

Take Hold of Christ and His Kingdom:

16 Gospel-motivated Considerations for Election 2016

November 4, 2016

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What do we say to our church in the face of the impending election?

In the spirit of 2016, here are six ways we can take hold of God, even as we wrestle with the challenges of this year's election. May God use these to encourage and challenge your heart. May he be pleased to use them to purify our hope in him and our church's commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Six Ways to Take Hold of God

1. Take heart in God.

God is sovereign and we can rest in his rule (Psalm 103:19; Daniel 4:34–35). No matter what happens on November 8 (or on any other day), it will not overturn his work in the world. In fact, for good or bad, God will use this election to expose idols, test faith, and ultimately gather sheep. Scripture repeatedly tells us no king, no nation, no president has the absolute power to halt God's kingdom. We must remember this, preach this to one another, and take comfort in this fact—God's kingdom has come and is coming.

2. Take hold of the gospel.

If God is sovereign, he is sovereignly working to build his church. As Paul said in Romans 1:16, "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation." In truth, the gospel is not just a message; it is God's power to raise the dead to life and declare the guilty righteous. And God has promised that what Christ began on the cross will be completed in the salvation of every one of his elect. In between eternity past and eternity future, it is the gospel that brings salvation to the world. And thus as we are tempted to give all our attention to political battles, we must not forget the power and priority of the gospel.

3. Take time to lament.

Throughout Scripture and history, one means of God's judgment has been the appointment of immoral leaders. Just as righteous kings and just judge bring blessing; immoral leaders mediate judgment (Proverbs 28:12, 28; 29:1). This year it is remarkable because America's two candidates are famously bad. Neither's character is worth commending, and both stand for some of the worst parts of American political and pop culture. In response we must lament. Like the prophets of old we must weep over our nation and its systemic immorality. In our prayer, we must begin with lamentations. Only then will we be able to pray according to God's will.

4. Take time to intercede.

We have biblical warrant (1 Timothy 2:1–4), not mention existential need for prayer. In fact, nothing may be more effective in staying God’s judgment on our nation than persistent intercession. As James 5:16 says, “The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” This promise of effectual prayer combined with the two unqualified presidential candidates, the believer should be even more resolute in prayer. For, if God has the power to bring “the counsel of the nations to nothing” and “frustrate the plans of the peoples” (Psalm 33:10), then we must lay our requests before him and plead that God would withhold these leaders (and any leader) from doing the worst in their power. As Bruce Ashford and Billy Hallowell have reminded us, [this is the one thing all Christians must do](#).

5. Take the long view.

Whatever happens this election, it is not the end of the world. Rather, from the perspective of redemptive history, it is one more step towards God’s goal of bring all things under Christ’s feet (Ephesians 1:10). So today, we must learn from Scripture to take the long view. Personally, this should temper our fears. And practically, it should shape our decisions, even the way we vote. As John Piper once said, we should vote as though we are not voting. Why? Because as 1 Corinthians 7:31 says, “the present form of this world is passing away.” Hence, let’s learn to live with our eyes on heaven and to take the long view of God’s work on earth.

6. Take hold of one another.

Whatever happens in next week’s election, we are in for a bumpy ride. Religious liberty is under major attack; the culture of death continues to escalate; and secularism continues to press its religion on Christians in their lifestyles and livelihoods. Those few examples will not be solved by one election. Politics is always downstream from culture and our culture is awash with hyper-individualism, erotic expressivism, and rejection of authority.

In this world, then, Christians conjoined by the Spirit and the blood Christ, must take hold of one another. The worst thing we can do is fight over non-essential matters. Even if we disagree or dislike what others in the church say about candidates, let’s covenant to build up one another in Christ and not tear one another down. We need one another, and we need:

Ten Ways to Give Grace

For those who know the grace of God, we are called upon to give grace to one another. Few imperatives are more important right now than showing charity to one another. Whatever happens in the election, we need one another in the church. And we need to learn how to listen and speak to one another about disputable matters (e.g., politics) and permit differences of conscience. Our unity and first priority is Christ and his kingdom.

To preserve and proclaim Christ’s gospel, I list ten items for us to consider in how we can give grace to one another. More consideration of these points can be found [here](#).

1. Remember, politics are downstream from culture. Therefore, as we focus on voting this week, we must redouble our efforts to preach the gospel and make arguments and art that preserve and influence culture.
2. Guard your brother's conscience, even if you disagree with him.
3. Make space for people to make biblical arguments about the election.
4. Do all you can to make plain your allegiance to Christ
5. Beware of using your vote as virtue signaling.
6. Be slow to use strong rhetoric with brothers in Christ.

7. Do more than vote; look for local ways to impact neighbors for good.
8. Be the church, an embassy representing another kingdom.
9. Outdo one another in showing honor.
10. Extend grace to others, and then more grace.

May God give us grace to be gracious to one another. In this, we pray that the world would see something different in us, so that in hearing the gospel they might want to flee from this world and find eternal life in Christ.

It is to this end we pray and labor, and to this end we vote.

For His Glory and your joy, Pastor David