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“Praying for The 46<sup>th</sup> President...”

Well, the inauguration has passed and we have another President, our 46<sup>th</sup> in our nation’s history. I remember each one that has served in my lifetime, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush 41’ Clinton, Bush 43’ Obama, Trump, and now Biden. Each one can be associated with something that they did that became their legacy whether they wanted it or not. And currently, many opinions are shared about our current President and our previous President. We all aware of their platforms and we tend vote for the vision that most represents our own vision.

In my fifty-one trips around the sun, I understand even more fully that all of our Presidents are all flawed. They are all influenced by the same sin that infects us. This means that their decisions are literally hell bent on pursuing things that do not coincide with the things of God. For example, all my life our country, (the richest country in the history of the world), has carried large debts, and has always spent more than it makes. Our debt is swelling to impossible levels. Every President that signed the many bills passed by congress authorizing that debt is creating huge problems for everyone down the road. Likewise, how many of us have carried impossible debt, perhaps even become bankrupt because of the things we signed on for. While the matters of the Whitehouse are much larger than our own house the principle is the same. We are all capable of good decisions and bad ones. And our personal policies can have a major impact on the well-being of our families, our jobs, and us bring good or harm. Sin skews everything.

In a world of division, I would encourage Christians to be united in the things of God. And one of those things is spelled out in 1 Timothy 2:1-6 which says, “I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— <sup>2</sup> for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all people....”

Note by the way who Paul is telling Timothy to pray for. Caesar, who believed himself to be a god, believing himself to be the ultimate authority. Those like Pontius Pilate, who rather than free a man whom he knew to be innocent condemned Jesus to save his own career. Or how about the Herod Antipas who beheaded John the Baptist because John called out Herod’s immorality. Or how about Caiaphas, who held the position of high priest in Jerusalem but condemned, the Messiah, Jesus out of sheer hatred. And yet Jesus died for them. Paul is arguing in 1 Tim 2—God wants all people to be saved. If Jesus wants all people to be saved, even flawed presidents, then it is important that we pray for them.

It is important that we pray for those like former Presidents and for President Biden. By doing so it keeps us on Jesus game and not wrapped up in the thorns of endless debate. It also keeps our heart from becoming embittered or overly proud. Prayer takes us to the highest authority and leans not our own understanding of things however, passionate our position may be.

Whenever a discussion of politics comes up, I have learned to wait to see if I am being baited for a challenge or if I am being asked to provide a sympathetic set of ears to vent their strong feelings. Truthfully, I have lost much of my appetite for most of it. I will however, argue

for the sanctity of life and take a strong stand in that regard. I will argue for the truth of the Gospel to be freely preached. I have decided to concentrate on those things of faith. I have also consciously decided to pray when I do get angry. Politics is by its nature frustrating after all. But as in all cases when I do make a discussion of a relevant topic I make it a point that it be done with the words of Romans 13:7—with respect and honorably. “Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.” Angry words never win any arguments.

Respect and honor dignify a person even if we disagree with his/her politics. To disagree is not the same as hatred. To disagree is fine. To succumb to hatred is not. Embitterment never brings peace nor anything godly. Lord knows we have had plenty of this. Lord knows many of us have been passionate about the issues. However, Jesus gives us an example in which to follow. For example, Jesus certainly disagreed with Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7 when Jesus was anointed by the woman but never berated, nor dishonored, nor disrespected the man. In fact, he tried to teach many such people and then said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” We are always free to disagree but it is best done with a temperament of humility and love.

As President Biden exercises his office, I would encourage us to pray in this same humility and love. First, because we are called upon to do so. Secondly, by doing so we keep ourselves focused on the things of Jesus which go way beyond the next few years.

And for what should we pray? I would submit that the Lord’s will be accomplished. That the President would truly exercise the faith in Jesus that he calls his own; to aim not for what he can gain from his position but for what should be done. I pray for the President to seek out good not just political gains. I pray for President Biden to remain well and safe. I pray for godly voices to reach his ears and that he leans not on his own understanding but seeks first the will of God. I pray for rhetoric that is calming and respectful to and from his Whitehouse even when there is disagreement. I pray for a godly character and for a genuine concern for the people he leads. I pray that he may turn to the Lord with a genuinely eager heart and for ears to hear the Word he confesses to believe. I pray for strength to endure the hard things of his office. I pray for his family and for our country. And I do it all in Jesus name.

And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord grant you His favor and give you His peace in Jesus. Amen.

Pastor Matthew Woods

John 3:30