

A Note from Pastor Nathan

But our citizenship is in heaven.
Philippians 3:20

“Jesus Christ is Lord.” Our confession implies ultimate allegiance. If Jesus is my Lord, then Caesar is *not* my Lord. Nobody else is my Lord. Only Jesus.

This does not mean that we are a rebellious people. Scripture repeatedly calls us to respect our authorities even when we are treated unfairly (consider Titus and 1 Peter). But our allegiance to Jesus is absolute. No one can serve two masters. If anyone beckons me to do something contrary to the Lord’s will, I must say no.

At least that is how it is supposed to work. I am a work in progress, as you are. The Lord has great grace with us, for which I am thankful. Learning to follow one Master in a world with many would-be-masters is a difficult journey. It is possible for us to claim Jesus as our Lord while actually serving other lords instead.

This is especially true politically. Jesus appeals to both liberals and conservatives. People of all backgrounds and ideologies have found things they like in the teaching and person of Jesus. On the other hand, people of all backgrounds and ideologies have found things they do *not* like about the teaching and person of Jesus. In every crowd, Jesus has fans and detractors alike.

If my chief allegiance is to a political movement, I will tend to pay more attention to the teachings of Jesus that support my party’s ideas, but pay less attention to the teachings of Jesus that challenge my party’s ideas. I will naturally begin to think and act as if Jesus were on my side. This is how our political rhetoric becomes so heated and condescending. If my cause is God’s cause, then my opponent must be doing the devil’s work!

It may well be that the particular political issue which you are most passionate about is in fact consistent with the witness and momentum of Scripture. I am not encouraging you to become dispassionate about that issue. But the teachings of Jesus challenge every political movement, just as His teachings challenge every human heart. When I am off in my thinking *or in my ways of carrying out my thinking*, I need His rebuke. So do you.

Jesus might be whispering to us among the shouts of our political opponents. In our zeal for being right, we are prone to overlook any truth that might be hidden in the midst of a competing perspective. Our culture loves clichés and overstatements. We lack subtlety and nuance. We make blanket condemnations and wholesale endorsements with little regard for the complexity of controversial issues. All of this stems from and perpetuates a chronic lack of good listening.

But good listening is essential to good citizenship. We are citizens of heaven. The Lord of that realm is unleashing His kingdom on earth, through us. He commands us to love our enemies and to pray for them. This love and prayer necessitates an effort to understand my enemies. I might need to watch my enemy’s favorite cable channel, or read my enemy’s editorial, or give thought to my enemy’s posts on social media. I might not be able to take for granted my friend’s assessments of my enemy. I might need to try to understand my enemy on my enemy’s own terms. I might need to cultivate empathy for my enemy’s personal experiences.

Success does not mean that I must change all of my political views to align with the person I disagreed with; even then, I would simply be switching sets of political enemies. Success, rather, is that my heart begins to soften toward those with whom I disagree. I begin to see them as human beings, loved by God, people for whom Christ died. I begin to “love my neighbor as myself.” That, I think, would be victory. *Lord, help us!*

Grace and peace,
Nathan

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July
2018

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Communion	2	3 6:30 Trustees 6:30 Bible Study 6:30 & 7:40 Softball	4	5 6:30 Deacons	6	7
8	9	10 6:30 Bible Study 6:30 Softball game	11	12	13	14
15	16 6:30 Softball	17 6:30 Bible Study 6:30 Softball game	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Vacation Bible School!!						
29 6:30 CGCMA Songfest @ Tulip	30	31				

Deacon of the Month <i>Jeff Coffin</i>	Trustee of the Month <i>Bert Terrell</i>	Usher of the Month <i>Debra Hudson</i>	Greeters <i>Maryanne Snow</i>
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<u>Reoccurring Weekly Activities @ FBC</u>			
Mondays: 10:00 a.m.	Enhanced Fitness - FH	Wednesdays: 6:15 p.m.	FLAMES - CLC
6:30 p.m.	Cub Scouts – FH	Thursdays: 6:00 a.m.	Men's Breakfast
		10:00 a.m.	Enhanced Fitness - FH
Tuesdays: 6:30 p.m.	Girl Scouts - FH	6:30 p.m.	Boy Scouts - FH
6:30 p.m.	Cottage Prayer Group	6:30 p.m.	Gideons (3 rd Thurs. each month) – FH

Sound System	
1 st	Paul Schmidt
8 th	Braden Hudson
15 th	TBD
22 nd	Eric Moody
29 th	Eric Moody

Prayers	
1 st	
8 th	
15 th	
22 nd	
29 th	

Nursery Care	
1 st	
8 th	
15 th	Marlen Flynn
22 nd	
29 th	Sherry Weeks

Children's Worship <i>(2nd, 3rd & 4th Sundays only)</i>	
8 th	Betty Miller
15 th	Janet Schmidt
22 nd	Kim Schulte