s relationship with the government. Paul is clearly stating at the beginning of chapter 13 that God has established all governing authorities.

Eric Metaxas, in his book “Letter to the American Church,” describes the attitude of the church towards Hitler’s crimes in the 1940s. Hitler told the church leaders in Germany, “Do what you want. Sing what you want to sing, preach what you want to preach, but don’t ever talk about politics or about me. The moment you do that, I will stomp you out.”

Believers were gathered on the Lord’s Day, singing the great hymns of the faith as German soldiers would haul people away in stock cars or on trains to death camps. The train tracks went through downtown, not far from many churches. The churches could hear the screaming and crying. Their response was to sing louder, to ignore what was happening to the people around them. That is unacceptable!

Christians cannot turn a blind eye to evil! We must engage, but how?

1. PRAY FOR THOSE IN POWER.

Sometimes there is a big difference between the amount of time one can spend listening, reading, or criticizing politics and the time spent praying for politicians.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 says, *“First, I urge petitions, prayers, intercessions and Thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those in authority so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in our godliness and dignity.”*

Pray for their salvation. Pray that they would reject ungodly counsel and understand they're accountable to God.

2. YOU MUST PARTICIPATE BY VOTING

Do not buy into the lie that you cannot bring your faith into politics. There is no such thing as separation of church and state. Jefferson meant that the church should not create a state church and control it. It does not mean that the believer cannot go into the state and proclaim Jesus Christ as savior.

We have a representative form of government. You are you elected officials who then represent you. This is why it's important to vote.

Before Roe vs. Wade was overturned, about 8,000 babies were aborted in Missouri each year. We have now become a life state with zero clinical abortions.

However, there are national and international groups that are using our state governance against ourselves. They're funding about 5 million dollars into our state to get signatures for a pro-abortion initiative petition ballot request. If they get 171,000 petition signers, the petition becomes an amendment that Missourians would vote on in November. If they get 50% plus one of Missouri registered voters, then they can change our Constitution.

This petition is a proposed amendment that revises Article one of the Constitution by

adopting one new Section three known as Article one, Section 36, and just a portion of it:

“The government shall not deny or infringe upon a person’s fundamental right to reproductive freedom, which is the right to make and carry out decisions about all matters relating to reproductive health care, including but not limited to prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, birth control, abortion care, miscarriage care, and respectful birthing conditions.”

You may have heard about this on social media or seen them at the various grocery stores where people are up there collecting signatures for what they’re calling reproductive health. Christians need to be well informed to help people understand this, not in an ugly, ungodly mean way, but in a in a concerned, grace filled, gospel centered way.

3. YOU MIGHT BE CALLED TO PARTICIPATE BY RUNNING FOR OFFICE

There is a need for leaders to put forth laws and policies that lead to flourishing, for people on our school boards who look to the Word and to the Lord rather than to some political organization who funds them and tells them what to do.

It would be awesome to see more believers running for office. If you are called, let us know.

4. BE PREPARED TO CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENT WHEN NEEDED.

Believers must be bold to speak clearly, boldly, and gracefully on biblical issues. It is important that individual churches and networks of churches do this.

How can you challenge the government?

You can call your elected officials, write letters, and email them when you have something that you do not agree with. They are your representatives and if you do not like how they represent you, then you can vote them out.

After the Constitutional Convention, a lady asked Dr. Franklin, “Well doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?” Franklin answered, “A republic, if you can keep it.”

The church needs to engage if we are going to keep the United States a Constitutional Republic.

Government and politics are important, but the gospel is all important. A believer should look to the government and politics through the lens of the gospel.

Ask the Lord to give you grace and boldness as you engage for the good of the neighborhoods, the glory of our King, for the flourishing and salvation of all.



Pastor Chris is living his dream as the Pastor of Fellowship Church. His desire is to help men and women lean into their mission on purpose and for great purpose. He's served his local church since 2014. Under his leadership, Fellowship Church has grown from a fledgling replant to a thriving spiritual family of well over 1000.

Pastor Chris has shepherded Fellowship Church to embrace healthy body life of active discipleship living out the one another statements of scripture, applying the gospel to learn to flourish in a fallen world. To be a church on mission on purpose to expand the Kingdom through replanting dying churches and planting new ones. Since 2018, Fellowship Church has seen 65 churches around the world live for the first time or live again. They have sent 15 members out into the mission field as pastors or missionaries since 2014.

Pastor Chris has earned a Bachelor's in theology, a Master's in Theology, and a Master's in Divinity. He is the current President of the Missouri Baptist Convention, a network of 1721 churches with over 400000 members. He is the host of Beyond Preaching Podcast with Pastor Chris Williams and Co-hosts The Better Man Podcast.

He is the proud husband to Kate, and dad to Max, Cooper, Jack, Judson, Lincoln, Lottie Kate and Jude.