**Transcript**

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I Love My Church - Politics
8/25/24

Joy Church

Today’s sermon
• Hard one
o I love my church – because we can hear hard sermons
♣ We can process them
♣ Test them against the Word
♣ Agree/disagree on the gray areas of our culture
• And love each other through it all

Take a poll
• Who is the first president you remember being in office?
o Obama?
o George W Bush
o Clinton
o H W Bush
o Reagan
o Carter
o Ford
o Nixon
o Johnson
o Kennedy
o Eisenhower
o Truman
o Roosevelt
o Teddy?

Americans – love / hate relationship with our presidents
To the point our country is at a point where we are divided almost 50/50 in our politics
Our political parties
Which means that I can find just as many people who say our democracy is in danger if the red hats when or if the blue hats win
• Political division is not just a recent phenomenon – goes way back
o Did you know that we had a president who killed someone in a duel
♣ Andrew Jackson – 7th President vs Charles Dickinson – 1806 (before he was president)
• A disagreement – over a horse race – ended in a duel – and Jackson won!
• Matter of fact – Jackson was in about 100 duels
o More famously our Vice President (1804) – Aaron Burr (VP for Thomas Jefferson) – got in a duel with Alexander Hamilton (another founding father)
♣ While he was in office as VP
♣ Hamilton died the next day

Politics is a harsh business
• I have a thought about our congressmen and women – all congressmen and women need to have their phones taken away
o Until they learn to talk to each other and run the country for the betterment of the country

For goodness sakes, we had a Presidential candidate come within a half inch of being assassinated just a few weeks ago
• Whether you love him or hate him – what a tragedy that would be for America
• And there were even some people online saying things they wish the shooter would have done

This sermon has been on my mind for a while and the assassination attempt put it in the forefront
• I don’t like preaching about politics, but I feel like it would be a mistake to be silent about it
• What about ‘separation of church and state’?
o Not in the Constitution, nor the Declaration of Independence
♣ In the Bill of Rights – amendments to the Constitution
• But, if you read it, you’ll see that its purpose is to prevent the government from promoting 1 religion over another, doesn’t say a word about speaking about politics in a church meeting
• “But a preacher shouldn’t speak about politics”
o Why?
♣ An ice cream truck driver can talk about politics, why can’t a person in a pulpit?

The truth is – and every one of us knows this at the depth of our soul – America’s biggest and deepest problems aren’t political issues – they are spiritual issues
• In the 60’s / 70’s – we took Bibles out of the classroom and brought condoms into them
o Is it any wonder – 3 generations later – why our teens have lost their mind?
• We have completely gotten away from God’s word – what really matters
o Before all of these things were political issues we knew them as Biblical issues
• And where are we now?
o The people who wear red hats blame the people who wear blue hats
o And the people who wear blue hats blame the people who wear red hats
• I want to challenge us today
o To put our red hats / blue hats aside and look at where the Church is at fault in all of this
o I’m sad that I see Christians in the media, on Facebook and social media
♣ Stirring up division
♣ Hate
♣ Anger
o Jesus told us ‘they will know we are his disciples by our love for one another’
♣ Church – we can do better!

We have some fault in this
• Maybe we need to sit back and place the blame on us – God’s people – for the spiritual issues we have in our country

A little tension in the room
• Let’s talk about these spiritual issues

I told you last week, when I teased this sermon, I have the answer, and I do
• This answer will fix our country, fix the world, and fix our world as individuals too
o The answer is revival
♣ By revival, I don’t mean everybody comes to church happy
• The music is really good
• And we all have feel good messages
o I’m talking about a Holy Spirit filled, Word of God revival
♣ A revival with impact
♣ Fulfilling the agenda that Jesus puts in our hearts
• Where we – the church – are known for carrying a servant’s towel and not for all the things we’re against

Let’s talk about revival
• So many times, I’ve heard church people talk about revival like it’s ‘out there’
o It’s out there and if it could just come here we’d be great
• Folks, that’s not it
o Revival starts in here – our heart
♣ Jesus said the Kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21)
• It’s not out there – it’s in here!
o Revival won’t come over the horizon
♣ It’ll come when we start living the way Jesus showed us
♣ Revival can start when you and I internalize this next verse of scripture and start to live it out day-to-day
• It’s a verse that is written for God’s people, not for those who aren’t called by his name
o For us – Christians – those of us when bear the name of Christ when we describe ourselves

2 Chronicles 7:14 (Familiar verse)
• If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land

Verse for today? Or for OT day? Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever
• God is outside of time
• It’s a timeless principle
o And I’m convinced that the solution to our issues starts here in the church house and not the White House
• It would be amazing to have a Godly person in the White House
o But we need to check our own hearts/life
o It’s so easy to solve everyone else’s problems

If my people who are called by my name

My people, my name
• So many times, I’ve heard people quote this verse and point toward all those heathens out there who are far from God
o It’s like we get mad at people who don’t know Jesus because they act like they don’t know Jesus
♣ This verse is for us today
• If you heard that verse and you thought of those ‘red hat’ people or those ‘blue hat’ people, then I want to challenge you to re-think
o To take some ownership
o To look inside and see where you/I need to change

It’s easy to do – blame others – here is how it usually goes
• We take individual people, and we categorize them
o Democrats/republicans
o White/black
o Straight/gay
• We lose sight of the individual and take the leap that all people can be / should be categorized
• Next, we minimize
o Let’s say “Johnny Joy Church” – good person, but he’s a democrat
♣ Then, “you know all those democrats are…”
• We minimize our view of the people as we lump them into their category
• After we minimize we can quickly start to demonize
o That’s how we got the holocaust
♣ Hitler didn’t just start out saying, “Let’s wipe out the entire Jewish race”
• Categorizing the Jews, minimizing them, and blaming the loss of WWI on them
• Minimizing them with propaganda
o So, let’s put them in concentration camps
• It’s easy to say, “I’d never do that, I’d never demonize a group and treat them like Hitler treated the Jews”, but it’s easy to get there in different ways

Then Jesus came along…
• Calls us to reach the world – the whole world
o A picture of the Last Supper
♣ All the disciples there
• Jesus brought these together and said, “love one another” (John 13:34-35)
o That’s great – I think we are all good with that
♣ But we can be very vague with it, it can mean different things to different people
• Jesus clarifies
o “Just as I have loved you”
o Interesting – pointing out 2 who were there
♣ Matthew – tax collector, worked for the Roman government, as left as Bernie
♣ Simon the Zealot – as far right as you can be, Zealots had a bad habit of finding ways to kill tax collectors
• Loving the far left, the far right and everyone in between

Let me ask you
• Which of the Presidential candidates does God love?
• Which one does He not love?
• Which one falls outside the reaches of His love and grace?

Revival won’t start in us when we put our politics aside and get in on Jesus’ agenda
• Committed to a man named Jesus and not a political agenda
• Jesus took those 12 – weeded out 1 – and changed the world
o What can we do with just the crowd we have here?

“Will humble themselves”

Jake – golf – he won!

Humility can come 2 ways
• We can get humbled, or we can humble ourselves

What is humility
• (If we have to tell people how humble we are, we probably aren’t that humble)
o Moses – Numbers 12:3
♣ (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth)
• Humility is to acknowledge that I am not enough
o Preached a few months ago – Christ is in me, I am enough
♣ That’s true, but if you take that Christ is in me piece out of it, you have a humble person saying “I’m not enough”
• “I am not enough”
o “Therefore, I need you”

What if our government leaders were known for their humility and not their hubris?
• What if the church was known for its humility and not for all the things we’re against?

We say, “But, I’m right!”
• Yes, Jesus could have said that too – and been correct
• But Jesus didn’t say “I’m right”, he said, “follow me” and he would transform us into who we need to be

So, we have 2 options – humble ourselves or be humbled
• James and 1 Peter – “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble

Will humble themselves

And pray, and seek my face

Prayer
• I could start reciting the Lord’s prayer (our Father) and most could join me
o We know, “Now I lay me down to sleep…”
o “God is great, God is good, let us thank him…”
• But what if we prayed with the intention of seeking God’s face?

A little experiment
• When I count to 3 (not now) I want you to reach over to the person next to you and start stroking their face
• 1… 2.. no, no don’t do that – that would be creepy

Parents – think about your babies
• Dads – especially girl dads – when baby starts touching your face
• Amazing

If it feels like that to us, imagine how it feels to God when we seek His face
• What would happen if we got that close to God?
• What would happen if we discovered things about Him we never knew because we were seeking His face?

And pray, and seek my face

Turn from their wicked ways

Our wicked ways – not that we are necessarily wicked people (remember God’s talking about His people)
• “Jesus, is there anything in me that isn’t what you want it to be?”
o This could change the world, and it could first change our world
♣ This is how revival starts

2 Chronicles 7:14 (Familiar verse)
• If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land

Then He gives us 3 promises
• Hear from heaven – God hears us
o It’s so easy for us to wonder/doubt if God really hears us
o We say a cuss word and know God hears it and ask forgiveness for a week
♣ We pray and wonder if He hears us
• God hears us / our prayers

Forgive our sins
• Good news!
o What would we do if we believed that?
♣ That Jesus in our lives brings forgiveness?
o We’d celebrate
o We’d sing
o Dance
♣ We’d leave all our shame behind and walk in newness and freedom
• Jesus’ forgiveness saves us from the penalty and the power of sin
o Freedom

1 John 1:9 – All wickedness

Heal their land
• We need that
• Trying to take out (assassinate) a political candidate

The church should lead the way
• What’s our part?
o Jesus is the healer
♣ Maybe take ownership of our part
• We’re “my people” that He talks about
• We are the ones who humble ourselves, pray, seek His face, turn from our wicked ways
o Prejudice
o Hateful
o Unkind
o Uncaring
o Categorizing
o Minimizing
o Demonizing

As a church – repent

Prayer