

John Sampson
"Voting for God's Kin-dom"
Text: Matthew 5:1 - 12
Preached at KVCC
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Will you pray with me?

God, may the words of my mouth, and the meditations of all of our hearts, be acceptable to you, our rock, and our redeemer.

Amen.

This Tuesday is Election Day, and hopefully we'll all be going to the polls, because this is one of the most consequential elections in modern American history. This is an election that is on the mind of every single person here in this room this morning because our votes will help decide, in fundamental ways, who we will be as a people moving forward.

Which doesn't mean we all agree on who the best candidates are, or how to solve the problems that are plaguing this state, and our nation, and the world. There is certainly a diversity of opinion here among us this morning. And that's good, and it's right, and that's the way it should be not only here in this church, but also across our land. It is one of our central beliefs as Americans that we are stronger when we can share different points of view, and different perspectives, and come to consensus on how to move ahead.

Now I am not going to tell anyone who they should vote for. That's not the role of being a pastor; at least as I understand what it means to be a pastor. Because when we vote, when we enter that small booth, or fill out that absentee ballot, it's a moment of conscience for each one of us. It's a moment where we each make a decision as to who we will choose to lead us as a community. And that's between each one of us and our hearts, between our beliefs and our judgment of the candidates running for office.

But what I will say about my role as pastor to this community is that it calls me to remind us, in the midst of the 24 hour a day cable news political chatter, and the tv ads for all kinds political parties, in the increasingly anxious proclamations of all those running for office, of what God's priorities are in the world, what God's dreams for all of her children are. And as a pastor it is my role to remind us that as followers of Jesus we are asked to live into his invitation of love, and of deeper compassion for each other, and for the totality of the Creation.

And so I read aloud this morning God's platform for the Kin-dom as understood by Jesus, the one we call the Christ. These statements I'll share with you are God's priorities for us, and for the world. They are the promises that the Divine is making to us, and telling us that these are the things she is working towards in our world. And I share these statements of God's Kin-dom with you so that you may reflect on them as you make your final decisions of who you will be voting for this Election Day. And I invite you to ask yourselves if and

how these commitments are also the priorities of those running for local, state and national office.

Hear God's platform for the Divine Kin-dom:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Which of our candidates, and I don't say this sarcastically but with curiosity, which of our candidates has shown themselves to be thirsty and hungry for true righteousness, not just for themselves, and for their party, but for all people of this nation?

In your review of the candidates running for office who is the one who actually shows mercy in their lives, and in the way they talk about the role and purpose of our social, political and legal institutions? When have they been shown mercy, and who have they shown mercy to?

Who among those running for office has actually proven to be a peacemaker, and has privileged making peace among our people, and throughout the world, one of their top priorities? What does peace mean to those asking for our votes?

Which candidate has shown a willingness to be beaten up politically, and to give up their party affiliations, and their commitments to their large donors, to do what is right for the country, or for those who have no voice?

These are the questions that our faith invites us to ask ourselves as we prepare to enter that booth on Election Day. In that small space where it is only room enough for our hearts and the ballot before us, God asks us to choose her priorities, even if that means we won't vote along strict party lines, or for the candidates that our neighbors are voting for.

Because I truly believe that God's platform for her children is not identical to the platform of the Democratic Party, nor is it identical to the platform of the Republican Party, nor of

the Independents, nor of the Greens, nor of the Socialists. God's platform is something different and it calls us, all of us trying to follow Jesus and live into his message of love and compassion, to hold our candidates, and political parties, and our political process accountable to the ways in which they will work for those who mourn, and for those who struggle to have the basic needs and rights just to be treated as human beings, and for those who Jesus calls the least of these, and for ordinary people like you and me.

You see, on Election Day God asks us to vote for her Kin-dom, for her dream for her children, and our candidates, and our political parties, are a means to move in that direction, if we want them to be, if we choose to see a bigger picture beyond red states and blue states, beyond liberals and conservatives, beyond the self serving need for unquestioned political power achieved at any cost. You see God is asking us to do nothing less than to vote for radically transforming the priorities of our nation, but also of our hearts.

So this Tuesday, who will you be voting for?

What will you be voting for?

Amen.