

The Silent Church

A silent church is the tyrants' playground. God has called the church to be the proclaimer of Christ as Lord over all – this includes the area of politics. As Scripture says, "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Note the totality of that claim.

History is replete with the sad results of what happens when the church is silent in the face of political evils. With the rise of the Nazis in Germany and the evils that proceeded from them, most of the German church was silent. "That's not our business, we just need to be concerned with our churches and what goes on in there, but not trouble ourselves with what is going on out there." Thus Hitler was allowed to rise to power implementing his wicked plans with hardly a protest from the German church. However, there was a notable exception...

Bonhoeffer story and quote... "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."

The lie in our day – getting involved in politics distracts from the gospel.

Main idea: The Gospel requires political involvement from the church

What I am not saying...you need to be politically involved to be saved or politics is the answer to our problems. What I am saying...you need to know what God's Word says in the area of civil government and apply that to our current political reality.

Why do I say the gospel requires political involvement? 2 reasons – 1) Biblical Examples & 2) Politics is part of God's creation

Action 1: Learn why – It is important for us to know why.

- **Biblical Examples**
 - Jesus is political
 - Psalm 2

- Psalm 110:1-2
- Isaiah 9:6-7
- Matthew 28:18
- Ephesians 1:20-23
- Revelation 1:5
- The early Christians were political
 - Acts 4 (Peter & John arrested after healing a lame man)
 - Acts 5 (Apostles told not to teach any more – v 29 “we ought to obey God...”)
 - Acts 17:1-9 (Jason and his Christian friends)
 - Romans 13:1-7 (Paul’s instruction to early Christians)
- Politics is part of God’s creation. Read Romans 13:1-7. Political involvement is the outworking of a changed life (see structure of Romans) – If you have been changed by the gospel you will work to move government to its God-prescribed limits
 - Civil government/politics is part of God’s creation and is therefore subject to Him
 - Just as you would order your home according to God’s instructions and your church according to God’s instructions, so too, as Christians we must seek to order civil government according to God’s instructions.
 - God will hold you accountable to how you do in this area of politics. See Proverbs 24:11-12: “Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, ‘Surely we did not know this,’ Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?”

Benefit: To combat the lie – “Getting involved politically distracts from the gospel.” This has effectively silenced the church.

What can we do?

Action 2: Begin studying – buy a book, sign up for IPS’ Biblical Principles of Government class

Benefit: Identify good from evil – to bring about good to your fellow neighbor

It's not enough to get involved, you have to get involved using the tools God has given. See 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 ³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,"

Are we using God's weapons or man's? Our wisdom should not come from political parties, talk show hosts, newspapers, or politicians. We must pick up the Sword of the Spirit – our only rule of faith and practice in everything...including civil government.

A word to Californians – it may seem hopeless...Remember God loves to display His power through our weakness. Can we forget the Red Sea? Gideon and his 300? Will we be like David who when the people of God were facing Goliath – afraid to engage the battle – rebuffed his critics asking, "Is there not a cause?" Brothers and sisters, we have a cause. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is God's power of salvation to all believe. That Gospel changes lives and transforms societies according to the Word of God. California is no different.

"There is no land beneath the sun where there is an open Bible and a preached gospel, where a tyrant long can hold his place...Let the Bible be opened to be read by all men, and no tyrant can long rule in peace...The religion of Jesus makes men think, and to make men think is always dangerous to a despot's power." –C.H. Spurgeon (quoted in WHI Journal, Spring 2023)