

HOPE IN AN UPSIDE-DOWN WORLD - Part 6

Scripture used: Philippians 1:27 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon continued with this series, which is highly targeted at our time of massive turmoil. Today the focus is on political choices. Pastor Rene Schlaepfer of Twin Lakes Church in Aptos will be delivering the message next Sunday. Per last week's message, we must keep living, serving, and loving. We are God's first responders.

KEY POINTS

- 1) How do we go from the basement of despair to the balcony of light? (Pastor Hurmon used the example of Canadian opera singer Cara McLeod who inspired many other live performance artists to emulate her after she serenaded audiences from her balcony). We need light in contemporary politics. The election is about seven weeks away, and is already the darkest and most divisive in American history. The protagonists in our text are suffering, and even at risk of execution. Yet they make a point to live not in hiding but "on the balcony". The same is true today: the Church should not be divided, as that prevents its being a beacon of hope.
- 2) The Apostle Paul emphasizes togetherness and unity: "one purpose, one spirit". The Early Christians of Philippi need to agree wholeheartedly, be of one mind, and work together. They need to name those who are dysfunctional with kindness and clarity. Paul openly calls two women who are creating a rift (Euodia and Syntyche) to settle their disagreement. Our essence is diversity, and this includes political diversity. But we must first live as citizens of Heaven. The colony of Philippi was undergoing conflict with the laws and authority of Rome. Paul asks his audience to focus on a greater Kingdom, to operate with a regal perspective. Our ultimate passport does not belong to a nation-state but is stamped with the label HEAVEN; and our official birth certificate shows we are reborn in Christ. Politics should be shaped by a Kingdom agenda, and this can be achieved from the brokenness of the political parties.
- 3) What side is God on? Joshua 5:13 (NIV) shows the protagonist asking "Are you on our side, or on the side of our enemies?". God says neither side; He is the Commander-in-Chief of the World. In the same way, we must reject all sectarian & tribal politics and show independence, servanthood to the Kingdom, and follow direction from our conscience. We must keep our political affiliations very loose, and our commitment to God very tight.
- 4) The Gospel pushes us to find alignment, to reconciliation, not to "counting sins." 2 Corinthians 5:19. We must break down the wall of hostility that separates us. We can profoundly disagree and love deeply. We can embrace those with deep-seated opposite convictions. Why? Because it mirrors the relationship Jesus has with us. Jesus smiled with love at the man who refused to follow him and instead walked away. This is the message of the cross.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Discern your heart. Where do your strong opinions and positions come from? Are you willing and eager to listen to other perspectives and narratives?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - How can you elevate the Kingdom to be your highest priority?
- 3) **DO** - Attend next week's message from Pastor Schlaepfer. Be ready to work for alignment and reconciliation during and after the election, whichever the outcome.