The Smell of Politics

“In Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, Ivan endures all the horrors of a Soviet prison camp. One day he is praying with his eyes closed when a fellow prisoner notices him and says with ridicule, ‘Prayers won’t help you get out of here any faster.’ Opening his eyes, Ivan answers, ‘I do not pray to get out of prison but to do the will of God.’” (Our Daily Bread)

There hasn’t been a time on earth when governments didn’t oppress, take advantage of, make unwise decisions, or treat its’ citizens unfairly, which is why the Bible tells us to simply pray for those in authority rather than retaliate or protest. First Timothy 2:1-2, “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.” Just pray. It doesn’t just highly suggest prayer or recommend prayer if all else fails. Even Jesus prayed for those in authority as they were crucifying Him, “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’” (Luke 23:34) He didn’t pray to make them stop because He knew they were only fulfilling the will of the Father. Whether or not we agree with the governing authorities placed above us, our job is to be obedient to what God has called us to do, and our response is a reflection on us, not them!

The smell of politics has been hanging in the air like a distinct odor. Can you smell it? It seems to penetrate our homes, conversations, workplaces, and our minds. We are in the middle of a groundbreaking election year and it’s hard not to pay attention and feel the potential impending doom of our next President. Let’s pray for them. Are we dissatisfied with our current government or candidates? Pray for them. Are we satisfied with the way things are going? Pray for them anyways. Let’s think of it this way—if we stopped praying for our government altogether? What would happen if our nation never prayed for its’ leaders? Let’s have obedient hearts and pray for the Lord’s will in the direction our nation goes. It’s what we are called to do and is a reflection of our hearts and obedience to our King. “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. (Galatians 6:9)”

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