

# (1 Timothy) the Christian and the State

by Brian Brodersen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer as a priority in the life of the church, particularly in praying for those in authority and for God's will to be done in their lives.*

**Duration:** 56:27

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 2:1

**Topics:** "Christian Citizenship", "Prayer And Politics"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of Christians praying for the government and being open to God's guidance in their involvement in politics. They acknowledge that while they may have personal opinions on certain candidates, they ultimately trust in God's plan for human history. The speaker highlights the responsibility of the church to pray for God's will and for the salvation of all people. They also express concern about the negative representation of Christians in the political sphere and call for wisdom and involvement beyond prayer.

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## Transcript

Alright, we'd like to have you open your Bibles to 1st Timothy 2. If you're joining us for the first time, welcome, and we are currently studying together through Paul's 1st epistle to Timothy, picking up tonight in the 2nd chapter and the 1st verse. Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus with the charge of keeping the church from getting off track. He had told Timothy to exhort them to teach no other doctrine, nor to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification, which is in the faith.

And so he more or less began with sort of a negative bit of instruction, things that they were not to do. Timothy was to warn them, don't do these things, don't get off track and get caught up in these disputes and arguments and things that don't really build people up in the faith. Now, as we come to chapter two, he looks at things from the positive side in that he gives him instruction on what they are to do.

And so he says, therefore, I exhort, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercession and giving of things be made for all men. Notice that the first thing Paul says as far as what the church ought to be doing is praying. Top priority in the Church of Jesus Christ is prayer.

That really ought to be at the top of our list as individual Christians, and it ought to be at the top of our list as believers collectively. Now, Paul is giving instruction to the believers as they assemble together. And

Paul is telling them when you get together, make prayer a priority.

You know, Jesus said something interesting in regard to the temple, but I think it definitely has application to the church as well. He was quoting Jeremiah and he referred to the temple as a house of prayer for all nations. He said, my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.

And that's true of the church as well. We are to be a people of prayer. And tonight we're going to be looking at praying and praying specifically for some of the things that we've already mentioned here tonight, praying for government, praying for our leaders, praying for our nation, praying for the world.

But, you know, that's the thing that we need to be doing more than anything else, not that we don't do other things. We need to do other things as well as God leads us. But above and beyond, we need to be praying because I really won't know exactly what to do unless I'm praying and getting direction from the Lord.

I have a friend who has been getting involved in some different kinds of activities in his community regarding the whole issue of gay marriage and sort of standing up in promotion of marriage as it has been traditionally and sort of standing up in resistance to the movement toward gay marriage. And he was talking to me a while back and he was urging me to sort of follow his example in our community and, you know, to do what he's done up there, to do it here in our community here in Southern California. And I said to him, I said, now, tell me how you came to the conclusion that you ought to do this.

And then he proceeded to tell me that he was in prayer over the issue and he was really burdened and he was asking God to give him some direction and show him how he might be involved in some way, shape or form. And then he went to tell me that immediately after he prayed about it, suddenly his phone ring. Somebody asked him if you want to do this.

And a series of events occurred. One thing led to another. And boom, they got this event together.

And I said, you know what? That is great. That is wonderful. And I want to have the same thing happen to me.

I'm glad you're giving me your advice on what you think I ought to do. I appreciate that, but I don't want to go do that because you told me I ought to do it. I want to go do it because God puts on my heart that I ought to go do it, because then when I'm out there doing it and maybe I'm facing opposition or coming up against unexpected challenges, then I will know that it's all right.

I need to persevere because God spoke to me and said, this is what I need to do. There are many things that we as Christians can do and probably should do, but we have to pray first because we've got to get direction. We've got to have wisdom.

We've got to have understanding as we approach these things. And so Paul says, I exhort, first of all, that supplication, prayer, intercession and giving of things to be made for all men. Now, as I said, he's talking about what happens when we gather together collectively as believers.

He's he's instructing Timothy on how to conduct things in the church. So as we get together, he says we ought to be praying. Now, he uses three different terms for prayer, supplication, some some other translations say request and then prayers and then intercessions.

Now, the distinction between these three things is so minimal that it's not worth it to go in and try to, you know, really make a sharp distinction. I don't think that Paul was so much saying, you know, that you've got to have exactly these three things and that there is some stark contrast between the three of them. And if you don't have all three, that your prayers aren't going to be effective.

I think what Paul's doing is he's just wanting to emphasize the importance of prayer. And like he said in writing to the Ephesians, pray with all kinds of prayer. If it's supplication, if it's request, if it's, you know, whatever it is, let's just be praying.

That's the point that he's wanting to make. But he says also in giving of things are to be made, first of all, notice for all men. For all men.

Now, not all men in the gender sense, all people is what he's talking about, we're going to be praying for everyone. Because as Christians, of course, we're the ones who have the connection with God through Jesus, we have the direct line, so to speak. So we can come to God and we can pray for things, and and I believe that it's our duty and responsibility as the church that we should be praying for all people in the sense that we would be praying that God would be saving people, that God would be pouring out his spirit, that he would be convicting people of sin, that he would be opening their eyes and turning them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.

That ought to be something that we are doing regularly as God's people, not being satisfied with, you know, just what we have going on in our own midst, but realizing that, oh, Lord, you you want to bring in more people. You died for the whole world, not just for, you know, this select group that's here or, you know, the other groups that are gathered together in different places. But, Lord, you died for everyone.

And so Paul says that prayer is to be made for all men and Thanksgiving. Now, there are lots of people in the world who do a lot of things that we benefit from that we don't really even know or know anything about. But, you know, just living life, enjoying life, it's it's all a part of God's providential blessing, but it's all a part of, you know, what other people do as well.

And Paul is saying, let's just let's just be praying for everybody, thanking God for, you know, those those blessings that we have that we sometimes don't think through all the way, but stop and think about anything. Well, somebody must have done this to get this to happen. And this has become a benefit to me.

And this is a blessing. And, Lord, I thank you for that series of events that happened and those people that were involved that brought this blessing into my life. Point being, were to be people who are prayerful and thankful.

But now listen to what he says. He goes down more specifically. Prayer is to be made for all men, for kings and all who were in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and reverence.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time. Paul says we're to pray for all men were to pray for kings and all who are in authority.

Now, sometimes as believers and I will be the first to admit that I have had this dilemma sometimes as a believer, it is difficult to pray for people in political power who are wicked people, godless people, people who are making all the wrong decisions, the bad decisions, leading the country in the wrong direction. the

wrong direction. It's hard for me to be passionate about praying for those kinds of people.

And some people would even say, well, we don't have to pray for those guys. You know, they're the bad guys. We just pray for the good guys, we pray for our guy that he can get in.

But, you know, that's not what Paul says. And I don't think and I've mentioned this before, but I don't think it was an accident by any means that the New Testament was written when it was written and under the political situation that it was written under. Because if Paul could and Peter and the others, Jesus himself rendered a Caesar, what is Caesars? If they could admonish us to be submissive toward government under those circumstances, then it sort of just tells us that we're to do that across the board.

Only being accepted when there's, you know, the government is seeking to force us to do something that would be in disobedience to God. But apart from that, generally speaking, we're into or to be in submission. Now, Paul, of course, wrote this while Nero was in power.

You know, Rome was not a government of the people, by the people, for the people. Whatever it began as it by the time Paul wrote this, it was pretty much a dictatorship. And Nero was an incredibly wicked and vile individual.

Michael Grant, in his book entitled *The Twelve Caesars*. He wrote these things concerning Nero. Let me quote from him.

Administrative work had never at any time enjoyed the highest of all priorities among his favorite occupations, for he was far more interested in the circus and theater and in singing, acting, dancing and writing poetry. He was said to have gone to bed with not only perfectly normal, good looking young women, but also with his mother, with men older than himself and with young boys. Graffiti on the walls of Pompeii included inscription by a male prostitute alleging that he personally had served Nero's lust on four different occasions.

Often he appeared in public in a brilliantly colored garment, which resembled an amply flowing toga below the waist and a tunic above it and was adorned by a garish scarf around the neck. Romans sometimes wore clothes of this kind in the relaxed privacy of holiday occasions, but only women were ever seen in them in public. And now Nero had joined their number.

He also liked to sport a kind of flower patterned mini tunic, a short, unbelted affair with a frilly Muslim collar. Nero's final words were. What a loss I shall be to the arts or how the National Theater will miss me.

You know, it's been bad in history, but I don't think that we've had anything yet in our history to match this sort of thing. This is the guy the apostle says to pray for. This is who Paul says to pray for, pray for kings, who's he talking about? He's talking about Nero.

He's the one in power. And Paul actually longed for the opportunity to meet with him and to share the gospel with him. Now, again, as I said, we often struggle.

With. Praying for those that. We are in disagreement with politically or morally or whatever the case, but.

Paul doesn't give us any. He doesn't give us any way out of it. He says this is what we're supposed to be doing.

I'd like to quote to you from. None other than John Calvin. And he says something that I think is quite fascinating and appropriate in regard to what we're talking about here tonight.

In commenting on these verses, he said he mentions kings and other magistrates expressly because the Christians might have had cause to hate them more than all others. All the magistrates of that time were sworn enemies of Christ so that they might have concluded that they ought not to pray for people who were devoting all their power and wealth to opposing Christ reign, whereas. For Christians, the extension of that reign is of all things most desirable, the apostle meets this difficulty and expressly commands that prayer should be offered for them.

Human depravity is no reason for not cherishing something instituted by God. Government is instituted by God. That's what he's referring to.

Therefore, since God has appointed magistrates and princes for the preservation of mankind, however much they fall short of the divine appointment, we must not on that account cease to cherish what belongs to God and to desire its preservation. That is why believers in whatever country they live should not only obey the laws and the behest of the magistrates, but should also, in their prayers, commend their welfare to God. Jeremiah said to the Israelites, pray for the peace of Babylon, for in their peace you shall have peace.

Therefore, we should not only pray for those who are already worthy, but we should ask God to make wicked rulers good. You see, government is ordained by God and the functions of government are ordained by God and what government needs from the church primarily is that we be praying for it. Now, pastors and Paul is addressing these things to the leadership of the church, pastors are not to be seen as the enemy of the government.

Pastors are not to be seen as crusaders against the government, but quite often that's the picture that we get. We see that's not what we're supposed to be doing. What we're really supposed to be doing above everything else as pastors.

As as people who are leading God's people is leading the church to pray for our government leaders, because as Paul goes on to say, he says, for God desires all men to be saved. And to come to the knowledge of the truth and Paul is, you know, he's writing about the kings, he's writing about the rulers. For the most part, these were men without integrity, without morals.

They were godless men, but Paul says God desires all men to be saved, even these guys, you might be tempted. I have been tempted at times to think there's no way I'm praying for that guy. There's no way he could possibly turn around and, you know, take his whole position and view and everything else.

But I don't know that. But I do know this. I know that God said to pray for him.

That's what the Lord has called us to do. You know, the Apostle Paul, he really set us a great example. Paul was brought before magistrates on several occasions.

And the thing that you see with Paul was that he was always very, very respectful and gracious to those that were, you know, basically wicked men. He was brought before Felix Festus Agrippa. And if you read.

In the account there in the book of Acts, you find that each time Paul was so he was so respectful. You know, he said, I think I counted an honor to stand before you today. He said, oh, most noble Festus, I'm

not mad.

He referred to him as noble and he treated them respectfully. And the reason I'm going into this is because I think that today, a lot of times it's easy for us to get swept up in the whole political thing and lose our Christian testimony to a large degree. We're not to adopt that mentality that we find in that political realm.

Obviously, you know this, but in the realm of politics, there's a lot of contention. And it's easy for us as Christians to sort of throw off our Christian demeanor and just jump right into the thick of the battle and start slinging mud and everything else, just like the other guys are doing. And after all, we feel vindicated for doing so.

We feel justified because that guy's a wicked guy. Be that as it may, that might be the case, but that's not what we're supposed to do. We're supposed to pray.

And I often have wondered. If we might not. Have a better reputation in the political realm, if we spent more time praying for our leaders and less time criticizing them and condemning them and trying to, you know, force them to do things the way we think they ought to be done.

But if we if we prayed for them, if they saw us as people who were not against them, but we're praying for God's blessing, we're praying for God's work in your life, we're praying for God's will to be worked through you, those kinds of things. You know, a few years back when I was in New York City, just after. The September 11th attacks, I was there with Mike McIntosh.

And we were kind of dispatched into different parts of the city working with the Red Cross, and Mike happened to be in this place where the families were coming. It was a center where the families were coming to find out what had happened with their loved ones. And, you know, there were all kinds of photographs on the wall and flowers and everything.

And people were congregating there regularly to sort of get updated. And people, of course, at that time were hoping that there were going to be people that survived that catastrophe. But anyway.

One of the persons who visited that particular area where Mike was stationed was former former President Bill Clinton. And Mike was telling me about what happened when he had that face to face encounter with him. And, you know, Mike, as he walked up, he said, you know, how are you, Mr. President? And, you know, thank you for coming.

And he had a conversation with him. And but but as Mike told me how he had addressed him and so forth, I thought, you know, that was right. It was very respectful.

He gave honor to whom honor was due, and he treated him very graciously and very kindly. Now, I'm sure I can speak for Mike. I know he didn't agree with the majority of President Clinton's political views, but nevertheless, he treated him the way a Christian ought to treat somebody else.

And I wonder how much trouble the church has actually brought upon itself throughout history by trying to control government, usurp authority over the government or compete with the government. You know, that has happened over and over again historically. And there are reasons I hate to say this, but it's true.

There are reasons why people have a big sort of a paranoid. Perspective on Christians getting into power, there are there are legitimate historical reasons for that. Because the church, when it's tried to function as

the government, has been just as oppressive as the most oppressive governments that the world has ever known.

That is a hard reality. And that's why we have got to be careful. Because, you know, it's just it's it's it's something that God has ordained to be separate, that men try to bring together and it ends up being disastrous for people.

God has ordained government. He's ordained the church, but they're two different things. They function in two different ways for two different purposes.

Now, I believe with all my heart that we as Christian individual people ought to, especially in the kind of situation that we have. A government of the people, by the people and for the people we ought to wisdom would say we ought to do our best individually to try to influence our society. To seek the peace of the nation that we live in.

By getting involved in the process, but there's a huge difference between that happening and the church coming in and trying to take over the reins of government. And that's what's happened over the centuries. You know, when the Bolshevik Revolution took place in Russia.

And the communists came to power, you know, what turned them so hostile against the czar and the whole existing form of government, there was the fact that the church was the puppet of the government and the church and the monarchy oppressed the people. And they saw themselves as coming in as liberators of that. And they began, of course, to persecute Christians because the church had previously been doing that.

And they didn't make a distinction between true Christians and false Christians and all that. Of course, everybody fell under that. And I'm not, of course, I'm not justifying what the Bolsheviks did, because, again, they claim to be liberators, but they proved to be just as oppressive as the regimes before them.

But the point is this, that they had lived under an oppressive religious authority for a long, long time where the people were abused and taken advantage of and all of those kinds of things. And it's happened over and over again. And we just have to be wise.

We have to be careful. And we have to look to the scriptures for what we are to be doing as believers in this regard. Now, Paul says that we're to pray for kings and for all who are in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

Government is established so men can live peaceably. And that's what we're to pray for, that there would be peace. And of course, there are times historically when things become tumultuous.

And what do we do then? Well, I think we pray more. We pray more and more and more. Now, we are in a time when.

We're all interested in what's happening in the political arena and perhaps. You're not paying much attention to it, maybe you're kind of keeping an eye on what's going on, maybe you're glued to. The news channels or whatever, because you're so intrigued by what's going on wherever we are, we need to be praying.

We need to be praying for God's will. God's plan, God's purpose to be brought to pass. As things happen in the political realm.

Now, I have some ideas that I think are probably good ideas. I think that certain candidates are the right candidates and other candidates are the wrong candidates. But in the end, you know, I'm not God and I don't know with absolute certainty what God wants to do at this stage in human history.

But this is what I can pray with my whole heart and never have to worry about it all. I can pray, God, I ask that your will would be done. Lord, you put the man or the men or the people you put in power, the people you want in power for this time in history, for whatever it is that you're doing.

See, because we tend to think always that, you know, we have to have an ideal political situation in order for everything to function properly as far as the church goes. Well, that's not necessarily the case. You see, as I've said before, and I want to say it again, the church and the success of the church is not contingent upon the political situation.

And if we think it is, we're making a huge mistake. You know, quite honestly, there are times I pray a lot for different parts of the world. And, you know, there is not the kind of freedom that we have here.

And sometimes I find myself in a quandary as I'm praying for those countries because I'm thinking, well, if they have the freedom that we have here, what does that mean? And we prayed for and saw the opening up of the former Soviet Union and the Eastern European nations and all that. We prayed for all that. And yes, the door is open.

We've been able to go in with the gospel and all of that. And that's been wonderful. But, you know, a lot of other stuff has gone in as well.

A lot of other things, a lot of the filth and everything else that is, you know, manufactured here in the land of the free and the home of the brave. It's being exported. Much quicker than the gospel.

So sometimes when I'm praying and, you know, I'm fine, oh, Lord, open the doors, break that government up, free up the people, I think, well, you know, Lord, I don't know if that's exactly what I should be praying. God, I just pray that you would do whatever is best. Because, you know, there are times, of course, when God allows persecution to come.

We think of Christians being persecuted. We think, oh, that's the most that's a horrible thing. Oh, you know, that should never be happening.

That's not the biblical picture. From the biblical picture, we understand that persecution comes sometimes by sovereign. Divine.

Mandate. Because God wants to do something fresh, he wants to do a new work, he wants to purge his church, he wants to get people weaned from materialism and from living for the flesh and all those things. So all of a sudden, boom, he come.

He allows something to come down in society to bring people back to himself and to get their eyes on eternity and off of the temporal situation. So, you know, as I'm saying, sometimes we can just look at something and think, oh, well, this is wrong and that shouldn't be that way. And we need to, you know, get rid of this kind of a situation.

At the end of the day, I must confess, I don't know. What the best thing is a lot of times. And so I've got to say, Lord, you know what's best.

You know what needs to be done. You know, of course, in China. Communism has been the the policy for many years now.

And there are some Christians who think. The you know, the solution, the best possible scenario is for communism to collapse, you know, be overthrown to dissolve from the entire whatever. But, you know, there are others who say, well, you know, that's not really what we're praying about.

I've talked to people that are in it and say, well, that's not so much what we're praying about. We're praying more that God will just keep building the church. God will just keep working.

God will keep spreading the gospel regardless of what the government's doing. So. First priority, ladies and gentlemen.

We need to pray. We need to be praying as God's people. Praying for those who rule over us, praying for our leaders, whatever political party they belong to.

If you're a Republican and a Democrat is in office, can you pray for them? Or vice versa, if you're a Democrat and Republicans in office, can you pray for them? You see, those are distinctions that we ought not to make. I had the greatest experience when I was living in Britain. Because, you know, I wasn't a Tory.

I didn't belong to the Labour Party. I wasn't a social Democrat. So quite frankly, I didn't care about any of the parties.

I could just pray freely for whoever was in power. But, you know, I must confess that I have a bit more of a struggle here than I did there. But I shouldn't.

I should be able to just pray for whoever's there. Now, recently we had mentioned this bill that was on the desk of our governor, a bill that seems to imply that there could be some sort of retribution in the future against those who would speak out against homosexuality. And we were urged to write him, fax him, email him, however else you wanted to get your opinion across to him, to let him know that this is not a good bill.

This is not in the best interest of the community to sign this bill. Well, evidently, he didn't get my email because he signed it. Either that or he didn't really care what I had to say about it.

So what do I do now? Do I send him hate mail? Do I try to get him recalled? You know what I do? You know what we do? We pray for him. We pray, God, help this guy open his eyes, save him. And Lord, if he's not going to get saved, restrain him from evil.

And Lord, if he's not going to be restrained from evil, remove him from power. And if he's not going to be removed from power, then God, do whatever you want to do with him being there. That's where we end up.

You know, the Bible talks about a judgment that's coming on the earth, doesn't it? But you know what it says? It says it begins first in the house of God. That's a scary thing, but it's a reality because, you know, a lot of decisions that are being made in the realm of government, I think, do to some degree indicate that there's a judgment that's coming. But have you noticed that the majority of people don't think in those

terms, they don't care about it, they're not they don't make the connection, we make the connection.

And we are the ones who initially experience the pain we suffer. But that's just exactly what the scripture said. Judgment will begin first in the house of God.

It'll touch us first, because most of the time, we're the only ones who are thinking about it or care about it. We're the ones that are concerned. So what do I do? Well, we pray.

Let's go on and read through verse eight, he says, speaking of God, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our savior, verse three, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and there is one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus. Who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle, I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying, a teacher of the Gentiles.

In faith and truth, I desire, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath. And doubting. So, again, he says.

Pray, men pray everywhere. Now, notice that Paul says, I would that men pray everywhere now, not because women aren't to pray, but I think Paul intentionally says this because men are to take the lead in spiritual things. Now, the fact of the matter is, unfortunately, quite often.

It's women who take the lead in spiritual things. It's the woman who's saying, oh, honey, could we just pray with the family, with the kids? Oh, sweetheart, could we could we just go to church and attend the prayer meeting tonight? Oh, come on, honey, you know, that game's on, you know, we'll do that next week. You know, generally it's it's the man who's dragging his feet.

Paul says. I desire that men pray everywhere. Guys, we got to take the lead.

We are to take the lead. The Church of Jesus Christ. Is to be led by men.

We're going to talk next in our next study about the role of women, and I'm not saying the church is to be led by men to demean women. Women certainly have a vital role to play, but God's called men to take the lead. We live in a society where men have abdicated their roles.

They're not taking responsibility. They're not taking the lead. We must take the lead in the church.

I did a conference last week in Lynchburg, Virginia, and I was so thrilled to stand before 330 men. And to be able to teach them and think, yes, Lord, this is great. These guys, they have families, they have jobs, they have part in their community.

God bless these guys and use them because that's what we need. Men, men praying everywhere. But notice what he says, lifting up holy hands.

Now, why does he say lifting up holy hands? Well, it was a custom. Among the Jews to pray with their hands lifted up, you can find that in the Psalms. Of course, I lift my hands unto your name, Solomon, when he dedicates the temple, he bows on his knees, he stretches forth his hands to heaven and he prays.

And so this was a practice among the Jews, and this became a practice in the early church. And as they would lift their hands and sort of turn their palms toward heaven, it was an indication that my hands are clean. And that's why he says lifting up holy hands.

We can't pray effectively if we have sin in our lives. God's ear is not heavy, that he can't save or God's. Ear is not heavy, they cannot hear and his hand or his arm is not shortened, that he cannot save, but your sins separate you from God and he will not hear you.

So we must be lifting up holy hands if we expect God to hear us. But then he says we're to do so without wrath. In other words, we're to lift up holy hands, we're to have pure hearts, we're not to be filled with bitterness, we're not to be filled with hatred, we're not to have those kinds of issues in our hearts when we're praying, because those things will hinder our ability to pray.

And then it says without wrath and doubting now doubting. It's interesting because the word translated doubting in. The new King James version that I use and the King James version in the newer translations, it's actually translated disputing and actually the word can be translated either way.

So some see it that men are to lift up holy hands without anger and disputing. Some see it without anger and without doubting either way, if it's anger and disputing, it seems to me like that might be more of the context, because Paul was warning earlier about getting into disputes and arguments and getting caught up in all the wrong things. He said, that's not what the church is to be doing.

So I think that that's probably what he's talking about here. In other words, he's saying, don't get caught up in those petty things. Prayer, that's what we need to be doing.

You know, the crazy thing is the world so desperately needs the Lord. But did you know there's a bunch of Christians just squabbling with each other about non-essential, stupid things today? Instead of getting together and lifting up holy hands in prayer, they're fighting with each other. My theology is better than your theology and that kind of thing, that's a waste of time.

So I think that's probably what Paul was actually referring to, although doubting would certainly apply as well, because. If we're praying and we're not believing that God's going to do anything we're asking him to do, then that poses a big problem as well. We need to believe the Lord and we need to be praying in faith that as I'm asking God, God is going to be doing the things that I'm asking him for.

But this is what I want to say as we close tonight. And we'll probably come back to these verses and look at him and from a slightly different point of view, because there's certainly some really key things that he says here about, you know, God being the savior of all men and the one God and one mediator, we probably ought to spend the whole session looking at that. But for our purpose tonight, I want to finish on this note of our responsibility.

So what are we to do as Christians in regard to government and the whole political thing? Number one, top of the list, we're to pray. And as we pray. We're also to be open to God instructing us to then do other things as well.

I think that if we don't vote. We are simply foolish. That's the best way to put it.

Is it a sin not to vote? I don't think it's a sin, but it's stupid because we have something. That most people historically have not had. And most people in the world today really don't have.

We have. The privilege to be able to influence how we're governed. And if we don't take advantage of that, it's just simply a foolish, foolish thing, because if we don't take advantage of it, we'll lose it.

It's as simple as that. So we ought to do that. But not only should we do that.

You know, I was watching something. I was flying somewhere and watching. A news program and they were interviewing Howard Dean.

Now, I don't agree with Howard Dean politically, probably in anything, but I totally agreed with what he was saying in this interview. And what he was saying is, you know, we need to get this nation back on the right track. And the only way we're going to do it, he said, is for the citizens of this country to get involved in the political process.

And he said, and voting is at the bottom of the list. And basically what he said is you need to go out and run for office. You need to go out and involve yourself.

And I think. That there's a lot to be said. About that for Christians.

We look at what's happening in our country and we think this is wrong, this shouldn't be happening, these kinds of things shouldn't be even being brought. Up in our legislative process. And obviously, even in voting, they don't seem to care much about what your vote is on a lot of things.

So what do you do about it? Well, you got to get in deeper. You got to get more involved. And there are certainly.

Examples in the scripture. Where we see that God places men in positions in government. And that is a means of serving God, because government is ordained by God.

So it's a great place for a Christian to serve God. Now, you know, this is pretty much common knowledge, but what everybody has agreed upon is the situation is the way it is, because at a point in time in this country, Christians decided to vacate the public square. They decided to just say, you know what? We're not going to be involved.

This is too corrupt. It's you know, we're just going to pull back and kind of live in our own little world. Well, after 50 years of doing that, you see where it's led.

And I would just encourage you tonight. Those of you that are here, people are listening by radio. I don't know what God's plan is for you, but it could be that you are a gifted person administratively.

It could be that you have an ability to think clearly and to know what kind of policies would be good policies. It could be that you are able to get up and to articulate views and to impact people. And it could be that with those gifts.

God might want to use you in that realm. And so, you know, we have things going on in the local school districts and so forth, and we hear things, we think, oh, that's horrible. That's terrible.

Well, run for election, get on the school board and see if you can do something there. Oh, well, you know, the city council, man, they're so wicked. You know, the stuff they're letting happen in our community.

Well, be a candidate. Go out and see if God might put you in a place like that. You know, I was just in D.C. last week and it is amazing to me.

It's a wonderful thing to see how God uses his people in the political process. Individual Christians. And that's a distinction that I want to make clearly tonight.

The church we do have in this country, what's called separation of church and state. And they the reason they did that now, of course, it's been distorted. It's not today what it originally was meant to be when the Constitution was written.

And as you probably know, that term doesn't even appear in the Constitution, although people are always talking about, you know, the Constitution's separation of church and state. But the way things were set up was intentional because. The people who came here from Europe.

Did not want to see repeated in this country what they had experienced back in their own country, they did not want a state religion that was controlling Christianity and basically enforcing you into a particular denomination and oppressing you if you did not conform to their denominational point of view. That's what they fled from in England. The nonconformists in England were persecuted by the state church, the Anglican Church.

And so when they came here, they said, we don't want that. We don't want the the church. The government to establish a state church that then controls the rest of the churches.

So. Again, that's where the church has to remember that, but we make a distinction between the church as a collective body and individual believers who are also citizens, who also have rights and who can be involved in the political process. And I'll tell you, I hope and pray that here in this wonderful state of California, you know, I never really say anything like this.

I am a fourth generation Californian. My wife's a fifth generation Californian. So we've been here a long time.

And I look at this state that we live in and I think, man, this place needs some help. You know, God's doing some great things in many ways. Some of the best churches, the biggest churches in the country are right here in the state.

But, man, you look at some of the crazy stuff that's going on in Sacramento, you think, how in the world could this happen? Well, maybe it's because Christian people aren't. Considering that maybe there's an area that God might want to use me at here, I was telling you the story about being in D.C., but being back there and seeing friends of mine, people I know who are believers who through a variety of different ways are working with and in the government and seeing the tremendous influence that they're having. It's a wonderful thing.

It's a beautiful thing. Now, they're not there, you know, kicking down the doors and telling people that you shouldn't do that and you better do that. And if you do that, we're going to boycott you.

They're not doing that. They're just being believers. They're just loving Jesus and letting their light so shine before men.

And a friend of mine has worked for many years for a certain senator. And she was telling me this past week, you know, that after all of these years, this senator who was probably in many ways a backslidden Christian when she met her. Now, this this woman is confiding in her that she feels that her calling at this stage in her life is to be an evangelist and she's a senator, but she feels God's calling her to be an

evangelist.

And it's just simply been through the friendship. And the witness of this gal who's been there serving. Quietly, but efficiently, effectively there in the capital.

When I was back there, I met a number of young young men and women who were orphans. And through this particular program, they ended up working as interns for a number of different senators in the state. And some of them that I met were wonderful young Christian men and women gifted, just great young men and women.

And they've been helping out. They help write legislation sometimes and things. I think, wow, that's a great thing to encourage young people to be involved in.

So pray. That's what we need to do as God's people. But because we have the opportunity, a unique opportunity afforded to us, we need to use wisdom.

And as God leads, we need to be involved beyond that as well. And so that's what Paul says. This is what the church is to be about.

And I just had this picture in my mind and I'm closing right now, so. Don't worry, but I have this picture in my mind. You know, I saw I saw this interview the other night.

And there was a man interviewing, there was a person who was representing one thing, and then there was a Christian representing supposedly the church and Christian people. And I got to tell you, I was so embarrassed by what this Christian guy was saying. And I just thought, oh, God, help us.

I do not appreciate that man representing me because he's he's not representing me and he's not representing the Lord either. There was all kinds of venom and hatred and just irrationality coming out of his mouth. I thought, oh, God, help us.

But in my mind, I think, you know, going back to Paul, when Paul stood before Festus, Felix and Agrippa. They were greatly impressed by him. They were greatly moved at one point when he was speaking with.

Felix. It said that. Felix was trembling, he was convicted, said, oh, Paul, go away for a while, come back later, we'll talk later.

But he was greatly impressed, he kept calling for Paul. And when Paul spoke with Agrippa, Agrippa finally says, Paul, are you trying to persuade me to be a Christian? But actually. What he probably meant.

Was Paul, you've almost persuaded me to be a Christian and Paul says, I wish that you were a Christian. I wish you were just like me, except for having this chain. But my point is, there was a great respect for him because he was respectful, because he had the proper demeanor of a believer before these men.

And so there was a respect. And that's the picture I get in my mind that if if we as the church was seen by. The political.

Leaders, many of them, if we were seen as not always being against an antagonistic and threatening and all of the kinds of things that we're so often doing, but if we were seen as praying. And truly interested in their welfare and truly committed to seeking God's best for them, I think that will go a long ways to maybe change people's minds and have a different perspective than they do have on the church.

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