FAITH + POLITICS 2: THE NITTY GRITTY

Pastor Rich Schmidt ▪ October 30, 2016 ▪ www.LivingHope.info

Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. [2] One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. [3] The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. [4] Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

[5] One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. [6] Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. [7] For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. [8] If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. [9] For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

[10] You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. [11] It is written:

"'As surely as I live,' says the Lord,
'every knee will bow before me;
    every tongue will acknowledge God.'"

[12] So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. [13] Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another.　　　　Romans 14:1-13 (NIV)

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. [35] By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."　　　　John 13:34-35 (NIV)

"But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, [28] bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. … [32] If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. … [35] But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. [36] Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."　　　　Luke 6:27-36 (NIV)

Three sources of many political disagreements among Christians:

1. Different ideas about the government's role.

    Example: Care for the poor

    • Republicans see government's role as limited (Romans 13), responsibility for care lies with individuals and churches.

    • Democrats see government as method for fulfilling shared civic responsibilities, find precedent in Old Testament Israel.

2. Different strategies for reaching the same goal.

    Example: Abortion

    • Republicans want to take clear moral stand, make abortion illegal, equivalent to murder

    • Democrats want make abortion rare by helping women avoid pregnancy or have support needed to keep child

3. Disagreements on Christian faith & practice.

    Examples: same-sex marriage, war

    • Are same-sex sexual relationships sinful? Is it the government's role to enforce that? How do we best love our same-sex-attracted neighbors?

    • Can a Christian participate in war? Is it OK for a Christian to kill another Christian because their nations are in conflict?

        o This is one reason some Christians refuse to serve in the military or any government role. Some abstain from the whole political process, seeing all politics as a seeking of power over others, which is incompatible with the servant way of Jesus.

Reminder to us all:

But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.　Philippians 3:20 (NLT

Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."　　　　John 18:36 (NLT