Are We Supporting the Right World Leaders?

<u>Mark 12:17</u>: (NASB) And Jesus said to them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they were amazed at him.



Politics. It is a word that represents a world of power, prestige and problems. It is a word that conjures up anger, division and disrespect. It is a word that often gives us a sense of retreat and uncomfortable acceptance. Sometimes we forget that the ideal perspective of political power is to serve the needs of the people. With the utter lack of tolerance society seems to have embraced in dealing with political and social issues, what role should a Christian play? Are we supposed to pick the side we think is the most just and righteous? Are we obliged to stand for principles? If so, what principles and what

about the need for compromise? Would that change anything? What would Jesus and the apostles do if they lived in our time? What should we do to best stand for our beliefs and discipleship?

Here in the United States we have presidential elections every four years, with a lot of state and local elections in between. Many of our listeners around the world have a right to vote in their respective elections. It is obvious that the worldwide venom between opposing sides is getting more corrosive and personally damaging. We want to take a step back and make sure we are not becoming caught up in the contentiousness. This program is a reminder about how to act before and especially after an election.

This is NOT a conversation about politics; it IS a conversation about being a faithful Christian:

<u>Galatians 5:13</u>: (KJV) For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

This is about Christian liberty and the ability to make choices on our own. Sometimes we see things differently than each other. <u>Romans 14</u> gives us principles of Christian liberty and tells us each man must follow his own conscience as they stand before God - *for the Lord is able to make him stand*. Having said that, we want to be clear that <u>Romans 14</u> is not about fundamentals like morality. We cannot bring our own morality to Christianity and say, well this is the way I think. There is no leeway with morality and integrity.



<u>Romans 14:1-5</u>: (NASB) 'Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not to have quarrels over opinions. ²One person has faith that he may eat all things, but the one who is weak eats vegetables only. ³The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. ⁴Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. ⁵One person values one day over another, another values every day the same. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

While this podcast is not about politics, we will look into the Scriptures that help us better understand our role. There are different Christian perspectives. We will discuss the principles to provide our listeners the tools to review the Scriptures and make decisions according to their conscience.

The New Testament speaks about our social and political responsibilities in some detail:

<u>Romans 13:1-2</u>: (NASB) ¹Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. ²Therefore whoever **resists** <**498**> authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

The apostle is saying we should not organize ourselves against authority.

Does God establish our governments? We will address the answer towards the end of this segment.

What does it mean to not resist authority?

Resists: Strongs #498 antitassomai; to range oneself against, i.e. oppose

Online Bible Greek Lexicon: 1) to range in battle against

"Range" is an old military term used for placing soldiers in a specific platoon with a specific function to attack or resist. It is organized resistance and can also mean to oppose or disagree intensely.

There are things we are supposed to "range" against:

<u>James 4:6</u>: (NASB) But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, GOD is opposed <498> to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

There is another kind of resistance we should be involved in:

<u>James 4:7</u>: (NASB) Submit therefore to God. *Resist* <436> the devil and he will flee from you.

Resist: Strongs #436 anthistemi; to stand against, i.e. oppose

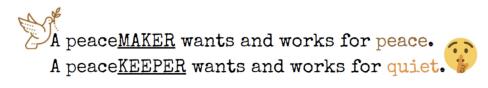
The King James Version translates this word as "resist" and "withstand"

We do not fight against Satan; we withstand him. God does the fighting for us, which is why we wear the armor of God.

Take care to stand for righteousness without joining with others who press (socially or politically) for righteousness.

However we interpret our stand when it comes to our secular world, one thing is for sure - we must ALWAYS keep Jesus' teachings and example first. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus shows us how to become his true followers. The Beatitudes all point to being peacemakers.

What is the difference between peaceMAKING and peaceKEEPING? We are all familiar with the expression, "I just want some peace and quiet."



PeaceKEEPERS avoid conflict but the issue is never really settled. In most cases, we are supposed to be peaceMAKERS but settle for being peaceKEEPERS. Peacemaking is much harder than peacekeeping. The seventh level of the Beatitudes is being a peacemaker.





Episode 1025:
Should We Be Peacemakers?

Here is how Christian peacemaking works in relation to our present political and social pressures:



To be a Christian is to understand WHERE our absolute life and death loyalty belongs!

We will be looking at the Beatitudes as rungs on a ladder.



<u>Matthew 5:3</u>: (NASB) Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The first rung of successful peacemaking is humility.

Humility in relation to peacemaking - we cannot be elevated to a position of influence without humility:

<u>Romans 12:9-10</u>: (NASB) ⁹Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

Humility is the basis for anything godly to have a chance to grow. Jesus was a wonderful example of humility, as he did everything the Father would have him to do. On the other hand, Satan completely crushed humility and did everything he wanted to do, as he wanted to be like the Most High.

Jesus' own perspective on secular matters when he was before Pilate:

John 18:36-37: (NASB) ³⁶Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, my kingdom is not of this realm. ³⁷Therefore Pilate said to him, So you are a king? Jesus answered, you say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth...

If my kingdom were of this world my servants would be fighting - he states he is a king, but not of this world.

Jesus KNOWS the object of God's plan is to replace the kingdoms of this earth:

<u>Daniel 2:44</u>: (NASB) In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

It is important to note that the current governments are run by Satan and will be destroyed - not renovated - and created from the ground up.

John 12:31 tells us Satan is the ruler of this world and will be cast out.

In <u>2 Corinthians 4:4</u>, Satan is called the god of this world. We are told he has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. Some people believe if only the right people could come into power, we can govern ourselves and get better and better. Greed and arrogance make sure that will never happen.

Let's return to the question from <u>Romans 13:1-2</u> where it states for there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Does God establish our governments?

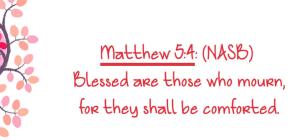


We have said, "The kingdoms of this world are under Satan's control," and "God establishes authority." Does this mean God and Satan are working together? NO! God ALLOWS or permits governmental authorities to be put in place, and they will ultimately carry out His plan. God's plan is bigger than anything we can imagine, and He does not interfere with our free moral agency. He does allow

leaders to be in place to accomplish certain things at certain times. The kingdom

of God, according to the <u>Daniel 2:44</u> prophecy, will crush and put an end to all of these kingdoms.





The second rung of successful peacemaking is the willingness and ability to feel hurt – having a heart.

Mourning in relation to peacemaking - feel the pain of your own loss and losses of others:

Romans 12:15: (NASB) Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

When dealing with social and political issues and pressures, we should have the ability to mourn with those on both sides. Mourning is good when we experience and observe loss. Knowing that the pain of loss is acceptable and that we are promised comfort puts the whole experience in a godly perspective.

To those who are politically opposed to our way of thinking, we run the risk of wanting them to fail because we think our way is better. We might badmouth them or delegitimize them. <u>Romans 14:10</u> reminds us *why do you regard your*

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brother with contempt? This is no way to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.



Humility and having a heart help us realize that our place is in support of Christ's kingdom while feeling the infirmities of a world that struggles to find direction as they clamor for their preferential human leadership.

Stand in compassion above the fray!

It sounds like being the best Christian we are capable of being, is the basis for our being good citizens.

Are we supposed to depend on our governments to be just and righteous? What if they are not?

This is a hard question. To even think about worldly organizations and governments upholding godly principles is often a waste of time. The Apostle Paul walks us through the appropriate balance. Remember, he did not politically challenge the slavery of his day, but he instead instructed us on how to be examples within it.

Paul continues to instruct us on our social and political responsibilities in Romans:

<u>Romans 13:3-4</u>: (NASB) ³For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; ⁴for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

Jesus did not organize his followers to subvert Roman rule because God allowed the authority of Rome. Jesus and the apostles never interfered with earthly rulers. They taught us to obey laws, respect the office of authority, pay our taxes, and except where they conflict with God's laws (<u>Acts 4:19, 5:29</u>), to offer no resistance to any established law (<u>Romans 13:1-7</u>, <u>Matthew 22:21</u>).

We are to do what is good in the context of an imperfect government - work with diligence, be kind, be respectful and be a good person.

A peace<u>MAKER</u> wants and works for peace. A peace<u>KEEPER</u> wants and works for quiet.



To be a Christian is to be aware of HOW we must act because of our allegiance!

Everything must come under our allegiance to God through Christ.

SHOW NOTES

FRONTLINE is an investigative journalism program that produces documentaries on the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) here in the United States. The audio clips come from an interview with a man named Frank Luntz, a political strategist and someone who takes polls of people to get their political opinions.

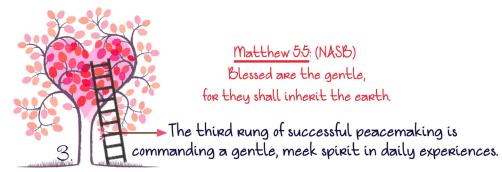
In speaking about what makes great nations fall, he said there is always something that has been introduced into that system that undermines and eventually destroys that system.



(1)) Social media poison, America's Great Divide: Frank Luntz Interview, FRONTLINE,

If you study history, it's like a disease that comes in, and there's no cure for it. For us, that disease is social media because it actually rewards not just negativity, but there's no differentiation between fact and fiction. There's no differentiation between those who know what they're saying and those who are just making it up. And because it is instantaneous, you can't fix it when you're wrong. And so, we now live by the latest tweet... The politicians create the poison, but social media is the system by which it is delivered. And make no mistake - it is in all of us now. And it's wrecking us; it really is.

This is a very sober warning. When dealing with matters such as politics, social issues, elections, preferences, and people's rights, it gets even worse. We need to be careful to make sure we are looking at factual representations instead of opinions, and unfortunately, we thrive on opinion.



Gentleness is built upon humility and heart. These two elements open our responses to be measured. A measured response is generally a gentle response.

Gentleness in relation to peacemaking - to be gentle is to be understanding. This means listening:

Romans 12:16: (NASB) Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly...



Think of a brain surgeon - bold in their profession but so gentle in their execution. We need to take a "Selah" moment, used in the Psalms to mean "pause and consider." Pause and consider what we stand for, so that we do not get caught up in the emotion of political frenzy. Remember our allegiance is to God.

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We may be right but presenting ourselves totally wrong.

Jesus' own perspective on secular matters:

<u>Matthew 6:9-10</u>: (NASB) ⁹Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Satan is *the god of this world*, but only under the control and allowance of God. The winning or losing of an election is within the overriding providence of God that allows us to find the good in it for us.

How does this help us not be so disappointed, angry or worse when our preferred candidate does not win?

It is important to realize that if we believe in God's providence, we must not let it be lip service or empty talk. We should not say we believe God is going to take care of everything and then be upset or angry when it does not happen the way we wanted. We need to live our professions of believing in God's providence regardless our preferred political or social outcome.

Jesus' focus was the kingdom:

<u>Revelation 11:15</u>: (NASB) Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and he will reign forever and ever.

Jesus knew his mission was to save mankind. He taught his followers to look forward to the future kingdom, but until it arrives, to live by its principles in this sinful world. We are to leave the wrath part to God.

<u>2 Corinthians 5:18-20</u>: (NASB) ¹⁸Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Being an ambassador for Christ makes gentleness easier to administer! An ambassador is a representative in a foreign land. First, we should have a reconciling attitude and spirit. Second, we should be an ambassador or representative for Christ and his kingdom.

Should Christians take part in the political process and vote or not? There are good points on both sides.

VOTING PROS

 I am a citizen and tax payer. It is my responsibility to give input. I do not want to be involved in the system, but I can express my point of view as a taxpayer.

2. We vote for candidates who will overturn moral wrongs. We are to reverse the corroding effects of sin wherever we can.

3. Christians as a whole can make up a powerful voting block to elect candidates who protect our rights, such as allowing us to worship.

4. While our citizenship is in heaven, our families still have to live on earth now and for the foreseeable future.

VOTING CONS

1. It is a waste of time and energy trying to fix the world now because it is in the process of being torn down and replaced. Only God is the solution to the world's problems.

2. Taking the time to cast an informed vote requires much study and time devoted to something that is not godly. Our time is better spent elsewhere.

3. Jesus told us his kingdom is not of this world. Therefore, we are not of this present evil order of things. Romans 12:2 says not to be conformed to this world, meaning do not be entangled by the things of this world. We should remain neutral but not complain if things do not go the way we want them to.

4. All elections will be choosing the lessor of two evils, which is still choosing evil.

We see things through the eyes of what we believe is most important as Christians. We are not here to tell our listeners "no" or "yes" on their conviction. We remind all of us to make sure our conviction is upon godly principles and doing that which Jesus would do. Let our spiritual conscience be our guide.



Matthew 5:6: (NASB) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

The fourth rung of successful peacemaking is an insatiable appetite for godliness and righteousness.

Once we are humble, have a heart, and gentleness has begun to gel, we are in a wide-open position to be not only fed but nourished and satisfied by godly righteousness.

Hungering and thirsting for righteousness in relation to our becoming peacemakers - to have a fundamental, instinctive desire for godly righteousness keeps us stable:

Romans 12:16: (NASB) ... Do not be wise in your own estimation.

Resisting the pride of our own minds as we relate to others opens us to possibilities for peacemaking.



For a Christian, peacemaking is only possible in our social and political world when we have our minds thoroughly set upon those things which are above!

Our influence on the world around us is not sound unless we are putting God's word above all else.

When we see corruption and hypocrisy in government, should we not call it out and stand against it?

It is always appropriate to stand against any unrighteousness. What does that look like? Because we are ambassadors of Christ in this world, we are IN it, but not OF it. This means that we realize the problems of corruption and injustice are not fixable here and now but will be corrected by God later.

As we discussed with the subject of voting, <u>John 17:14-16</u> talks about Jesus and his followers being in the world but not of the world. It is a little like being in the water without getting wet.



For those Christians who use their liberty to opt-out of voting, could it be said they want the benefits of a democracy without taking the time to participate in it? That they let someone else secure their freedoms or overthrow a dangerous dictator while they stay home waiting for God's future kingdom?

This is a debatable question, but everyone has a role to play in society. A typical person may like to eat hamburgers. Does that mean you must work in a slaughterhouse in order to enjoy a hamburger? No. We are willing to let others do certain things while enjoying the benefits. This is how society works. If we take the position not to vote, we would say we are supportive of others voting but not participating in such things.

SHOW NOTES

Paul continues to instruct us on our social and political responsibilities in Romans:

<u>Romans 13:5</u>: (NASB) Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience's sake.

For conscience's sake is a key point. Even though those in power likely have little or no respect for God and His plan, being a righteous person within this unholy environment is a powerful indicator of our allegiance.

A peace<u>MAKER</u> wants and works for peace. A peace<u>KEEPER</u> wants and works for quiet.

To be a Christian is to know WHY we are attentive to our world but ultimately not loyal to it.

The children are listening, America's Great Divide: Frank Luntz Interview, FRONTLINE, PBS

• I know what the future is, and if we do not change this course right now, our children will grow up in an environment where there is no compromise, where there is no cooperation. Our children are being taught to be judgmental at a time when we should be more open than we've ever been. They're taught that their opponents are stupid or destructive, or even worse. Our kids are taught to bully. Our kids are taught to ignore. It's not just how adults treat each other; our children are watching. Our kids are watching.

What is even more important is that God is watching. When we find ourselves getting upset over election results, we need to do better. We are supposed to be standing above the fray as the light of the world. Let us live up to what is expected of us by God through Christ.



Once we are humble, have a heart, are gentle in spirit and have been feeding on and drinking in righteousness, how can we help but desire to be merciful as Jesus was?

As a Christian, whatever political side we lean towards, whether we vote or not, where is our mercy? Mercy should be shown to everyone regardless of any election results.

Mercy in relation to our becoming peacemakers: To be merciful is to give leeway regarding people's opinions and platforms. It makes the assumption they are searching for the right thing, as we cannot read their heart. We need to rise above finding ourselves judging others.

Romans 12:17: (NASB) Never pay back evil for evil to anyone....

If we do not get out of our own way regarding any thoughts of retaliation, we leave no room for peace.



We cannot be like Jesus unless we are merciful, and therefore cannot bridge any gaps between us without this Christlike attribute.

Jesus' own perspective on secular matters:

<u>John 19:10-12</u>: (NASB) ¹⁰So Pilate said to him, you do not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you, and I have authority to crucify you? ¹¹Jesus answered, you would have no authority over me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered me to you has the greater sin. ¹²As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release him, but the Jews cried out saying, If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar.

Jesus accepted the sinful acts of others that led to his death as God's providence. He had to die because humanity needed saving. The governments needed replacing but it was not time to organize his followers in that effort.

A godly conscience sees events through God's eyes. Do we see our political opinions and preferences through God's eyes?

Daniel thanks God for being able to see the answer to the king's dream:

<u>Daniel 2:19-22</u>: (NASB) ¹⁹Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven; ²⁰Daniel said, Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him. ²¹It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. ²²It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him.

Merriam-Webster:

Epoch: noun

an event or a time marked by an event that begins a new period or development

An example of an epoch is the Gospel Age (the time when the gospel message was spread) which came after the epoch of the Jewish Age (the time when God dealt exclusively with natural Israel).

We are to focus on our highest priorities to direct our peacemaking efforts, as it is all in God's hands. Ultimate peacemaking is not maintaining the governments of this world. Our peacemaking responsibility is to maintain the righteousness of Christ so HIS government can reign forever and ever. We need to be good citizens along the way, standing for righteousness the way the apostles did, living in an unjust world in the highest way possible.



Matthew 5:8: (NASB) Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

The sixth rung of successful peacemaking is godly intentions behind all of one's actions.

Once we are humble, have a heart, are gentle in spirit, have been feeding on and drinking in righteousness, and have engaged in merciful actions, we now seek to hold on to these attributes. We desire purity in every thought and feeling.

Purity of heart does not automatically come with our proclamation that Jesus is our Savior! We have to grow into that purity.

Purity of heart in relation to our becoming peacemakers and dealing with the political and social issues of our world:

Romans 12:17: (NASB) ...Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

One of the sad things in our world today is when someone on one side of an issue does something good, the other side almost never acknowledges it.

<u>Proverbs 3:27</u>: (NASB) Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.

We shy away from giving credit to "that" side. We have to rise above this, as we might be the only light some people see.

Giving respect to the highest standards lets those around you know what you stand for. This is not easy, especially when opinions and preferences hide principles from all of us.



By God's grace, we are not required to achieve purity in our actions, but we must rise to the heights of a pure heart if we are to make peace.

There is an incredible amount of work set out for us to do here, and we still have not risen to the level of peacemaker.



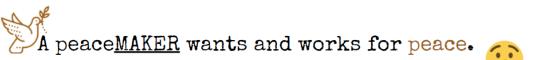
All of these things to work on and we know we cannot change the world now! Is it all worth it?

The most important thing for any Christian at any time in history is walking in Jesus' sacrificial footsteps. It is so important to remember that Jesus did NOT convert the world 2,000 years ago. He did call out a few to follow him whose faithfulness would contribute to saving the world later.

It is a matter of understanding the timeline of God's plan. We need to be true examples of good citizens - whatever that means to us - at its highest level in terms of our Christianity and our loyalty to God first.

Paul continues to instruct us on our social and political responsibilities: <u>Romans 13:6-7</u>: (NASB) ⁶For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. ⁷Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

Render to all - builds upon the previous thought in <u>verse 5</u>. Obeying government rules - not just from fear of punishment but *for conscience's sake* is saying be complete in your good citizenship. There may be different interpretations of this verse. We just need to make sure our interpretations come from our highest Christian principles. This exhibits a trustworthy character, which is a witness to the Gospel.



A peace<u>KEEPER</u> wants and works for quiet.

This sounds almost trite, but it is not! There is a very important distinction: Peacemakers are willing to go beneath the surface to find a way to alleviate the problems. We need to be working in a reconciling manner in our lives right now.



To be a Christian is to know who is worthy of our cooperation and who is worthy of our loyalty.

The world we live in is worthy of our cooperation, but God in heaven, whom we serve, is worthy of our loyalty. We cannot confuse the two - we must live our conscience so we are fully taking care of those things in the proper order with the proper focus on the highest goals.

Back to an audio clip - Frank Luntz ran focus groups during and after various United States presidential debates to find out public opinion. Having to listen to the strong emotions on both sides, he became discouraged.

Nobody wants to learn, America's Great Divide: Frank Luntz Interview, FRONTLINE,

• I don't know if this is recoverable. And remember, the people you have sitting in this chair have much more important jobs than I do, have been in places I've never been. But what they haven't heard are the voices of so many thousands of Americans who have told me just how unforgiving they are, how bitter they



are towards the other side. Everybody wants to speak; nobody wants to listen. Everybody wants to be heard; nobody wants to learn.

Hearing that hurts. We must not be described in this way. Let us *not* be the ones who only want to speak but do not want to listen. Let us *not* be the ones who are so hurt and bitter that we cannot acknowledge the good things in someone who is on the other side. If not, what does that say about us? Is that Christlike?

We must rise above...

After all those rungs, we FINALLY get to the seventh rung - being a peacemaker. Look at all of the important preparatory work it took to get to this point.



All of the Beatitudes were building towards this! Jesus now announces *Blessed* are the peacemakers, because THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF GOD. He is announcing the heavenly calling, which is now available for faithful Christians.

Jesus is telling us this is where we want to get to: Follow me, live the way I live, and you, too, can become peacemakers.

With all of the previous steps of development, we can now see clearly, think righteously and act appropriately. This is an *uncommon* place to be, that of a peacemaker. The world has forgotten about this. Being at this level enables us to contribute to our society in a wholesome, Christian-based way. Be the light in the context of the mess of all the political wrangling. Whatever election we are looking at, however it turns out, we need to be the light that has graciousness and understanding with God's will and providence foremost in our minds.

While we cannot change the world now, we can elevate our own environment by peaceMAKING. How do we act as peacemakers in this world? We cannot be afraid to deal with hard things. We have to be willing to ask the hard questions, to go into the hard issues with those who may see things differently. This is what Jesus did. He was never afraid of any hard issue.



We can make each other's lives better, fuller and calmer. This is like the "Selah" (pause and consider) moment we talked of earlier. We need to bring calm to the storms of political wrangling. We are not saying that we need to be involved in politics. We need to be a light

Kewind SHOW NOTES

that can illuminate through example how to handle the difficult emotions and feelings swirling around world and national issues.

Peacemaking in relation to our becoming peacemakers: While we cannot change the world now, we can elevate our own environment by peacemaking - that is what Jesus did.

Romans 12:18: (NASB) If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

We are not now able to bring peace to all, but we can be examples of it. We can be at peace with all men. We cannot control how others feel about being at peace with us. How are we handling the part that we can control? Is it in a Christlike manner?



Our calling is no simple or easy matter. We will be entrusted with reconciling the world to God in the future and therefore must heartily apply all peacemaking principles here and now!

We must not stop short of becoming peacemakers in our world!

Jesus' own perspective on secular matters: Context - Pharisees and Herodians were sent to entrap him:

<u>Mark 12:14-17</u>: (NASB) ¹⁴They came and said to him, Teacher, we know that you are truthful and defer to no one; for you are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not? ¹⁵Shall we pay or shall we not pay? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, why are you testing me? Bring me a denarius to look at. ¹⁶They brought one. And he said to them, whose likeness and inscription is this? And they said to him, Caesar's. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they were amazed at him.

Jesus simply did not have the time or the need to engage in petty secular complaints.



Two questions apply to Christians around the world:

- 1. Are we supporting the right world leaders?
- 2. Who would Jesus vote for?

Jesus was bound by the Jewish Law and would have been steeped in the Jewish tradition, thought and process in how

leaders came about. Under the Law, God appointed the leadership prior to the days when Israel demanded a king.

Rick's opinion: Jesus would have stood outside of all discussion because he knew his kingdom would put an end to all the political entities on earth. He would not have voted on this or that here in Satan's world. He saw the kingdoms of this world crumbling and knew his kingdom would eventually replace them in God's time.

<u>Galatians 6:7-10</u>: (NASB) ⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. ⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ⁹Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. ¹⁰So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

For some of us as Christians, part of doing good is expressing our perspective in matters of voting, etc. Others would say, doing good means avoiding all of that. We need to do whatever our highest Christian conscience directs us to do. We need to use our spirituality and scriptural reasoning.



Matthew 5:10: (NASB)

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The eighth rung of successful peacemaking is suffering harshness because we actually stood for and pointed to something higher than most would ever consider! This is how Jesus lived.

The rest of the Beatitudes are describing the result of becoming a true peacemaker:

Now we move into the "underbelly" of peacemaking. The ability to stand for and point to something higher brings persecution because we are not falling in line with everyone else's criticisms and hate. As Christians, we need to stand above the fray.

Jesus says that once we get to that peacemaker status, persecutions *will* follow. Then he says: Blessed are you when people insult you and falsely say vile things about you when you stand up for my precepts.

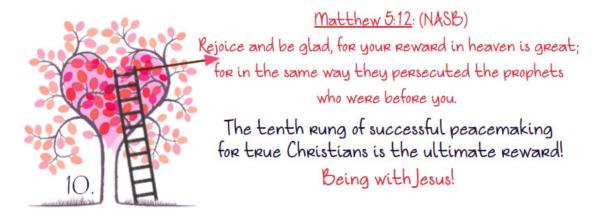


Matthew 5:11: (NASB)

Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

The ninth rung of successful peacemaking is being persecuted with evil intentions. This is what brought Jesus to his death, and yet he joyfully accepted that fate for the sake of bringing peace to the world!

This is what got Jesus killed - false accusations of evil. Jesus says we are blessed in that circumstance.



Your reward in heaven is great. Faithfulness has the advantage of being blessed with being with Christ.

Currently we are in a volatile election environment. This is true all over the world. How do we stand as Christians in light of all of these things going on?



Our efforts at peacemaking in a sinful world of unrest and divisiveness will often provoke persecution. This is NOT bad as long as we are living and exampling -

the peace of Christ!

We have to be the example. We are not trying to encourage engaging in politics. We are encouraging everyone to live in a Christlike fashion. We as individuals are left to decide many things about the way we live our Christian lives.

What we do is our own business; however, we must make sure that our business is the Father's business. Remember Jesus at 12-years-old saying, I must be about my Father's business. He reminds us that it is all about God's will for us.

We must look at political strife, and even violence, through the lens of knowing the world will be at peace through God's hand in establishing the kingdom. It gives us calm and peace in our hearts to know He has all in control and will work out the inequities, pain and suffering in the world. We need to show that certainty in our own character rather than getting caught up in the maelstrom of emotions rocking our society in this day.

The world should see our light, shining through us from God and Jesus. It should bring calm and peace to them because we are reconcilers as representatives of Jesus. We need to remember that our primary allegiance always lies with God in heaven. To Him be the glory, Amen!



So, are we supporting the right world leaders? For Jonathan and Rick (and Julie) and Christian Questions... Think about it...!



Join us next week for our podcast on November 9, 2020 Ep. 1151: Has the Bible Been Mistranslated and Misunderstood? (Part I)

Bonus Material and Study Questions

In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock. – Thomas Jefferson

Peacemaking is hard - here is an example:

Paul called Peter out in front of everyone. How does this keep the peace? By living the truth:

<u>Ephesians 2:13-16,19-22</u>: (NASB) ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

Jesus himself broke down the ages-long barrier between people. He did it through Peter's vision:

¹⁵by abolishing in his flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in himself he might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.



Peacemaking Principle: Our ONLY pattern for peacemaking is the instruction and example of Jesus.

¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, ²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the corner stone, ²¹in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Peacemaking Principle: Within the body there is NO difference between members. Make peace by adhering to the core equality we ALL find in Christ and give God's spirit a place to dwell.





Several Scriptures that reveal the relationship between God, His chosen and worldly governments:

<u>1 Peter 2:13-17</u>: (NASB) ¹³Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. ¹⁵For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. ¹⁶Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. ¹⁷Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

<u>Romans 13:1-7</u>: (NASB) ¹Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. ²Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. ³For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; ⁴for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. ⁵Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. ⁶For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. ⁷Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

<u>Titus 3:1-3</u>: (NASB) ¹Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, ²to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. ³For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

<u>Proverbs 8:14-16</u>: (NASB) ¹⁴Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, power is mine. ¹⁵By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice. ¹⁶By me princes rule, and nobles, All who judge rightly.

Jeremiah 27:5-8: (NASB) ⁵I have made the earth, the men and the beasts which are on the face of the earth by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and I will give it to the one who is pleasing in My sight. ⁶Now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and I have given him also the wild animals of the field to serve him. ⁷All the nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson until the time of his own land comes; then many nations and great kings will make him their servant. ⁸It will be, that the nation or the kingdom which will not serve him, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine and with pestilence, declares the LORD, until I have destroyed it by his hand.



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Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1150: Are We Supporting the Right World Leaders?

https://christianquestions.com/character/1150-politics/



- 1. What does resisting authority mean? What should we resist instead? (See James 4:6-7)
- 2. What is the difference between a peace**maker** and a peace**keeper**? How does humility help us be peacemakers? (See John 18:36-37, Romans 12:9-10, Daniel 2:44)
- 3. Why is it important to be willing and able to feel hurt? How does this relate to our responsibilities in this world? (See Matthew 5:4, Romans 12:15, 14:10)
- 4. How does gentleness relate to peacemaking? (See Matthew 5:5, Romans 12:16)
- 5. What does it mean to be hungering and thirsting for righteousness? How does this apply to peacemaking? (See Matthew 5:6, Romans 12:16)
- 6. What role does mercy play in peacemaking? (See Matthew 5:7, Daniel 2:19-22)
- 7. How can we develop purity of heart? How does that help our peacemaking work? (See Matthew 5:8, Romans 12:17, Proverbs 3:27)
- 8. Why do we want to be peacemakers? How does this help God's plan? (See Matthew 5:9, Romans 12:18)
- 9. What can we expect to come as a result of being a successful peacemaker? What reward will we receive? (See Matthew 5:10-12)
- 10. What did Paul teach about our social and political responsibilities as Christians? (See Acts 4:19, 5:29, Romans 13:1-7, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Galatians 6:7-10)
- 11. What was Jesus' perspective on secular matters? What was his focus? (See John 17:14-16, 19:10-12, Revelation 11:15)
- 12. What do you consider to be your social and political responsibilities? Why?

