

1 Five Thoughts

2 Tuesday is Coming

- In three days, the nation goes to the polls.
- The country has been badgered and battered by attack ads, polls and policy-mongering for almost two years.
- Tuesday, it comes to an end, until the next go round.
- Here tonight, I'm offering some thoughts about the election which can be offered to the congregation without threatening our church's tax-exempt status.
- So I offer you five thoughts for Nov. 6th.

3 Promises, Promises

- In 2008, then senator Barak Obama, promised in his acceptance speech, a new kind of politics where both Republicans and Democrats would work together.
- On the night he became the presumptive Democratic Nominee, he promised that if elected, the government would start providing,
 - care for the sick,
 - good jobs for the jobless, and
 - future generations would notice that this was the time when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal . . . [and that]
 - this was the moment when we ended a war and secured our nation and restored our image as the last, best hope on Earth.
- Interestingly enough, this kind of rhetoric is frequently given by all political parties. It is something politicians do because so many people really do what to believe in a better future.
- Wasn't Barak Obama's campaign slogan, "Change, You can Believe in!" No doubt he and other politicians know that deep inside us all there is a hope for a better tomorrow.

4 "Do No Trust in Princes"

- Blogger, Rev. Paul McKay warns us about what can happen when we put too much hope in politicians.
- He calls it "the true believer syndrome."
 - It is so powerful, that we make heroes or messiahs out of ordinary people.
 - But, inevitably, our political heroes let us down.
 - We find out they have "feet of clay," and hope turns into despair.
 - We forget that the Bible tells us, "Do not put your trust in princes," and instead go out and anoint another messiah to fix the world for us.
 - But doesn't it say in the Bible, It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes. (Psa 118:9 NIV)

5 My First Thought

- Only God deserves our trust, devotion, and praise.

- Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. (Psa 146:1-3 NIV)
- Certainly, we should support our candidates and work with them to advance the causes that are important to us. But praise them? No. Lavish admiration should be reserved for God alone.
- To praise God is to give credit where credit is due, to the Lord who is our creator, redeemer and sustainer.
- As the Scripture says, God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. (Psa 46:1 NIV)
- When we offer praise we are saying that God is God, and we are not, nor is any politician who says they have the power to bring in a golden age of prosperity.

6 My Second Thought

- Put your trust in something eternal.
 - Again psalm warns us, Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. (Psa 146:3-4 NIV)
 - We take a chance when we rely on political leaders to help us because they are as flawed, weak, biased, transitory and limited as any human beings on Earth.
 - The point is that everyone has weaknesses and limitations, from far left to radical right, across the political spectrum.
 - The psalm warns us against putting our trust in mortals, because every one of us is made of dust and to dust we shall return.
 - Our complete faith should be directed toward the one eternal God, maker of heaven and earth.

7 My Third Thought

- Don't expect a candidate to make you happy.
 - With all the energy that goes into a presidential campaign, we can certainly forgive voters for wanting their favorite candidate to bring them joy and satisfaction.
 - But such an expectation is truly unrealistic and is often a recipe for disappointment.
 - Whether the victor is a Republican or a Democrat, he is going to let down large numbers of his supporters -- over the past decade, we have seen this with George W. Bush and Barack Obama as well.

8 Happy Are Those . . .

- But there is another path to take: Unreserved confidence in God.

- As the scriptures say, But happy are those who have the God of Israel as their helper, whose hope is in the LORD their God. He is the one who made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them. He is the one who keeps every promise forever, . . . (Psa 146:5-6 NLT)
- Better for us to look for happiness in a relationship with the Lord God, the one who made heaven and Earth, and who is eternally faithful.
- God is the source of every good and perfect gift and is a Lord who always keeps promises.
- With God, we have a leader who can be trusted to provide for us, and who never, ever flip-flops.

9 Happy Are Those . . .

- Even more importantly, when we focus on our relationships with God, we find happiness within ourselves.
- We ground ourselves in the great commandment of Jesus to love the Lord your God with all your heart . . . and your neighbor as yourself. (Luke 10:27).
- When we do this, we are not looking for a politician to bring us joy and satisfaction, but instead are finding it deep within our faith commitment with God and with the people around us.

10 My Fourth Thought

- Vote the Lord's Values.
 - In the 2004 presidential election, a group of people called "Values Voters" were seen as playing an important role in the reelection of George W. Bush.
 - But what are the values that should shape a Christian voter today?
 - According to Psalm 146, it is . . .
 - justice for the oppressed, and
 - food for the hungry
 - During the 1960s, justice for the oppressed was centered around the Civil Rights movement and desegregation, then to wipe out poverty, President Lyndon Johnson in 1965, declared his war on poverty, which included the creation of all kinds of welfare programs and entitlements for the poor.
 - While these movements were in part successful, they didn't necessarily bring in any golden age of prosperity. Why? because there are other godly values to consider.
 - In fact today, millions of innocent babies are being aborted every year, and many social programs to help the poor were so poorly executed they have not only failed to help the poor, but have ended up corrupting the poor and now are close to bankrupting the nation.

11 Godly Values

- When the Lord commands us to forgive our enemies and love our neighbors, the context is on one-on-one and near neighbor relationships.
- The role of government is primarily to protect the population and see that justice for all is in compliance.
- We want policemen to administer justice not forgiving the bank robbers because they feel sorry for them. Men do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving. Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold, though it costs him all the wealth of his house. (Prov 6:30-31 NIV)
- The government role is justice, our role is to help the needy with their burdens but not their responsibilities. As the apostle Paul has said, For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.” (2 Th 3:10 NIV)
- Today the values of our society is a mixture of secular ideas with politically correct biblical values.
- So then, let us not be fooled into believing government can solve all our problems and that man with the help of social engineering can produce a heaven on earth experience.

12 My Fifth Thought

- Take the Long View.
 - If you are joyful on election night, don't get overly elated. And if you are disappointed when the election is over, don't get too depressed.
 - The next presidential campaign will begin before you know it, and the political pendulum will begin to swing in the other direction.
 - As Christians, the most important leader in our lives is the Lord Almighty, and Psalm 146 reminds us that the LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD! (v. 10).
 - When we give praise to God, we are joining a community of faithful people who are linked together across the generations.
 - Election days may be divisive and difficult, but they do not prevent us from looking up to God together and taking the long view of human history.

13 God is on the Throne

- If your candidate wins, praise the Lord! If your candidate loses, praise the Lord!
- If you are excited about the next four years, praise the Lord! If you are worried about what will happen next, praise the Lord!

- There is nothing that can happen on Election Day that should shift our focus away from giving praise to the God who has created us, redeemed us and sustained us throughout the course of our life.
- God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. (Psa 47:8 NIV)

14 Hurricane Sandy

15 God is on the Throne

- Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain. (Psa 48:1 NIV)
- The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice. (Psa 97:1 NIV)
- Your arm is endued with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, (Psa 89:13–15 NIV)
- Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods. (Psa 40:4 NIV)

16 Conclusion

- Why should we not trust in Princes, or mortal men?
 - Their power is limited.
 - They overstate what they can do for us.
 - They're clumsy—create more problems when they try to fix others.
 - Often corrupt and dishonest.

17 Conclusion

- Why should we trust in the Lord and praise Him?
 - He has the power to carry out his promises, He is the Almighty!
 - Always speaks the truth.
 - Knows how to intervene and provide the perfect solution.
 - Full of compassion, mercy, and abounds with love.