

Week of Sept 9-15

DUAL CITIZENSHIP

Scripture Reading: Read Philippians chapter 3

Sixty days from now, as I am writing this, millions of Americans will head to the polls on Election Day to vote. The two major political parties are claiming that the other party is at fault for the poor economy and our country's difficulties but that their party has the answer to what ails us. Their appeals for votes will blanket the airwaves, at least in the so-called swing states, for another two months. We'll also be treated to debates between the candidates as each seeks to gain the electoral edge over the other.

How are Christians to approach this coming election? Sadly, many will tune out and not even bother to vote if past history is any indication. In 2004 & 2008, there were approximately 52 million evangelical Christians in America. Over 1/3 of these never even voted. Given the fact that Paul acknowledges that governmental authority comes from him (Rom 13), and that we are called to be salt and light in our world by sharing our faith and living by godly principles, as well as the fact that Paul calls us to pray for those in authority over us (1 Timothy 2), it seems unbelievable that so many Christians would simply opt out of the process afforded us as citizens of our country.

On the other hand, while some have chosen to opt out, others have gone in the other direction and attempted to "Christianize" our political system as if by simply electing Christians to positions of power they can usher in the kingdom of God on earth. While I certainly appreciate political officials who share my Christian faith and are supportive of the church, I recognize that there are limits to the role of government. Just a historical reminder, the first time the church and state were married (in the time of Constantine), both the church and the state suffered and western civilization slid into the dark ages and it didn't get much better after that with the crusades, inquisition, religious wars, etc.! We will not usher in the kingdom of God through the political process. That requires the return of the King! So, what's the solution?

Paul hints at it in today's chapter reading when he mentions that our citizenship is in heaven (3:20). It was a fitting reminder to the church in Philippi (a city proud of its Roman citizenship) that its true citizenship was in heaven. In other words, we are not just national citizens. We are also citizens of heaven. We, therefore, have responsibilities to and privileges in both realms but our heavenly citizenship is supreme and is to influence our national citizenship. We are to live as dual citizens!

Action Step: If you are not registered to vote, do so this week. Contact the County Board of Elections, obtain a registration form, fill it out and return it. Study the issues. Review the positions of each candidate running for office on the state and national level biblically. Attend candidate forums where questions can be asked. Finally, on Election Day, vote!

Prayer Focus: Pray for our governmental officials. Pray that God would bring a spirit of repentance to our country in accordance with 2 Chronicles 7:14. Pray for God to raise up godly leaders of his choosing who will govern well with wisdom, truth and grace.

Take-a-way: *Being citizens of heaven means we take seriously our citizenship on earth.*