

I. Set Up

A. Welcome / introduction

B. We've had a good last few days: the Cubs won; the Bears won and we just got an extra hour of sleep! I think most of us are of the opinion that the events of this upcoming week (especially on Tuesday) are unlikely to be as much fun. But there is some good news surrounding all of this. And I do not simply mean the campaigning is just about over. The news is far better than that. God has some coaching for us about how to think about this political moment.

C. As we step back into our of study of Luke, we find Jesus talking politics. Mike will be starting there but also walking us through Psalm 62 – which is one of the great Psalms of King David. It is his prayer in the dark hours that follow some political drama in Israel. Absalom, David's son, had led a revolt. As a result, David and the rest of his family to flee. They ran into the desert to hide. While on the run he wrote this prayer. It's one in which he talks to himself, to his enemies and to God.

D. Let me read this prayer to you from the Message, which is a paraphrase.

1. God, the one and only. I'll wait as long as he says. Everything I need comes from him so why not? He's solid rock under my feet breathing room for my soul, An impregnable castle: I'm set for life.

2. How long will you gang up on me? How long will you run with the bullies? There's nothing to you, any of you—rotten floorboards, worm-eaten rafters, Anthills plotting to bring down mountains, far gone in make-believe. You talk a good line, but every “blessing” breathes a curse.

3. God, the one and only—I'll wait as long as he says. Everything I hope for comes from him, so why not? He's solid rock under my feet, breathing room for my soul, An impregnable castle: I'm set for life.

4. My help and glory are in God—granite-strength and safe-harbor-God—So trust him absolutely, people; lay your lives on the line for him. God is a safe place to be. Man as such is smoke, woman as such, a mirage. Put them together, they're nothing; two times nothing is nothing.

II. Introduction:

A. About ten years ago we had a difficult few months in the Woodruff household. Our oldest son, Austin, was in his senior year in high school and we were in the full-court college selection mode.

1. We went through the standard drill: we generated a list of reach schools, target schools and safety schools; we took a few college tours.

2. We then moved into the “fill out the applications” phase.

3. And Austin – who had been able to consistently beat me in chess since well before 3rd grade – had lots of options. But he was not as motivated to fill out the applications as I thought he should be. And the dynamic became pretty classic: I started to push, and in response, he resisted. And the more I pushed the less he did, which lead me to push more.

4. It wasn't pretty. I'll spare you the details. Suffice it to say, at 10 PM on the night before the applications were due, Austin had finished the applications but not yet sent them in. (All that remained was, essentially to hit "send" but he had not yet done that. And as a result I was about to need medical help).

5. In the end it all worked out just fine. But it wasn't pretty. And so, after it was over, Sheri sat us both down and said, "We all have reasons to be embarrassed about the way we have acted. (I'm not sure she did, but I certainly did). We are not going to go through this again."

B. I share that because I feel like the same can be said for the country – and in particular the church – during this past presidential election. The rhetoric, allegations, anger, despair, threats and general vitriol – from all sides – leads me to say, "collectively, we have reason to be embarrassed."

1. I have been asked to referee fights. I have been involved in tense stand offs. I have received emails written in all caps with lots of exclamation points. I was talking to my Mom yesterday, who lives in a retirement community, and she said that yesterday at the tennis courts a fight broke out between two men in their 80s over politics.

2. About six months ago I started to wonder if our country would be governable after the election and I started praying for whoever won to be able to lead.

3. About three months ago I grew concerned over how angry everyone was becoming and over how harsh the rhetoric was becoming – not between the candidates but between friends.

C. As you hopefully know, we have a 24 hour prayer chain for the country and the election and the new president. Right now I want to offer some counsel – from God – on how you can navigate the days ahead.

III. Let me note, I did not want to say anything about anything political at this point. In fact, I'd rather chew sand that paint a target on my back and wade into this. I was very happy that the plan – set up six months ago – was to go back to Luke for a few weeks.

A. Then about six weeks ago I looked at the sermon schedule in order to start preparing for this message and realized that the passage for this weekend was Luke 20:20-26 – which is about as political as Jesus ever gets.

B. In that text the Jewish elite were, trying to trap him so they could have him arrested. In particular, a group pretending to be sincere, asked him a "gotcha question:"

C. Those asking were the Pharisees and Herodians. The Pharisees and Sadducees were theological opposites. The Pharisees and Herodians were political opposites. This is a political discussion through and through.

1. "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

D. In other words, who are you voting for? There was a lot going on here.¹ It's not just that the Jews were heavily taxed and they wanted relief, and if Jesus said "Yes, pay your taxes" that that would get him in trouble with the people. But if he said they could avoid paying their taxes they'd turn him into the Romans.

1. For starters, the tax they are referring to was a head tax, which had been instituted 25 years earlier. It wasn't a big tax – one denarius, which was about \$50 – but it was insulting. It was a tax for the privilege of having Caesar as your King. And they didn't want Caesar as their King. When it was implemented a man by the name of Judas the Galilean had led an armed revolt.

a) He had also cleansed the temple and argued that God was their king and that he was now going to bring in the Kingdom of God.

b) When Jesus – who is also from Galilee - shows up teaching about the kingdom of God, he gets their attention. When he cleanses the Temple – as he had just done – everyone sits up and says, “If he tells us not to pay the Head Count tax then he is in lock step with Judas the Galilean.

c) So when they ask this question it's very charged. If Jesus says, “Do not pay the tax,” Rome will crush him. If he says, pay it, then the Jews will think, “all of this talk about the KOG was just Jesus blowing smoke,” and they will leave him.²

2. Secondly, the Denarius has a picture of Tiberius Caesar – and it says that he is king, Son of God and High priest.

a) Jesus asks, “whose image?” (*Greek* word is icon).

b) Then he says, give to him what has his image. But give to God what has his image. (Which would be your life).³

3. Thirdly, Jesus changes the verb and says “render”

a) It's a hard word in Greek to translate. It is “pay back” what he deserves

b) Does he deserve his money back? Does he also deserve some push back? You cannot give him ultimate allegiance

4. Jesus is giving a masterful example of Jesus not telling them to revolt or pay taxes, but he had at the same time.

a) The implication is that Jesus the Galilean is envisioning a revolution different than Judas the Galilean

b) There will be a revolt but not like you imagine.

E. When pols get a hot question they don't answer. And those listening are mad. But Jesus doesn't leave them mad. They are amazed.⁴

F. It is brilliant. It does not answer the question, but it's not a dodge. It reframes it and leaves them thinking.⁵ In a few short words he signals: 1) that everything is God's; and 2) makes it clear that he was not getting pulled into their partisan conflict.) He walks right past their trap.

G. When I read it I was amazed again at the wisdom of Jesus. He has political skill others can only dream of.

H. I also realized that I was not going to be able to say nothing about the election.⁶

IV. Let me assure you, I am not going to rehearse specifics of the campaigns or the platforms. I do not think there is much of a need for that, nor do I think anyone is in the mood to be reminded of what has happened or been said. (One of the things that is remarkable is how few people want to talk about the election). So, I'm not really going there. Let me simply summarize the situation by saying:

- A. This is a challenging moment in the United States.
 - 1. Not the most challenging ever. We have had a civil war, a Great Depression, a few world wars and times of disruption and despair. Things have been worse in the past. But this feels pretty bad.⁷ There is a lot of fear and anger out there. In my life I do not believe I've known a time when Christians were as divided over the candidates as they are right now.⁸
 - 2. Nor have I known voters to be as frustrated as they are right now. Nearly one in four young Americans report that they would rather have a giant meteor destroy the Earth than see either Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump elected to the White House. And according to the American Psychological Association, more than half of Americans say that this election has caused them significant stress.⁹
 - 3. In *FutureView* I noted that many things have gotten better over the last thirty years, but we face some troubling trend lines.
 - a) To be clear, a lot of things could get worse and most of us would still have it better than ninety-five percent of everyone who has ever lived or who is alive today.¹⁰ We need to be reminded of our blessings.
 - b) But we face some real challenges. So, number one: it's been worse, but this is a challenging moment in the United States. **But!**
- B. Number Two: Our hope is in God.
 - 1. **The results of the election are important, but our hope is in God**
 - 2. Laws matter. Leadership matters. The decisions of the courts, the tax code, and the way the military is deployed all matters. How we define our country matters. Good government makes a big difference. God established government for our benefit. When it does its job well, evil is curtailed and people have a chance to flourish. When it does not, people suffer. This political moment is important.
 - 3. But this election is not all important. God is still Almighty. His hand is not restricted in any way by who wins and who loses.
 - a) The God we worship created more than two trillion galaxies, each with around 200 billion stars. He can do whatever He needs to do to accomplish His will.
 - b) In Proverbs 21:1 we read, "The Lord can control a King's mind as he controls a river; he can direct as he pleases." He is over all.
 - 4. The late Jacques Ellul – an author, sociologist and a bit of a C.S. Lewis figure – wrote about what he called "the political illusion." It's the belief that tempts many every four years, leading them to believe that our deepest problems are political. They are not. They are spiritual. And they are not subject to an election.
 - 5. Our hope does not rest in a party or a platform, but in God.

6. The person who sits in the Oval Office cannot fix what matters most. We should not tie our mood to a president but keep it rooted in the king who defeated death.

C. Number Three: This election doesn't give us an excuse to set aside our assignment of serving others, being kind or caring for the disadvantaged.

1. We are expected to love our enemy. We are expected to be characterized by joy, patience, gentleness and civility.¹¹

2. We are to be more self-critical than we are critical of others. We are to take the log out of our own eye before we try to take the speck out of our neighbors.¹²

3. I do not expect that we will all think, act or vote the same way. But we all should walk in love and unity and reflect the hope that is within us – the ongoing awareness that God has everything under control. Let others panic. We do not need to. Men and women, if you are fearful then your faith is misplaced.

4. I understand being sad. I think there is reason to be sad. And I also understand a sense that things might get hard. I suspect they will.

5. It seems likely that we will get the government that we deserve as opposed to the one we need. That's not a good thing.

6. But we are not to panic. We can have as much confidence that God will prevail as we can have watching a rerun of Game Seven of the World Series.

a) There will be some moments when we go, "Oh no! But then we remind ourselves, this ends well. God will prevail. There is no need to doubt that His plans will prevail.

7. We are not to get mad, yell at the TV. We are to continue on as the church – we are to remain His primary vehicle for carrying out His work is His church – you and me.

D. I initially turned to John 17 to do something about unity – about loving each other and getting along.

1. If you've not recently read the prayer that makes up most of John 17, please do. It becomes clear from what Jesus prayed for that he really, really wants us to find ways to get along.

2. And he models that, by the way. He not only issues a number of commands to that end, he found ways to hold both ends of the political spectrum of his day on the same team. Matthew the tax collector was in bed with the Romans, meanwhile Simon the Zealot kept plotting to overthrow them. And they both served as disciples.

E. But after praying – and talking to a few others – I decided to focus on hope instead. And so we turn to Psalm 62. I want you to leave here today reminded that:

1. God is in control.

2. He is not worried.

3. His plans are not subject to the results of this election.

4. Beyond that, He is not depressed by this campaign season even if many of us might be. He will bring His plans to bear.

V. I invite you now to turn to Psalm 62.

A. As was noted in the setup, most scholars believe that this Psalm was written by David after the events recorded in 2 Samuel 15.

1. In 2 Samuel 11 and 12 we read about David's decision to sleep with another man's wife and his subsequent efforts to cover it up, which led him to have the other man killed.

1. After this he was confronted by Nathan – the prophet – and he confessed and repented. But that doesn't always stop the natural consequences of our sin. And one of the things that David was told at the time was that, as a result of what he had done, "the sword" would never depart from his house. It doesn't. There is all kind of dissension in his household – mostly resulting in half-brothers and half-sisters who hate each other. But there is also rape and murder and – in this case – a palace coup. One of David's sons tries to overthrow him. As a result, David and the rest of his family is on the run.

2. They are hiding in the very same desert where David had earlier hid from Saul. And it is while he is fleeing he writes this prayer. All that to say, this is a high-stakes moment. In fact, there is likely more risk and drama in his life when he writes this than is in your right now.

3. Perhaps I am wrong about that. Some of you are not thinking about this election very much because you are very anxious about other things. You are facing more immediate challenges. But having your own family members trying to kill you strikes me as being pretty dire.¹³ David's situation is worse than the one most of us are facing.

B. So he gives us this Psalm of Lament.

1. Psalms generally fall into one of three categories.¹⁴ There are exceptions, but most are either:

a) Praise Psalms, which focus on God's beauty, power and majesty.

b) Thanksgiving Psalms, which list thanks for what God has done. (We praise God for who He is and thank him for what he does).

c) Or Psalms of lament, in which a person who is struggling asks God to show up.

2. The Hebrew word for lament is *zakar*, which is the root of the name Zechariah. It means "remember." When things are going poorly people often pray something along the lines of, "Hey God, remember me?" One of the common refrains in Psalms of Lament is, "How long oh Lord?" How long before you come through as promised? How much longer do I have to suffer?

C. This particular Psalm unfolds in three paragraphs

1. It opens with a bold statement in which David restates his trust in God.

2. It then moves into a section in which he states his frustrations.

3. And then it goes back to his hope.

D. Let's take this verse by verse.

VI. **1 For God alone my soul waits in silence from him comes my salvation.** (repeat)

A. Some see this verse as an advertisement of the benefits of silence, which is surely a good idea.

1. About a month ago, Ben Beasley – the Director of our High School ministry at our Crossroads campus, led the devotion at a staff meeting from this psalm. On this verse he noted that Craig Ferguson, who used to host the Late, Late Show, would occasionally end his interviews with celebrity guests by inviting them to join him in an “awkward pause.” It was 10 to 20 seconds of silence. And – according to Ben – it never failed to lead to lots of laughter.

2. We don’t do a lot of silence today. There is lots of noise – phones, radio, TV, leaf blowers, car alarms and one-thousand other things – and it takes a toll. We are assaulted by it. (And assault is the right word once you realize that noise comes from the Latin word *nausea*, meaning seasickness). Noise is not just sound. It is an invasive pollutant that keeps us from being settled.

3. And often times we seek it out because, it’s easier to watch Netflix or listen to ESPN than to be silent before God. But we need some silence.

4. I need the first few hours of the day, which are very quiet, to rightly order what comes next.¹⁵

5. We need silence. But I don’t think that is what David is saying here.

B. The second way this passage - **For God alone my soul waits in silence from him comes my salvation** - is understood is as a call for submission.

1. The Hebrew term *dumiyah* that can be translated *silence*, can also be understood as *submission* or *yielding*. This is the path John Calvin goes down.

2. He says that the silence intended here is the “submission of the believer to God. In other words, Calvin argues that the only time we have a peaceful heart – when we find comfort – is when we calm the rebellious attitude of our heart.

C. I think both of the first two understandings of this verse are valid options, but that David was arguing for something a bit different here.

1. When David says, **For God alone my soul waits in silence**, I believe he is saying, “the only time I can quiet my mind and be free of fear is when I come consciously into the presence of God. When I am looking at Him. When I am aware of who He is and have some insight as to how powerful and holy and awesome He is. When that happens – when He is right-sized – then my problems fade. The rest of the time there is a little voice inside my head yapping, “This is bad. This is really bad. All is lost.”

2. But when I come before God, my soul settles down.

3. David opens his prayer reminding himself, “I need to be focused on God. If I am focused on the candidates or the polls or my problems, then my heart starts to race.

VII. **For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. V2: He alone is my rock...**

A. He likes this term “rock” and will use it three times in this Psalm. It suggests stability.

VIII. **He alone.**

A. He also likes “alone” or “only.” He uses it six times. What we want comes only from God!

B. No elected official can provide what brings lasting peace. Some will be pleased with the results of the election. Others will be disappointed. But even those are happy with the outcome will eventually be disappointed. No human leader can deliver us in the ways that will matter forever.

IX. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall never be shaken.

A. The Hebrew here is actually, “not greatly shaken” which suggests that he we might be a little shaken from time to time. But our hope stays solid in God.

B. And please note, we must have hope. I appreciate the comment by the late Richard John Neuhaus, who wrote, “Christians do not have the right to despair. Despair is sin. Furthermore, we do not have reason to despair because, quite simply, Christ has risen from the dead. Over and over and over again we are told, “Fear not” and also “to have hope in God.”

X. V3: How long will you assail a person, will you batter your victim, all of you, as you would a leaning wall, a tottering fence?

B. These comments are directed at those who are chasing him. David describes himself as “a leaning wall or tottering fence,” – in other words, as something that is weak and vulnerable. And he asks, “How long will you gang up on me? How long are you going to kick someone who is down?”

XI. V4-6: Their only plan is to bring down a person of prominence. They take pleasure in falsehood; they bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse.

XII. V 5: For God alone my soul waits in silence; for my hope is from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

A. Verses 5 & 6 essentially repeat what was stated in verse 1, although I agree with those who put in a comma. So rather than it being descriptive, “My soul is waiting for God alone.” It’s a statement, “My soul, wait for God.”

B. He is basically giving himself a pep talk. Several times lately I have pondered what the statement, “And David encouraged himself in the Lord” meant – from I Samuel 30:6. Here it is.

C. David talks to himself. He preaches to himself. He reminds himself of what matters. He very intentionally focuses his thinking and manages his emotions.

D. In the book, *Spiritual Depression: Its Cause and Cure*, Martin Lloyd Jones argues that much of our unhappiness comes from the fact that we listen to ourselves rather than talking to ourselves. He says that rather than going along with the thoughts and fears that come our way – many of which go back to the problems of the day before – we need “to take ourselves by the hand, preach to ourselves and question ourself. We need to ask, ‘Why are you so glum?’ Then exhort yourself to hope in God.”¹⁶

E. David appears to be preaching to himself even as he prays. He is talking to his own soul and telling himself how to think and feel. To that end he keeps piling up descriptions of God or and reminding himself of what his God will do. Notice how personal he makes this – all of the uses of personal pronouns.”

XIII. 7: On God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.

A. Let me pause here to ask you an important question, “who are you listening to? There are lots of voices of despair and false hope out there. Some say the sky is falling. Some are promising things they cannot deliver. David was preaching truth to himself.

B. This is one of the main reasons to memorize Bible passages. It allows us to preach to ourselves.

XIV. 8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him. God is a refuge for us.

A. David is not just talking to himself but also to others. To us. We need to be reminded that God is enough.¹⁷

XV. 9: Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.

A. To understand this verse you need to picture a balance scale – like a teeter totter. He is noting that people – of all sorts – do not weigh as much as God. We do not measure up. We are a vapor. This includes us and it includes the bad guys causing David so much grief at the moment.

XVI. 10 Put no confidence in extortion; and set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, do not set your heart on them.

XVII. 11 Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,

XVIII. 12 and steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord. For you repay to all according to their work.

XIX. David was in a desert when he wrote this.

A. I hope we do not go there. I hope things work out – whatever that means. There are no promises. Sometimes God allows people to go to the desert and he allows nations to fall.

B. One of the really scary lines that is found in the Bible – repeated several times is – “and God gave them over.”

1. We see it in Psalm 81 and Romans 1. Sometimes God gives us up to our desires. I’ve told you this was a bad path, but if you keep insisting on going down it, so be it.

2. We may get what we are after – however you interpret that.

C. I don’t know how the next four days, or four weeks, or four years will go. But I know that God ultimately prevails – in the final analysis, everything is under control, and our hope is in Him. We do not need to panic.

XX. Men and women, our well-being is not ultimately linked to the person who sits in 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. It rests with a King who died in our place. Focus your hope on the right person.

XXI. There is no need to panic! Let others play the part of Chicken Little. Let others say they are moving to Canada. God has this. We should be as settled as if we are watching a rerun of Game Seven of the World Series.

A. It was a roller coaster. And watching it again may make your heart race. When the Indians tied it up in the 8th you may still feel a wave of panic. But then you can say, “No, wait. I know how this ends.”

B. “Ps. 146 reads: Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings who cannot save. Blessed are those whose help is in the Lord their God. He is maker of heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them.”

C. We are called to pray, to love, to serve – to be the church – and to hope.

XXII. Prayer / Communion.

¹ The people there were not Sadducees and Pharisees (theological opposites), but Pharisees and Herodians (political opposites). See Keller, *Arguing with Jesus*, Luke 20 for more.

² Need to realize that we think of the KOG more privately than they did b/c we are on the other side of Locke and Kant and Enlightenment thinking. When they heard it they are thinking real politics. All the stuff Jesus is saying about freedom and no hunger is about now. Jesus talk about preaching good news to the poor is not about inner peace it's about real life.

³ Some would argue that this is the first statement in favor of limited government. Up until this time the government always claimed that it was there by god's will. Here Jesus implies that it is not. Jesus said, “No. Give him the money but no more.”

⁴ Jesus gives an answer that refuses: 1) Political simplicity; 2) Political complacency; and 3) Political primacy

⁵ When Jesus talks about our relationship with him he is very simple and clear. When he is asked a question about our relationship with the state we do not get simple answers. We must not do for Jesus what he refused to do for himself. If you are a Christian there is only one party. If you think Climate Change is greatest issue you might have voted for Nader on idea that stewardship is important. But if you are about racial justice

⁶ David Brooks recently noted that if you embrace Christianity you inevitably get pulled into politics at one level because sin is not just personal it is social. And systemic. Liberals often focus on the systems over the personal, while conservatives do the opposite. But both matter.

⁷ In the 1800 election, New England Federalists claimed that the allegedly atheist Thomas Jefferson – who was actually a Unitarian – would as President close churches and burn Bibles like the French revolutionaries with whom he initially sympathized. Meanwhile, Frontier revivalists countered that John Adams was a closet monarchist serving the British crown. Neither of these scenarios unfolded as threatened.

⁸ I've received emails suggesting that Donald Trump is a Winston Churchill figure and others saying there is no possible way a Christ-follower could vote for Mr. Trump. Metaxas and Dobson stand on one side and Mohler and Moore stand on the other. Grudem was with Dobson but no is not.

⁹ Jim Denison, “Do You Wish a Giant Meteor Would Destroy the Earth,” *Today's Cultural Commentary*, Oct. 19, 2016.

¹⁰ In “James Dobson and Christian Pessimism,” Mark Tooley writes, “There’s nothing new about apocalyptic chatter in American politics. New England Federalists in the 1800 election claimed the allegedly atheist Thomas Jefferson, who was actually privately Unitarian, would as President close churches and burn Bibles, like the French revolutionaries with whom he initially sympathized. Frontier revivalists countered that John Adams was a closet monarchist serving the British crown. Neither of these scenarios unfolded.

Hyperbolic scare talk is not limited to traditional religionists. The secular prophets of environmentalism routinely warn that a few more SUVs on the highway will irretrievably push the planet into a calamitous, carbon fueled spiral landing in permanent Hades. Scare talk gets attention, mobilizes followers, and can sometimes achieve partial political gains, although rarely sustainable.

More typically, apocalyptic political warnings are not vindicated, with a few exceptions, like Churchill’s warnings about Hitler and appeasement, or Demosthenes’ oratory against Philip II of Macedon. The ancient Hebrew prophets are the model of such jeremiads, and their dark prophecies were fulfilled, because they of course spoke with divine authority, usually resulting in their own martyrdom. Few if any others have similar authority.

Very possibly America is on the edge of some horrendous, irrevocable collapse. Maybe we are akin to Weimar Germany, decadent, confused, divided, and preparing to surrender our ancient liberties in favor of some ominous new tyrannical order. Possibly, but I don’t expect so.

From my own personal observations, America — in reality versus the hysteria and rantings of the Internet and cable television — is not hovering on collapse. My knowledge of America is hardly comprehensive. But I don’t entirely live in an insulated bubble.” He then goes on to recount the many things that are going well. My sense is that his perspective on this is largely correct. There are real issues in front of us, and it is possible that we are approaching a major crisis. But there are more than a few things going well and people have cried wolf for 2,000 years and no matter what happens, God is in control.

¹¹ I think the comments of a blog by Michael Wilson are worth considering. He wrote: You would think that during election time Christians somehow have managed to throw out the teachings of Jesus until after election day. Even then there will be doomsayers on whichever side loses. So many people are afraid the country is going to hell in a hand basket if either candidate gets elected. Folks, I have heard this rhetoric since I started voting.

If we truly believe that Jesus is Lord then stop your bellyaching, name-calling, mud-slinging and judging and start doing what he told us to do...prefer one another and love one another as he loved us, especially towards those that disagree with you.

In the end, our trust has to be in HIM and not a political party. Neither Trump or Clinton will be the savior of the United States. Neither one of them are, nor will be, the perfect candidate.

If Jesus can take two opposing men and bring them together, helping them understand there is a larger kingdom that we are to be concerned with, then don’t you think we should do the same?

My fellow Christians, please hear me . . . you are a Christ-follower first and foremost, an American second, and a member of a political party (or not) third. Don’t forget that order. Right now the people outside of the Church think we are a bunch of whiny cry-babies when we don’t get our way.

¹² Joel Woodruff (no relation) writes: I’ve been convicted lately at how much time I spend appraising the moral character, integrity, words and actions of presidential candidates, as opposed to how rarely I use these same litmus tests to evaluate my own life. (Joel Woodruff, “Presidential Candidates and Me,” **Knowing and Doing**, Summer 2016.

¹³ I am referring here to physical death. Spiritually speaking we are locked in mortal combat. (Eph. 2:1).

¹⁴ There are more than three categories, but 100 of the 150 fall into one of these three. We see this division in 1 Chronicles 16:4

¹⁵ In the words of George Fox, the well-known Quaker, we need to learn how to carry some quiet around inside of us.

¹⁶ He continues: And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, Who God is and what God has done and what God has pledged himself to do. Then having done that, end on this great note: defy yourself, and defy other people,

and defy the devil and the whole world, and say with this man, “I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance, who is also the health of my countenance and my God.”

¹⁷ As an aside, this does not mean that we do nothing. David acted. As he fled from Jerusalem through the Kidron Valley he met with one of his advisors and sent him back as a spy – to frustrate the counsel Abaslom’s new advisors would give to Absalom. It was a brilliant plan. It worked. The point is, the one who is telling us to “wait on God,” did not do nothing. He acted as well.