

POLITICAL RHETORIC

This will not be my usual devotional piece, but I think it is worth saying, it is supported by Scripture, and since this is my platform, I'm going to say it. We need to tone down the political rhetoric. The ink is barely dry on this off-year election's results, and already we are hearing about the coming 2014 mid-term elections. Stretching the campaign seasons till they virtually run together is nothing new. Neither is partisan bickering. But there comes a time when you have to say, "Enough is enough."

I'm not speaking to the general public here, but to believers in Christ. The extreme loons on both sides of the political aisle will never be persuaded to de-escalate the vitriol. Divide and conquer has always been and still is a successful strategy. Apparently the devil thinks it's not enough that Christendom is divided over theology; now he adds politics to his array of tools to further fracture the body of Christ and thereby keep Christians marginalized.

Jesus thought the unity of His followers was important enough to spend His last night on earth as a man praying about it. The Apostle John recorded this prayer in the 17th chapter of his gospel. Jesus asked the Father to protect His people "so that they may be one as we are one" (Jn. 17:11). Jesus prayed that God would protect us from the evil one (v.15). He prayed for our unity so that the world would come to believe that God sent Him (v.21) because He loved humanity just as He loves His only begotten Son (v. 23). And at the end of His prayer, Jesus says He will continue to make His Father known so that the love They share may be in us (v. 25-26).

As Christians, our first allegiance is to God and His kingdom. Citizenship in the U.S.A. or any other nation is secondary, and membership in any political party is even farther down the list of priorities. For an individual Christian a primary obligation is to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

I am not saying Christians must agree politically. I know devout believers on both sides of the political spectrum. But when we attack one another, whether directly or by inferring that some extreme statement made by a few far-out fanatics applies to everyone on that side of the aisle, we have fallen into the devil's trap, to the detriment of our testimony and influence in the world. Neither am I saying that we should just keep quiet and not say anything about politics or candidates. Speak your mind, but stick to the facts. State your own opinion if you must, but be careful not to tear down fellow Christians just because they don't agree with you.

Jesus said a house divided against itself cannot stand (Matt. 12:25). He was speaking about Satan's house, but it applies to His own as well. And Paul warned the Galatians, "If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other" (Gal. 5:15). We do not want to find ourselves playing into the devil's hand as he seeks to steal, kill, and destroy. As those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we are to bring His presence and influence to bear in this very broken and difficult world. We can't do that if we can't at least be civil to each other.

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