Hope in the Midst of Chaos Part 2

We spoke last week about what is happening with our nation and the western world by reading Romans chapter 1 together.

God is giving us over to a debased mind, to unholy passions and to the lusts of our hearts. And we said it is a form of judgment on America because of our unwillingness to acknowledge God as God and give Him the thanksgiving and praise He deserves.

But we said there is always a redemptive plan that God is working out through His divine judgements, and we know this because of the patterns we see in the Old Testament with how God dealt with the nation of Israel.

There were five separate judgments in the form of five captivities that came on Israel.

**1.Assyria – (Assyrian Captivity)**

**2.Babylon – (Babylon Captivity)**

**3.Medes and Persians – (Medo – Persian Captivity)**

**4.Greece – (Grecian Captivity)**

**5.Rome – (Roman Captivity)**

Now the Assyrians, Babylon and the Medes and Persians conquered the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel, too the people captive and dispersed the them throughout the provenances of their empires where the Jews began to build synagogues. Greece rose to power and conquered the world and Hellenized the nations which meant they had to learn Greek culture and the Greek language and then Rome comes on the scene and built a road system to move there military and help with trade.

Five captivities which were five separate judgments from God but through them God had a plan; God spread His people out across the world, and they began to build houses of worship, God brought about a common unifying language and God established roads so people could travel.

So that when Jesus comes to earth in the fulfillment of time; that is what the bible says; that there were things that need to be established before He came. After His death and resurrection and Pentecost the early church and the apostles had synagogues that people were gathering and studying the Torha, they had a common language that everyone understood, they had roads they could travel so that the gospel could be preached to the ends of the Earth.

All those judgments but through them all God was working out a redemptive purpose for all of humanity.

And God is doing the same thing today. Only today the promise we look to through God’s judgment is not the coming of Christ but instead it is a Joel chapter two last day out pouring of the Holy Spirit.

Remember this was our sermon outline for our 3 part message.

**1.What is going on with our nation?**

**2.God always has a redemptive plan amid chaos.**

**3.In the last days God is preparing hearts for an outpouring of His Spirt.**

**4.What we need to do as the church / our role and responsibility.**

Now we said because God is giving people over to a debased mind they will no longer be able to think straight or apprehend truth which means things are going to become very confusing because nothing is going to make sense or be predictable anymore. And when we have mass confusion everywhere it will get worse because people will being to fill in the gaps with vain imaginations. The media and others will say this is what is going to happen and then they will say no this is what is going to happen and there are going to be a million voices all shouting what they think not just in the world but in the church as well. And because of that you need clear direction from God in the days ahead which comes from growing in your love for Him because love has the power to clarify and define and give direction.

Okay now that we are up to speed I would like to bring some clarity to some thing I touched on last week. One main area of confusion for the church in the up and coming days will be; **How involved should the body of Christ get when it comes to politics?**

**Mark 12:13-17 ESV - 13And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. 14And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances,[**[**c**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2012&version=ESV#fen-ESV-24680c)**] but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?”15But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius[**[**d**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2012&version=ESV#fen-ESV-24681d)**] and let me look at it.” 16And they brought one. And he said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said to him, “Caesar's.” 17Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.” And they marveled at him.**

Mark says they sent some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians to trap Him; but the question we have to ask ourselves is what was the trap? The Pharisees and the Herodians were God’s chosen people; but the Pharisees were committed to staying separate from society and politics and the Herodians were committed to getting involved in society and politics trying to influence it for the good. The Pharisees and the Herodians were very much like a large part of the church today. Many in the church like the Herodians say we need to influence the powers that govern us and our government to bring about change and help be lights for society. But then there are others in the church that say no if we get involved in these debates and use our influence to try to steer government the attitudes and the corruption of the world will begin to seep into the church and our testimony will be lost.

So you still have God chosen people, the church, who are Pharisees and Herodians arguing and fighting about the same things today that they were fighting and arguing about in Jesus time.

But here’s the trap. They asked Jesus a question; should we or shouldn’t we pay taxes to Caesar? In other wards should we or shouldn’t we be involved in supporting and influencing the government?

But notice how they phrased the question? They said is it lawful or not? In other wards we want a yes or no answer; we want you to answer us Jesus but we want you to limit your answer to something that is black and white.

Do you see the trap? The trap is let’s take something that is very complex and nuanced and lets boil it down to a yes or no answer. But Jesus doesn’t take the bait. No instead he answers the question with much more complexity then they wanted and leaves the listeners with the need and the duty to pray over and think through and discern each situation when it applies to the government.

Now I had said last week that there is a need for Christians to be salt and light in every sphere of society especially government. And there is a need for people to stand up for what is right according to God’s word. We need Christians to answer the call to be on school boards and town mayors and governors and to run for congress. And we need to help support those who feel called to a life of public service. But at the same time there is a complexity to this.

Getting Christians elected and standing up for what is right alone will not bring down the spiritual strongholds that plague our nation. No to fight those types of battles you cannot use the weapons of the world. Those types of battles can only be won on your knees in prayer and through seeking and surrendering to God in all areas of our lives and our public discourse.

Ryan Hewitt shared this when he preached last year but it has always stuck with me.

In Judges chapter 19 and 20 there is this weird story about a Levite and his concubine that is raped and killed by a group of men in a small town in Israel. The Levite cuts up his concubine into twelve pieces and sends the pieces out to the 12 tribes of Israel; Israel gathers together, hears what happened and decides to fight against the town and the tribe that were responsible; the tribe of Benjamin. But here is the crazy part Israel had 400,000 soldiers on their side that were going to go to battle against 26000 Benjaminite’s. 40000 against 26000 that is 16 times more soldiers than the Benjaminite’s and guess who won the battle. Benjamin. And here is the crazy part God told Israel to go and fight against the sexual perversion of Benjamin. But even though Israel had God’s command and direction to fight against the perversion that was destroying their nation they still lost. In fact, they went out again and fought a second time at Gods command and lost again. But then they came back to the camp and to the presence of God and they wept and fasted and brought offerings to God. They waited on God for His direction and then after all that they won and brought down the sexual strongholds.

See the church when it comes to the issue of politics has to deal with much more complexity than people like. We live in this world where we need to be lights for the kingdom, but we have to remember even though we live in this world we don’t fight with the same weapons of the world. So we vote and we answer the call of God to serve in public service but we serve through prayer, through humility and through submission to God’s will; not through securing as much power as we can at any cost and anyway possible because of the greater good. That will never work; like the 400,000 Israelites it doesn’t matter how much power and influence you have you will always get crushed.

Now with that said the church needs to be careful in this hour because we have been anointed by God to be the prophetic voice in society. God has called us to be the referee in the football game of life and politics. We are not on any team; we are not on the republican team even though we might be registered to vote as republican or the democrat team even though we might be registered to vote democrat according to God we are the refs. And God gives us the playbook called the bible of how the game is to be played.

See when we become tribal, and we swear an alliance to a party at any cost we lose our prophetic edge. That doesn’t mean we don’t support certain politicians or public servants, but we hold them to the same accountability as everyone else in every area of life according to the word.

Let me read to you part of an article I was reading from a Christian Author – He said this; **It’s incumbent upon churches and Christian institutions today that they orient around this true gospel—the one given to us by God in Scripture—rather than around the various perverse gospels that tempt us:**[**prosperity**](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/topics/prosperity-gospel/)**,**[**power**](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-high-stakes-of-how-christians-approach-power/)**,**[**politics**](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-know-if-made-an-idol-politics/)**,**[**self-help**](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/women-insecurity-and-the-self-help-gospel/)**. This will mean churches and Christian institutions will not fit easily into the “all or nothing” tribes of our day, because to be prophetic from the center point of the gospel is to**[**challenge multiple sides at the same time**](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/need-leaders-alert-dangers-one-direction/)**:**

I am going to let that marinate with you for a little bit. God has anointed His church to be the voice of truth and the gospel not the voice of the Republican Party or the voice of the Democrat Party or the voice of CNN or the voice of Fox News. Does that make sense?

Then how do we make sure Pastor Michael that we don’t lose our prophetic voice or the true message of the gospel in the very political and divisive days ahead; especially since God might be calling some of us to get involved in politics? Well, I talked about it last week but let me take it a step further. Before Jesus commissioned Peter and released Him to go and preach the gospel to the ends of the earth, He went to Peter in John chapter 21 and asked Him the same question three times.

**John 21:15-19 - 15When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.”16He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” 17He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.18Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” 19(This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”**

Jesus was saying Peter for you to stay focused and to finish your race well; for you to be that voice of the gospel for my people and the lost you need to love me and your love for me has to be ever growing.

See love get this has this unmistakable power that naturally defines and prioritizes and gives clarity in very confusing times.

But here is the thing we don’t need to just love Jesus more, but we need to love His coming more. Every Christian should have a groaning inside of their hearts that longs for Jesus’ return. The bible says that the bride and the Spirit say come. When that groaning is alive and well it brings a right balance to how we involve ourselves in the affairs of this life. We still fight for what is right in society and pursue peace according to the word, but it doesn’t consume us and we are not shaken when things begin to fall apart because of the witness that is in us that this is not our home.

Let me read you another quote from Dr. Martyn Loyd - Jones commentary on the book of Romans when it comes to this.

**So we realize that we are only here as strangers and pilgrims, travelers and sojourners. That, again, is one of the great differences between the Christian and the non-Christian. Non-Christians live for this life and this world alone, so they get excited about the state and about their political parties. They believe the state can work wonders and they are consequently full of a false optimism. That should never be true of the Christian.**

**I repeat that Christians do not set their affections on this world. They do not believe that the world will be reformed and will be made wonderful and perfect. Of course not; they know it cannot happen. They have their eye on the second coming of Christ and the ushering in of the kingdom of God in a visible manner. So their relationship to the state is, in a sese, detached. They are in it, they are subject to it, they observe its rules and its laws, they are the best of citizens. Yet the whole time there is a detachment; they are not lost in it, involved in it, thrilled by it, excited by it, ready to quarrel with people over it. They cannot, because ultimately their citizenship is in heaven.**

The Holy Spirit through this season of judgment is gathering the church and getting its attention and detaching us from the things of this world and all our worldly hopes so that He can begin to stir up this cry in us one more time. Because as our love for Jesus coming begins to consume us and increase our prophetic voice as the church is restored. And the Holy Spirit can began to pour our in the church and society and convict it of sin and righteousness and judgment; it can convict the world of truth.