

SEPTEMBER 8 & 9

POLITICS VS. KINGDOM

JOHN FULLER, SENIOR PASTOR

INTRODUCTION

This weekend we launch a new series entitled *Loaded*. The foundational question of the series is "Since we live in a divided culture, how do we engage with it?" Pastor John leads off this series with the message "Politics vs. Kingdom." He points out "It's always been a tightrope for Christians in this world, but it's a new season of social connectedness and 24-hour news cycles that has ramped up the stakes for how Christians engage in this increasingly volatile arena of politics. We are in such a polarized and divided time; it is ugly and brutal." We will consider how we can become the "aroma of Christ" who "spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him," while living according to Truth [2 Corinthians 2:14-15].

DISCUSSION

1. Pastor John speaks to the grim reality of our nation, proclaiming, "We are a divided nation. Something has to change. What if the Church - the followers of God, those who claim Christ as Savior and King - could begin the change?" Ruminating over and brainstorming together how that change could actually and practically begin with us, the Church.
2. Pastor John encouraged us to serve and disciple children today. As parents, grandparents, mentors, aunts, uncles or small group youth leaders, how could teaching foundations such as righteousness, an active prayer life, reading Scripture and teaching and modeling the Fruit of the Spirit [Galatians 5:22-23] impact them positively as future leaders?
3. 1 Peter 2:11-12 reads "Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." Pastor John said, "It's not about what we do or don't engage in or say. It's about our hearts." How could earnestly seeking to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" [Mark 12:30] keep our focus appropriately aligned and spur us toward living out the 1 Peter 2:11-12 passage?

DO SOMETHING

1. Talk through or role play frequent scenarios group members find themselves in, such as heated, politically-focused extended-family dinners or social media posts that get their blood boiling and tempt them to fire back. In the discussions or roleplays, practice [or discuss] responding as a Christ follower first rather than a candidate follower, and rehearse loving responses that might do more to bridge the gap than widen it.
2. Have each person write down five to ten politically-based tensions in their lives such as cultural topics, movements, candidates or even people with whom they frequently are in tension due to political dissension. Pray for these topics or people, and create a plan to pray more extensively for each of them for the remainder of 2018. As you pray, be sure to carve out time to listen to the Spirit of God and be open to His voice. As a small group, set a date to return to the prayer lists/concerns later this fall.

RESOURCES

1. *Christ and Culture Revisited* by D.A. Carson [book or Kindle]
2. *Christians and Politics: Uneasy Partners* by Philip Yancey [Kindle]