

## **Your vote matters!**

### **Proverbs 29:2**

Election Day is almost here. Praise God it's almost over. Won't you be glad when you can watch television without being subjected to a barrage of politicians making empty promises? Won't it be nice not to see your mailbox stuffed with political ads everyday?

I'm reminded of the story about a four year old girl who kept tugging on her daddy's coat, trying to get him to stop watching TV and read her a fairy tale. He daddy was weary of watching all those endless campaign commercials anyway, so he turned off the TV and started reading to his little girl. He had just begun to read his daughter's favorite fairy tale when she interrupted him, looked up into his face and asked, "Daddy, do all fairy tales begin with: 'Once Upon a Time?'" The father looked down his daughter, smiled and said, "No sweetheart, most fairy tales begin with, "And when I'm elected..."

Proverbs 29:2 says: *"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan."*

In America, for the righteous to be in authority we have to elect godly men and women. Elections are a basic part of how our government works. In fact, government is one of the three institutions God established along with the family and the church. Paul states in Romans 13:1 that *"the (governmental) authorities that exist are appointed by God."* Since God established the institution of government, we can be certain that He expects those of us who are His children through faith in Jesus Christ to get involved in the process of government.

There are many ways we can do that. We can work at a polling place on Election Day. That's being involved in the process. We can campaign for a candidate. That's another way to get involved. And of course we can run for public office. We certainly could use more Christian people running for public office. However, the most basic and fundamental form of personal participation in the process of government is the simple act of voting. That is what I want to speak to you about this morning. First of all, as American citizens...

### **1. We have the right to vote**

The right to vote is a privilege that millions upon millions of people in this world can only dream about. And yet so many Americans don't even bother to vote. It is a disgrace that half of the Christians in this country aren't even registered to vote, and of those who are registered only half will likely go to the polls this Tuesday in what will be one of the most important presidential elections in our lifetime.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves-and the only way they could do this is by not voting."

Voting is a sacred right. Many Americans before you have bled and died for your right to vote. Use it and make it count for good!

You have the opportunity to be heard through your vote, to elect those who embrace biblical values and stand for truth and righteousness. Take advantage of it! It is your right as an American citizen. Not only do we have the right to vote...

## 2. We have a responsibility to vote

Samuel Adams said: "Let each citizen remember at the moment he is offering his vote... that he is executing one of the most solemn trusts in human society for which he is accountable to God and his country."<sup>1</sup>

There are two reasons why every Christian citizen of this country has a responsibility to vote. First, we have a responsibility to vote because the freedom to vote cost so much. We must never forget that freedom isn't free. You and I can be free from the penalty and power of sin in our lives because God's Son, Jesus Christ was willing to give His life to pay for our freedom. What is true spiritually is also true politically. There are millions of patriots who have paid a great price for our freedom to vote. When we fail to exercise that freedom we are saying to all of those brave men and women who have fought and died for this country that their sacrifice was for nothing.

Second, as Christian citizens we have a responsibility to vote because of the command of our Savior. Jesus said, "*Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's*" (Matt. 22:21). In order to obey the Lord's command "to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar" we must participate in government, and one of the most important ways we participate in the process of government is by voting. If you are a Christian you have a responsibility before God to vote!

Let me make an important point here. Dear folks, not only do we have the responsibility to vote, we have the responsibility to vote right! That means voting our values, our biblically based Christian values.

Unfortunately, many believers don't even consider their Christian values when voting, often choosing candidates whose positions are completely at odds with their own beliefs and convictions. I don't understand that! A study by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life a few years ago showed that 62% of Americans say their faith has little to do with their voting decisions.<sup>2</sup> Church that is a sad statistic.

How should a Christian vote? Now, we can find answers to all of life's most important questions in this blessed book, but the bible won't tell you and me *who* to vote for this Tuesday. You won't find an endorsement of any candidate in the pages of Holy Scripture. You can find Obadiah and Matthew in the bible but you won't find Obama or McCain. However, the word of God does tell us *how* we should vote.

First of all, we should vote pro-faith. One of the most basic of freedoms we have in America is found in the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or *prohibiting the free exercise thereof*." Unfortunately, that freedom is under fire in America today.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ignored the original intent of the Founding Fathers and trashed four centuries of America's Judeo-Christian heritage by turning a statement in one of Thomas Jefferson's private letters completely on its head in declaring a "Wall of Separation" between church and state.

The result is that religion in general and the Christian faith in particular is being slowly and deliberately expunged from every area of public life in America.

Let me give you a little glimpse of what is going on in the United States today.

Recently a Methodist Church Camp in New Jersey lost its tax exempt status for refusing to allow two women to have a wedding ceremony on their private property.<sup>3</sup> A Christian couple who runs a photography business in New Mexico refused to photograph a same sex commitment ceremony and were convicted of "sexual orientation discrimination" and had to pay over \$6,000 in attorney's fees.<sup>4</sup> A New York public school told a Kindergarten student that she could not pray over her lunch "God is great, God is good, let us thank Him for our food" because it was religious speech. The child was eventually allowed to pray, but the fact that her prayer was challenged by school officials demonstrates the depth of the problem.<sup>5</sup> A Federal Court ruled that if a student asked whose birthday is being celebrated at Christmas the teacher could not answer.<sup>6</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> Circuit Court ruled that a NJ high school coach cannot kneel and bow his head because his posture might be misconstrued as prayer.<sup>7</sup> Well, we couldn't have that, could we?

It get's worse. If liberal judges and legislators have their way we may soon lose our freedom to preach the truth of God's Word even in the church.

How many of you have heard of the Hate Crimes bill that has been proposed in Congress? This law would elevate the sinful sexual lifestyle choice of 3% of the population to the level of a Civil Right and criminalize all those who disagree. If this legislation is passed anyone who opposes homosexuality or speaks against that lifestyle will be threatened with prosecution. Christian pastors like me who stand in their pulpits on Sunday morning and declare that homosexual behavior is sinful will be subject to stiff fines and possible imprisonment. If that happens you may have to visit me in the Clay County jail because no jaybird in Washington is going to tell me what I can preach. You say, "Oh preacher you're getting all worked up over nothing. That will never happen here in America." Don't fool yourself. It's already happening in many parts of the world today and it will happen here someday if we don't elect godly leaders who hold to biblical values and appreciate the importance of religious freedom. As President Reagan said, "We must act today in order to preserve tomorrow."

Where a candidate stands on our God given First Amendment right to worship as we please and to freely express our Christian faith at home, at school, at the office, or wherever else we choose, should be critically important to us as we step into the voting booth two days from now.

Second, the bible teaches that we should vote pro-family. The family is the basic building block of society, and the first institution created by God. Genesis 1:27: *"God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them."* God created humankind in such a way that men and women united in the bonds of holy matrimony complete and compliment each other physically, emotionally, and in every other way.

In Genesis 2:24, God further declares: *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."* God's pattern for marriage is one man and one woman united in covenant relationship for a lifetime. And when God's pattern is followed it's good for everyone; it's good for men, for women, for children, for the community, and for the country.

So called "same-sex marriage" is a deceptive perversion of this divine pattern. The Word of God is absolutely clear when it comes to the issue of homosexuality. It is sin! Leviticus 18:22 says: *"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination."* Homosexuality is an abomination to God. The word "abomination" is the strongest word used in the bible to denounce sin. How much clearer can it be than that? The bible says in Romans 1 *"For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting"* (Rom. 1:26-28).

Some people say, "Well, Jesus never said anything about homosexuality." Really? Jesus may not have explicitly condemned homosexuality but in He certainly affirmed the biblical pattern of marriage. In Matthew 19:4-6 Jesus is quoting from Genesis 1 and 2, and states that marriage is between one man and one woman. Jesus said, *"Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."* Now if Jesus said marriage is between one man and one woman, it follows logically that marriage cannot be between two men or two women. In affirming God's divine pattern for marriage, Jesus by implication rejected the perversion of homosexuality.

There is a strong push in our country to radically redefine marriage and the family. The sacred institution of marriage is under attack by radical homosexuals and their allies in the courts. The frightening truth is that we could be just one new Supreme Court Justice Nominee away from legalizing same-sex marriage in this nation. Don't tell me it doesn't matter whether Christians vote their values or not.

Beloved, before you pull that lever, or punch that card, or mark that ballot this Tuesday find out where the candidates stand on the essential issues of morality and the traditional family and then vote right.

Not only should we vote pro-faith and pro-family, according to God's Word we should also vote pro-life. Life is precious, miraculous, and sacred. Every human being is uniquely created by the loving hand of God in the image of God. King David prayed: *"My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them"* (Psalm 139:15-16).

According to the Declaration of Independence, "All men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. Among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Unfortunately, our God-given right to life in America has been overtaken by a "culture of death." Every day in this country more innocent human beings are put to death than those who died in the 9/11 attacks. Abortion ends the lives of more than 1.3 million unborn children in the United States every year. Nearly 50 million babies have been killed by abortion since 1973.<sup>8</sup> Some have called abortion an American Holocaust.

Listen, slick talking pro-choice politicians will do everything they possibly can to make abortion appear less hideous than it really is but the bottom line is this: pro-choice is pro-death! When a woman chooses abortion it means death for her unborn child.

The bible says in Proverbs 6:16-17, "*These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood.*" God hates the shedding of innocent blood! I ask you, what can be more innocent than an unborn baby? God in heaven hears the cries of the little children being sacrificed on the altar of "choice" in this nation, and there will be a day of reckoning!

Church, it is our duty as followers of Jesus Christ and citizens of America to find out where those running for public office stand on abortion, human cloning, and embryonic stem cell research and to vote for those candidates who understand the sacredness of all human life and will do everything they can to protect it.

### **3. We have a reason to vote**

Our vote matters! Think about it. When we vote, we help determine who will lead our nation, make our laws, appoint our judges, and protect our freedoms. Voting is a simple act with a significant impact. One vote can accomplish so much.

### **Conclusion and Invitation,**

The big question facing us on the eve of the election is this: Are we going to let God guide our vote or leave our faith outside the voting booth? That's what it boils down to. Church, let us rise to the challenge, and take a bold stand for faith, for family, and for life in this election.

What a privilege to have the freedom to exercise our right to vote. Next Tuesday we will go into a voting booth and choose who will be our next president. There's another choice every one of us must make today. In just a moment we are going to stand and sing a hymn of invitation. I'm going to ask you to choose to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. I'm going to ask you to make the choice to give your heart, your soul, your life to Jesus and follow Him. Joshua said, "Choose you this day whom you will serve."

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Adams, *The Writings of Samuel Adams*, Harry Alonzo Cushing, editor (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 4:256, originally in the *Boston Gazette* on April 16, 17 81 .

<sup>2</sup> <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=28>. "Most people (67%) say that their religious beliefs play at least an occasional role in helping them decide what to do in their lives. But far fewer (38%) say religion has the same influence on their voting decisions. Overall, 45% say they frequently find themselves using their religious beliefs to help make choices and decisions on a typical day.

But just 22% say they frequently rely on their religious beliefs to help them decide how to vote and 16% say they do so occasionally."

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/18/nyregion/18grove.html>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.onenewsnow.com/Legal/Default.aspx?id=75547>.

<sup>5</sup> Frank J. Murray, "Federal Court Hears Lawsuit Over Kindergarten Christian; New York School may relent, may let tot say grace at meals," The Washington Times, June 12, 2002 .

<sup>6</sup> *Florey v. Sioux Falls School District* , 494 F. Supp. 911 (U.S.D.C., S.D. 1979).

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ca3.uscourts.gov/opinarch/063890p.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> "Abortion in the United States : Statistics and Trends," National Right to Life, Internet, <http://nrlc.org/abortion/facts/abortionstats.html>.