

# Jesus in Our King and His Word is Our Platform

*This Cultural Moment, Pt. 8*  
*Psalm 2 & Acts 4:23-31*

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# I. INTRODUCTION

**a. So, as we announced last week, this morning, we are going to be specifically talking about the election that is happening this Tuesday.**

- i. And before we dive into that, I just want to make some preliminary comments...
- Let's all take a deep breath, and just acknowledge that this has been a tough year...
    1. The combination of the isolation of a pandemic and the divisiveness and passion of a presidential election is a recipe for a lot of strained relationships and stress.
    2. And this morning, we are not here to unite around politics, a political candidate, or even a flag...this morning, we are united around what we just sang about...the name of Jesus Christ.
    3. And my hope and my goal for our time together this morning is not to point you to a candidate or a side...but to ground all of our hope in our true King, Jesus...who will one day be not just our God but our political leader after He returns.
  - With that said, this morning, I will not be endorsing a candidate nor a side...in fact, I will not even hint at a candidate or side.



1. My goal this morning is for us to study God's Word and allow His Word to guide how we, as followers of Jesus, can faithfully engage in the political process of our country.
- Next, I know there are some who think that it is not appropriate for us to talk about politics in the church.
  1. I understand the sentiment. Politics is incredibly divisive. And the church as a whole has not been a great example on how to disagree gracefully.
  2. And why import the stress from out there into here? Totally fair question.
  3. But, I believe there are times where it is important to address politics specifically because God's Word addresses it and because we need to fight for unity in this divisive times.
  4. And that means going to God's Word together, being humble together, and hearing from God together.
- Lastly, if you have questions...
  1. [slido.com #917](https://www.slido.com)

## II. PRAYER



### III. PSALM 2 & ACTS 4

- i. This morning, we need to start with a Bible Study and then apply what we read to the issues...

- Psalm 2:

<sup>2</sup> Why do the nations rage  
and the peoples plot in vain?

<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers take counsel together,  
against the Lord and against his Anointed,  
saying,

<sup>3</sup> "Let us burst their bonds apart  
and cast away their cords from us."

<sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens laughs;  
the Lord holds them in derision.

<sup>5</sup> Then he will speak to them in his wrath,  
and terrify them in his fury, saying,

<sup>6</sup> "As for me, I have set my King  
on Zion, my holy hill."

<sup>7</sup> I will tell of the decree:  
The Lord said to me, "You are my Son;  
today I have begotten you.

<sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I will make the nations  
your heritage,  
and the ends of the earth your possession.

<sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron  
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

<sup>10</sup> Now therefore, O kings, be wise;  
be warned, O rulers of the earth.

<sup>11</sup> Serve the Lord with fear,  
and rejoice with trembling.

<sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son,  
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,  
for his wrath is quickly kindled.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.



## **b. This Psalm was written by King David.**

- i. And King David is looking at the Kings and rulers of the world and observing how they are against God.
  - And David says that God is laughing at them.
    1. At their pretending to be powerful and sovereign.
- ii. **Why? Why Does God laugh at them?**
  - God is laughing and David knows it because God told David something about the future of the kingdoms of the world...
  - V.6 - God says...no, I have set my King over Zion...the Kingdom of God...who will rule for all of eternity.
    1. And then in v.7-9, David reminds us that when God made David King of Israel...that God made a covenant with David that His throne would be a throne that would last for all of eternity and it would be a the throne that would rule over the Kingdom of God.
  - V.7 - God says to David - YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.
    1. If your familiar with the Bible, you might be thinking...hmmm, doesn't God say something similar about Jesus?
    2. Yes!
    3. David is a foreshadow of God's true King who will sit on the throne of David for all of eternity. The Messiah...Jesus Christ.
    4. Psalm 2 is a messianic prophecy of King Jesus.



- iii. Here's what Psalm 2 is saying church...that God laughs at the Kings of the Earth because He has established His King who will rule for all of eternity...His Son, Jesus.
- If you follow Jesus...the Bible calls you first and foremost a citizen of the Kingdom of God...and Jesus is your King...and He is sitting on the throne.
    1. And there is nothing that is going to happen this week that is going to change that reality.
    2. Nothing will change this week.
    3. Our hope will not change...because our hope has nothing to do with America or an election...but is anchored in King Jesus whom we are awaiting His return.

**c. Now, what do we do with that?  
How does that impact the way that  
we should engage in the political  
process in our country?**

- i. Well, we are in luck this morning because Psalm 2 is one of those Psalms that the Apostles decided to interpret and teach on in the New Testament...and that makes my job in studying and teaching Psalm 2 a whole lot easier.
- So, let's turn in our Bibles to Acts 4
    1. Let me set the stage...Peter and the Apostles are in Jerusalem and they are starting the first church.
    2. Now, Peter heals a guys at the temple in front of a lot of people...and all these people are clearly amazed.
    3. And so, Peter and John start preaching the Gospel to everyone.



4. And this greatly troubled the Jews.
  5. And so, the Jewish officials arrested Peter and John...detained them overnight...questioned them the next day...and decided to release them out of fear of all the people who were still amazed that Peter healed a guy!
  6. And when they released them, they commanded them to no longer speak of Jesus to anyone.
  7. Obviously, a command that Peter and John were going to ignore.
- And that brings us to our text in Acts 4. Peter and John come back to their church after being detained...and in response to these events...they are going to have a little discussion about Psalm 2...that we just read.

1. *Acts 4:23-27 - <sup>23</sup> When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. <sup>24</sup> And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, <sup>25</sup> who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit:*

*[Psalm 2:1-2]*

*"Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'—*



*27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel.*

- ii. There are a couple of things I want us to observe in how this first church interpreted Psalm 2 in their context..
- First, notice how they too interpret Psalm 2 as a Messianic prophecy and they themselves believe that what Psalm 2 teaches is that the true King and the anointed one is not David Himself...but Jesus Christ. V.27 makes that clear.
  - But secondly, I want you to notice how they took what David said 1000 years earlier in Psalm 2 about Kings and Rulers who plot against God and they applied that to their current socio-political context in Jerusalem in the first century.
    1. They quote Psalm 2 and then in Acts 4:27...they say that in their context...the kings and rulers who are against God in their day are represented by Herod the Roman client King over Palestine and Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor over the province of Judea.
    2. And then as for the peoples who plot against God...they cite the gentiles...so the Romans...and then they also cite the people of Israel.
    3. The religious establishment of the day...as plotting against God.



- So, I have two sides here who are against God...
  1. On one side I have Rome, and they are against God.
  2. On the other side I have the People of Israel...and they are also against God according to the text.
  3. Both held a certain. measure of responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus and both persecuted the first church established by Jesus.
- You could look at it this way...we have two sides here in Acts.
  1. We have a political movement that rejects religion in their plot to attain power. That's Rome.
  2. We have another political movement that uses religion, that manipulates religion, in their plot to gain power...that's the people of Israel.

**d. And in the same way the Apostles applied Psalm 2 to their context, I believe we can apply both Psalm 2 and Acts 4 to our context.**

- i. Because when I look at our country and the two dominate ideological sides that dominate our politics...
  - I see one side that, in its extreme form, rejects religion in its plot to attain power.
  - And I see another side, in its extreme form, that manipulates religion in its plot to attain power.



- ii. And this morning, I believe that we as Christians should be aware of the worldviews that undergird these two sides, be aware how they are against God, and then ask what we should do as followers of Jesus in response.

## **IV. THE ISSUES**

### **a. So, let's dig into the issues a little bit.**

- i. I want to talk about both the left and the right...and worldviews that drive a lot of their ideology that Christians need to be careful they don't get caught in it.
  - Now, I am not saying that everyone on the left or everyone on the right subscribe to these worldviews.
  - But I am saying that these worldviews carry a lot of influence on these sides and we need to be aware of them.

### **b. So, let's start on the left.**

- i. I believe the left in our country primarily represents the side from Acts 4 that uses their rejection of religion to attain power.
  - The worldview that undergirds much of the ideology of the left is what I am going to call **SECULAR HUMANISM**.
    1. Secular = rejection of religion or God.
    2. Humanism = the glorification of the individual...almost the deification of humanity.



- So, this matters most when it comes to building a moral framework...
  1. Secular humanism rejects the idea that morality can come from outside of us...like God...and believes that each individual has the right to establish their own moral standards.
  2. And any institution or person who would seek to dictate a moral standard upon humanity must be rejected and eradicated.
- And this worldview is deeply problematic...
  1. This is why the left finds no moral problem with the practice of abortion.
  2. This is why the left is pushing an agenda to redefine things like marriage, sexuality, and gender.
  3. This is why the left believes that these things must be inserted into the curriculum in our schools...because we must not get in the way of any individual, especially our children, deciding for themselves their own moral standard.
  4. And this worldview is a threat to our religious freedoms in this country because this worldview believes that institutions such as the church that have a different moral standard should be silenced.
  5. To use their terminology...it is violence upon an individual to believe in an external source of our morality.



- ii. And so, Christians should be deeply troubled by this worldview and be very careful that we don't get enticed by this worldview.
- Because we believe in a God who has given us a moral standard to live by.
  - That He decides what is good and right, we don't!
  - And we believe that it is God's goodness, grace, and love to us that He has given us this moral standard because He knows what is best for us.
  - God has given us His Word so that humanity will flourish.
  - And the lie of secular humanism is that humanity can only flourish when everyone is free to establish their own morality...and we don't believe that is true.
- iii. Just like Rome in Acts 4, the left is no friend to the Kingdom of God and will persecute it.

### **c. Now, let's pick on the right.**

- i. I believe the right in our country primarily represents the side from Acts 4 that manipulates religion to attain power.
- The worldview that undergirds much of the ideology of the right is what I am going to call **CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM**.
    1. Maybe you've heard one of those sermons before...
    2. A sermon that quotes from the Old Testament...a popular one is 2 Chronicles 7:14...



3. *"14 if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

- And the sermon normally goes like this...
  1. They'll quote this verse.
  2. They'll declare that America is in danger of being punished by God.
  3. And that if we just do the right things, that God will heal America.
  4. And normally, that right thing to do for God to heal our land is the election of the republican nominee for President.
- The problem with this is that this particular verse...and most of the Old Testament...is specifically referring to a specific covenant and agreement that God made with the Nation of Israel.
  1. And it's bad biblical interpretation to ascertain that God has made the same type of covenant and agreement with America.
  2. But there are a lot of pastors that imply that God has made that agreement with America.

## ii. And here's why that's problematic

- First, it's a misuse of the Bible to stoke fear in people about how God might curse us if we don't vote for a particular candidate.
- Second, when you have a political party that markets itself as the side that cares about moral standards...and when you set that party up as God's party...then you essentially silence any criticism of that party...because to criticize this party is to criticize God.



1. Which allows corruption and sin in that party to go unchecked by the very ones who say they care about moral standards.
  2. And now, we have a massive hypocrisy problem when we have a political party that contains unchecked immorality yet we have religious leaders connecting God's endorsement to that party!
  3. And that is the exact thing that was happening in Jerusalem with the people of Israel that caused Jesus to flip all the tables at the temple.
  4. You had unjust practices happening with the stamps of approval from the Jewish leadership and it angered Jesus!
- So, today many who support the policies of the Trump administration have been vilified for seeking to hold the President accountable for his character, and his words, and untruthfulness.
  - Many who have pointed out that the rhetoric pointed towards immigrants, minorities, and refugees from the right has been at best unempathetic and at worst discriminatory have been vilified for offering that critique.
- iii. **And Christians should be deeply troubled at the idea of stamping God's endorsement on a particular party or a particular candidate...and giving any political party blanket support.**
- And just as with secular humanism, Christians should be careful not to get enticed by this worldview that is very prominent...especially amongst evangelicals.



## d. And so, yes, this year in 2020 we are in a bit of a conundrum.

- i. As I think of the candidates that we have before us, it's not an easy choice. There are things on both sides of the aisle that bother my conscience.
  - So, the question is...what do we do? How do we move forward?
  - Well, I'm not here today to tell you how to vote. But what I would like to do is help you apply a biblical worldview to the way that you engage the political process in our country.
    1. And to do that I am going to close our time by giving us four exhortations that should help us stay grounded as we decide how each of us will engage.

## V. FOUR EXHORTATIONS

### a. Exhortation #1: Jesus Is our King and His Word is our Platform.

- i. Let's go back to Acts 4 together and let's read the next verse after the Apostles identify Rome and the People of Israel as being opposed to God...
  - *V.29 - "And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness..."*
- ii. The people of the first church knew that they were politically homeless with threats from both sides.
  - But they also knew what their purpose was...to proclaim the Word of God boldly.



- And they needed boldness because to be faithful to proclaim the Word of God was going to bring about persecution and ridicule from both Rome and Israel.
  - And church, today in our context, to fully proclaim the Word of God with boldness without political influence...WILL MEAN...ridicule from left and the right.
- iii. **Psalm 2 makes it clear. Jesus is our King. And if He is our King, than His Word is our platform.**
- And this is important for us to understand because the Word of God will never change. We worship a God who is unchanging. He does not evolve based on cultural trends or currents.
  - But you know what does change all the time...
    1. Politicians! Political parties! Political platforms.
  - And the thing that Christians need to be careful of is that they don't interpret the Scriptures based on a political platform but rather the other way around...that they interpret political platforms based on Scripture.
    1. What this means...is that over time...as you stay faithful and grounded in Scripture...your politics, your affiliations, even your party will probably change.
    2. The Christian should pledge no allegiance to any party.
    3. They do not get to tell us what to do, how to vote, how to think, or what even to believe.
    4. We have God's Word to do that for us.



- iv. And what God has called us to as the church is to boldly proclaim His Word...even if that does not support a particular party's agenda...
- And that leads to Exhortation #2.

## **b. Exhortation #2: Get Used to Not Belonging Here!**

- i. If you're feeling like believing in the Bible is making this election difficult...well, I think that might be a sign that we're approaching this election in the right way.
- As we said earlier, as followers of Jesus, we are first and foremost citizens of the Kingdom of God and secondarily citizens of America or another nation.
  - The Bible calls us sojourners and exiles in 1 Peter 2.
  - We don't belong here. Our beliefs, our worldview, our morality...don't fit here in the Kingdoms of this world...
  - And so, we need to get used to being in his place like the early church in Acts 4...where they didn't really have a place in the socio-political institutions of their nation.
- ii. And so, I know that begs the question then...if we don't belong here...and we really don't have a home in the political arena...should we even engage in the process?
- Should we even vote? Or should we be more disengaged as we wait for Jesus to return?
  - If we should vote, who should we vote for or how should we make that decision?



iii. Great question! Let's me point us to two Scriptures that will help answer that question.

- Colossians 3:1-4

1. *"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*

*2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*

*3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."*

2. So, in other words, as a follower of Jesus...you have been promised an inheritance in the Kingdom of God...and so we should be looking forward to that rather than trying to preserve our life here.

3. Our life is hidden with Christ in God...we don't need to worry about our life here.

- But, look at Jeremiah 29:7. This verse gives us direct instructions on what we are to do while we are in exile here and we are waiting for the Kingdom of God.

1. *"But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare."*

- So, putting these two Scriptures together...here's what we get...

1. As people who don't belong here we should seek the things above trusting our lives to Christ.

2. So, we should not engage in the political process out of self-preservation, for personal gain, or out of fear - Col. 3.



3. However, we should seek the welfare of our town and love our neighbor - Jeremiah 29.
  4. So, we should engage in the political process out of love of our neighbors and a desire to see our town flourish.
- iv. **So, to put it plainly...Christians should be involved in the political process.**
- We should not be beholden to any party.
  - We should look to Scripture for guidance.
  - We should not vote out of fear.
  - And we should vote according to our conscience out of what we believe will most contribute to the flourishing of our town and our neighbors.
- v. **There it is...that is your voting guide...**
- And listen...what this means is that there are going to be people in our church who are very sincere and prayerful about how they engage in the political process...and through prayer and out of love of their neighbor...they are going to vote for President Trump.
    1. Knowing he is not perfect...still being troubled at many things...but they believed that was the best thing to do.
    2. And they have the freedom to do that and it was honoring to God.
  - And there are going to be people in our church who are very sincere and prayerful about how they engage in the political process...and through prayer and out of love of their neighbor...they are going to vote for Vice President Biden.
    1. Knowing he is not perfect...still being troubled at many things...but they believed that was the best thing to do.



2. And they have the freedom to do that and it was honoring to God.
- In fact, there might be people in our church who with the same sincerity and prayerfulness...decide not to vote at all, or vote third party, or write-in a candidate.
    1. And they have the freedom to do that and it's honoring to God.
  - But, with all of that said...that leads me to Exhortation #3.

### **c. Exhortation #3: Practice Empathy and Charity.**

- i. Let me say it as plainly as I can...
  - If you vote for President Trump...I am going to call upon you to have empathy for those who will be deeply grieved at his reelection.
    1. President Trump has been deeply hurtful to a number of different people in our country...including people in our church.
    2. And his reelection will feel like a gut-punch to them...because they don't believe the leader of their country values them equally.
    3. And that's valid.
    4. So, what it means to have empathy is to seek to put yourself in their shoes and not seek to invalidate how this President has made them feel.
    5. Just because they are grieved at his reelection doesn't mean they are full blown supporters of everything on the left.
    6. So, please, show empathy. Validate their hurt.



- If you vote for Vice President Biden...I am going to call upon you to have charity towards those who will be deeply grieved at his election.
  1. There are many sincere Christians who are deeply concerned about the direction that Vice President Biden will take out country.
  2. And those concerns are valid.
  3. And what it means to have charity is to give them the benefit of the doubt, to assume right motives in their vote, to assume they are seeking to honor God with their vote.
  4. Just because they are grieved at his election doesn't mean they are full blown supporters of everything on the right.
  5. Be charitable. Validate their concerns.
- ii. **Remember, as followers of Jesus, we don't belong in this Kingdom. We don't have an easy, clean choice.**
  - And we have the freedom to prayerfully make a choice according to our conscience.
  - The presidential election is not something that ought to break fellowship and friendships in the church.

#### **d. Exhortation #4: Pray**

- We need to pray for our nation and the aftermath of this election.
- We need to pray for unity in the church.
- We need to pray for those who will be grieved by Preident Trump's election.
- We need to pray for those who will be grieved by Vice President Biden's election.



- We need to pray that the church will be a breath of fresh air in these divisive times as we seek.
- i. **And so, church, let's pray together tomorrow night.**
- We are doing a virtual prayer night tomorrow night, Monday, November 2, at 8pm for about an hour.
  - Our staff is going to be at our office and we're going to livestream some worship and we will lead times of corporate prayer.
  - We encourage you to get together with your care group or community group to pray together.
  - If you can't get together with anyone, we are going to have a zoom call going on at the same time...we will be e-mailing out that Zoom link tomorrow to those on our newsletter list.
  - Jump on that zoom call and we're going to do prayer break outs during our livestream.
- ii. **But church, what our world needs right now is not one of the candidates on the ballot this week.**
- Our world needs a unified, faithful church who boldly proclaims the Word of God.
  - So, let's pray together that God would unite His church in the midst of these times.

## VI. PRAY

