



Life Group Study Notes

"Lessons From An Election Year"

Dr. Rice Brooks - November 6, 2016

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What is the #1 attribute you would want a boss to have?
- What's the greatest contribution you bring to your workplace (household)?
- Whose character do you admire most? For what quality or attribute?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Background texts that speak to our conduct and response during this political election time:

1 Peter 2:9-17 NIV *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage 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. Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.*

1 Timothy 2:1-4 NIV *I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

Three lessons learned over this past year of the American political cycle.

1. Character matters.

- 1 Peter 2:1-3
- James 3:9-12
- Our response to the political process and candidates matters. Our character can be exposed by the political challenges taking place in our country at this time. How we respond is observed by others, especially the younger generation which is skeptical of the church at large. If we imitate the weaknesses and sins of various political candidates by engaging in attitudes that abandon the

character and image of Christ, we have allowed ourselves to be pulled into the vortex of the spirit of our age. This includes how we communicate on social media.

- We must instead demonstrate the character of Christ. We are called to be a prophetic people who speak God's message to our culture and society. But we are called to speak that message with God's heart. Christ came the first time not to destroy, but to redeem and save. We must remember Jesus' rebuke to James and John who wanted to call down fiery judgement on their enemies. Jesus rebuked them and told them that they did not know the spirit they were of. His point was that they were called to walk in a spirit of love toward his enemies and to seek their reconciliation with God.

2. Truth has stumbled in the streets.

- Isaiah 59:1-4
- Isaiah 59:12-15
- People in the West have largely abandoned belief in absolute truth. Many are skeptical of any claims to truth. Truth has been relativized and has become personalized. What's true for you isn't necessarily true for me. Many people base their values and decisions on their feelings, instead of reason and revealed truth. People want the right to decide morality for themselves without any higher authority over them. This is particularly true in our time regarding sexual ethics and morality. Those who seek to uphold biblical morality are viewed as intolerant at best, hateful bigots at worst.
- God has called us to hold unswervingly to the truth he has given us in Scripture. We are not to be open to every idea, view, or proposition if they clearly violate the fundamental truths of Scripture. We are to unhesitatingly and unequivocally uphold our belief in God's inviolable truth, commands, and will as revealed in Scripture. Yet even as we do this, the spirit in which we do it is just as important as the truth we uphold. We must proclaim God's truth and demonstrate Jesus' spirit of meekness, goodness, and kindness. Otherwise our un-Christlike spirit will obscure the truth and repel people. More significantly we will dishonor God and fail to truly be his witnesses.

3. The World Is Not Coming To An End.

- Isaiah 60:1-3
- Matthew 24:14
- As challenging as the times are in which we live, they are in many ways far less than the trials faced by the first century church. When the apostles Peter and Paul wrote the passages quoted in the beginning of this message, Nero was the emperor in Rome. Nero was a despot, who violently abused his power, engaged in unthinkable immorality, and eventually severely persecuted the church. In spite of the corruption of power by Roman emperors, God's word to the early Christians was to honor the office of the king. Even if we cannot approve of the conduct of a civil ruler, we are still called to honor the office of authority.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related point for discussion.

- What adjustment do you need to make to your character to better reflect Christ to this generation?
- What can you do to bring hope to others in this time of our nation's frustration, fear, and anger?
- How can we best pray about the upcoming election?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Ask God to have mercy on the American church and to grant it a spirit of repentance.
- Ask God to have mercy on our nation and to grant it a spirit of repentance.
- Ask God to send his word to our nation's leaders and to convict them of their need for him.