

Epiphany 4, 2019

Choosing God Over Politics

Romans 13:1-7

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A German shepherd, a Doberman and a cat have died. All three are faced with God who wants to know what they believe in. The German Shepherd says, "I believe in discipline, training and loyalty to my master." "Good," says God, "Then sit down on my right side." "Doberman, what do you believe in?" Asks God. The Doberman answers, "I believe in the love, care and protection of my master." "Aha," said God, "you may sit to my left." Then he looks at the cat, and asks, "And what do you believe in?" The cat then answers, "I believe you are sitting in my seat."

I use this to set a foundation that applies not to our relationship with the Father but our relationship with the governing bodies of our country. I have heard it said that the worst subjects to discuss amongst family and friends are politics and religion...fair warning; today I'm going to do both.

Place yourselves at the feet of the governing party you support. You acknowledge and believe what they foreshadow the path ahead ascribes for the future of all. If they are prevented from their agendas all hell is going to break loose, calamity will ensue and anarchy will be the result! A fear builds within demanding strong stances and even action before the world spins off its axis. Your party, Republican or Democrat, should be able to lead the way...you believe in discipline, training and loyalty to your master...you believe in love, care and protection of your master. Your party is leading in the right way and all should submit to its clamor. Yes, I said clamor...for clamor is all we hear from both parties with enough positive to attract half a nation and enough negative to repel the rest.

Why are we in such a position? Why are we at each other's throats engaging in violence over party lines? Why are families being broken apart, friendships lost and businesses closed because of political

posturing? I'll tell you why...Our joke about two dogs and a cat is not a laughing matter. The Mt. Sinai of America has become politics itself and those bowing at its flanks are a couple of dogs called the Republican and democratic parties. They guise themselves as being so devoted to the process and yet they steamroll over the bodies they are suppose to protect and be accountable too. The reality is...we are the cat. We the people are the ones THEY are accountable too and we have a responsibility to ensure they are doing their jobs in leading this country truthfully and morally.

A gleeful reading through St. Paul's 13th chapter in Romans may make you think that you have to pick a ruler and give your full allegiance, that you have to accept everything your party upholds. Listen once again to our brother Paul;

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil...do that which is good and thou shalt have the praise of the same."

We, the cat, have a difficult job. We must support the authorities placed over us by God while at the same time holding them accountable to the highest moral integrity. We are not really Republicans and Democrats, we are Christians who have a moral obligation to support and uphold the moral authenticity of our faith.

If we feel that we do not have to pay taxes to a governing body we disagree with, If we feel we do not need to show respect for those ordained by God to lead, If we feel we do not even need to pray for those in authority because their views make our skin crawl, we are in deep error ourselves. What do we know of eternal affairs, that God may be doing a work of which we are not privy countering an evil we cannot comprehend, or giving us a leader we deserve?

On the other hand, if we persist in compromising our faith in support of our secular rulers, where their direction puts us in violation of God's laws, we error all the more. *"For he is the minister of God to thee for*

good” Paul continues. *“But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”* If we support the wickedness we find in our leaders we must understand that being put there by God, they will still remain in power. They may have been placed there for our good, but if not kept in check the evil of human nature may be to our detriment. There is a balance between authorities and subjects that we in a democracy have the power to uphold. That power is found in Matthew 22:21, *“Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.”* We can give respect to the office of any politician while at the same time make our voices heard where politics rise above God's laws.

“Wherefore, Paul says, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.” Living as Christians under a democracy that has altered moral guidelines presents us with a difficult task. How can we give ourselves completely to one party when we know all too well that power can be so easily inclined to corruption? We will suffer the wrath of misguided agendas but we are called by God to fight for “conscience sake” not merely accept the good with the bad.

Even way back in the times of the Old Testament judges you see the warnings, *“You will not spread false rumors. You will not lend support to the wicked by giving untrue evidence. You will not be led into wrongdoing by the majority...nor side with the majority to pervert the course of justice”* (Exodus 23:1-2).

We are not called to blindly support one side or another but to ensue that which is good and boldly speak against that which is contrary to the Will of God. It is the realm of our current political climate where we find ourselves in subjection to a present day wrath. Families are being used as pawns in a power struggle never before seen as our government closed its doors and abortion is becoming so accepted that some governors are advocating for post-birth end of life.

We must rely on the internal voice that resides within each of us, the consciousness enabled by the Holy Spirit and pray for those in authority so that the evil in high places will cease. The Power those in authority have is great. It can be used for good and it can be used for evil.

Nevertheless, it is given to them by God. *“For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.*

Our responsibility is great, our prayers are required, and the ability to move beyond political lines is paramount. Pray for God’s will above party lines and may our unity in the body of Christ change the moral fabric of this nation.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.