

Responding to Political Turmoil w/ Wisdom

Proverbs 28 & 29

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. I am not sure if you knew this, but there is an election coming up.
 - 1. I do think this is an important election
 - 2. I do think our country is in a crazy place
 - 3. Whoever wins will have a dramatic impact
 - 4. I am not surprised by any of it; we've seen the writing on the wall
 - 5. In a week our country and the world will be in upheaval
 - 6. I am not sure if, realistically, that can be avoided
- B. Jesus says elders & me are responsible to shepherd the flock entrusted to us. I don't know who will win. I don't know how the world will respond.
- C. But how will WE respond no matter what the outcome? Tensions are high. People are short-fused.
- D. During the Civil War, only 10% of the nation actually was involved. We could be on the brink of that legitimately. We could be on the brink of serious persecution.
- E. I have observed from a place of quiet for the last few months while i've watched other pastors and influential Christian voices stir up anger (not all, no)
- F. As the beating of cream yields butter and striking the nose causes bleeding, so stirring up anger causes quarrels. (Prov 30:33)*
- G. Scoffers set a city aflame, but the wise turn away wrath. Prov 29:8*
- H. Will our country descend into this? Is this what we want? Is this what we need? Is this what will fuel the gospel moving forward and honor Jesus?

II. How did we get here?

- A. [2] When a land transgresses, it has many rulers, but with a man of understanding and knowledge, its stability will long continue.*
- B. 2 Kings 15-17 → When the people aren't following the Lord, they reap a terrible leader
- C. 2 When there is moral rot within a nation, its government topples easily. But wise and knowledgeable leaders bring stability.*
- D. Isaiah 30 & Isaiah 56
- E. Romans 1 → When people walk away from the Lord, he gives them up to their own desires. Eventually, they give approval and celebrate wickedness.
- F. All of the problems within our nation are rooted in spiritual rot.**
 - 1. "Oh these leaders are a mess." Americans elect them!
 - 2. "These shows are a disaster." Americans watch them!
 - 3. "These celebrities are terrible." Americans pay them!
 - 4. "These news channels only lie." Americans listen to them!
 - 5. When the people are bad, so go the leaders. When the leaders are bad, so go the people.

- G. How do we fix it? Well, do you remember when God sent the spies to spy out the promised land?
 1. They came back and gave a bad report - people were afraid
 2. God told them they couldn't enter into the land
 3. The next day they got up and what did they try to do? Fight
 4. What happened? God let them lose
- H. They thought it was about their refusal to go fight and if they changed the externals God would bless them, but it was about the lack of faith in their heart
 1. All the right policies in the world won't change a spiritually rotten heart
- I. Religion says, "change the externals" / Jesus says, "change your heart"
- J. The problems around us are spiritual problems and they need spiritual solutions

III. What can we expect if wicked people come to power?

- A. *[12] When the righteous triumph [rejoice], there is great glory, but when the wicked rise, people hide themselves.*
- B. Let me rephrase in my own words: When the godly succeed, a nation rejoices and prospers (financially, socially, etc). When the wicked rise to power, they seek the righteous out to persecute them, which is why they have to run and hide
- C. As I look out at our world there is a part of me, even if it's a small part that feels this way. (Right now I am simply vocalizing what many are thinking)
 1. Should believers send their kids to public school? They are teaching doctrines of demons!
 2. Should I be preparing for persecution? It seems inevitable!
 3. Is it possible that people might legitimately come after us for our faith? Jesus said it would happen!
 4. Should I plant a garden? Buy a gun? Stock up on ammo? It's too late, they're sold out!
- D. We don't know what the future holds, but we know that - one day - it will get bad before it gets worse. Might be in two weeks, might be in twenty years.
 1. We don't know whether tyranny will come. We don't know where it will come from. Right? Left? Militarily? All have historical anecdotes.
- E. What we do know is that a wicked government is like a beast (c.f. Daniel)
 1. *[15] Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a poor people.* C.F. Pharaoh, Herod, Nero, Stalin, Hitler, Mao, North Korea, Iran
- F. If wicked people come to power, the righteous get trampled. So what do we do?
- G. *Psalm 146:3 Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. 4 When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. 5 Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God.*
- H. *"Many seek the face of a ruler, but it is from the Lord that a man gets justice."* Prov 29:26
- I. **Wicked leaders will never bring about the change our souls desire**
 1. You desire Eden. You desire utopia. You desire the good ol days, but guess what? The days have been evil since Adam and Eve ate from the fruit of the tree in open rebellion against God.

2. Yes, we yearn for the good ol days, the return to Eden, and our only hope of getting there is Jesus Christ - the way, the truth, the life - who was hung on the tree of life b/c we ate from the tree of knowledge
- J. Don't expect people to accomplish what only the Lord can do. Do you want revival? Do you want joy? Do you want peace and blessing? It's only found in repentance.

IV. How do we respond if it and when it gets really bad?

- A. *[4] Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but those who keep the law strive against them.*
- B. Looting, chaos, vigilantism, hatred, discord, fighting "praises the wicked"
- C. How do you promote wickedness? By disobeying God's Law
- D. How do you strive against wickedness? By obeying God's Law
- E. *Matthew 24:11-13 says, 11 And many false prophets will appear and deceive many, 12 and because lawlessness will increase so much, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the person who endures to the end will be saved.*
 1. Lawlessness will increase - that sure feels like our world
 - a) Looting in the streets → lawlessness
 - b) Vigilante justice to deal with it → lawlessness
 - c) Murdering babies without consequence → lawlessness
 - d) Turning a blind eye to wickedness when it suits our politics → lawlessness
 2. What does this result in? The love of many will grow cold.
 3. Do you feel more loving or less loving than you did 8 months ago?
 - a) I feel angry lots of days. And that concerns me. A lot.
 - b) Why? B/c *James 1:20 says, the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

F. When we allow ourselves to degrade into chaos and hatred, we feed the wickedness that we are supposedly fighting against.

1. Those who forsake God's commands promote wickedness
2. Surely you will quote to me some hyper specific verse from the conquests about killing your enemies, but if you want to live under the Old Covenant of Death then you forsake the New Covenant of life. Our battle is spiritual
3. For us, when we keep God's commands we promote justice

V. So, what do we do? Obey God's Law which is summarized by loving God/neighbor

- A. **The best way to fight wickedness is loving God and your neighbor in both gospel deed and gospel word. → Proclaim and live the kingdom of God**
- B. Look to Jesus as an example of this:
 1. *John 13:1, Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end [to the uttermost].*
 2. How did he love them? Not as they expected. Not as they desired.
 - a) The Pharisees wanted a religious messiah.
 - b) The Scribes wanted an academic messiah.

- c) The Zealots wanted a political messiah.
- d) The tax collectors & sinners thought they were beyond a messiah
- 3. What did Jesus do? Jesus loved them, to the very end, the uttermost.
 - a) He loved his enemies all the way to the finish line and past it.
 - b) *2 Cor 5:21, God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
 - c) *He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. (Isa 53:7)*
 - (1) Like a lamb led to the slaughter. He gave the world, not what they wanted, but what they needed
- 4. Why? He had eternal discernment. He had eternal wisdom.
 - a) Prov 28:2 looks to Jesus → w/ a man of understanding stability would eternally continue
 - b) Prov 28:12 looks to Jesus → he was victorious so that we can rejoice and celebrate
- C. How do we do the same? How do we live w/ eternal discernment?
 - 1. We realize that spiritual rot is the real issue going on in our nation
 - 2. We realize that we cannot look to men, only to God, for true change
 - 3. We refuse to compromise who God wants us to be by degrading ourselves into hatred and violence
 - 4. We combat against wickedness with love and the gospel of Jesus.
 - a) It's hard to share the gospel when you are screaming in someone's face.
- D. We love. How do we love? By obeying Jesus. By preaching the gospel. We live the gospel. We get poured for the sake of the gospel as a drink offering.
 - 1. We suffer all things for the sake of the elect (2 Timothy 2:10)
 - 2. We rejoice in our sufferings for the sake of others (Col 1:24)
 - 3. We count ourselves as sheep to be slaughtered (Romans 8:36)
 - a) And are CONQUERORS in these things
- E. I'm not telling you not to vote or even how to vote. I am telling you how to live.
 - 1. We don't need to ask the Lord's direction on things that are clearly and plainly laid out in the Scriptures
 - 2. Jesus is our commander and chief. Jesus has all authority. Jesus gives the marching orders. Jesus gave us a mandate to go make disciples and teach them to obey all his commands.
 - 3. All the law is summarized by loving God and loving your neighbor.
- F. A warning if you're stewing about my message: *Proverbs 28:9, [9] If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.*
- G. *Instant pot kick... some advice if you feel like a pressure cooker: A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back. - Proverbs 29:11*
- H. Pray. Fast. Love Jesus. Love your neighbor. Preach the gospel in season and out of season. Point to the only hope we actually have.