

Dear Friends,

As the political heat rises in our nation I am reminded that politics have always been divisive. Going back in history we see that mankind has not ruled this world well. There are exceptions when man has risen to a level of honor and doing right but sadly they are not in abundance.

While thinking about all the haranguing currently filling the news from 'debate' to biased commercials it dawned on me that Jesus was crucified by politics! Maybe I should more accurately say He was put to death by politicians.

John 11:46-48

"...some of them went to the Pharisees and told the things which Jesus had done. Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

This last comment is a bold political statement declaring the need to protect their fragile hold on power in Israel and their fear that Jesus will be declared king of Israel. In verse 50 the high priest says basically, "he has to die to keep the 'whole nation' under our control". He makes it sound noble by saying in effect: "we are doing this to protect our nation from harm."

Later in John 18:33-37 Jesus is dragged in front of Pilate who asks him if he is a king? Again, this is a hugely politically driven question. In Roman controlled lands the only king allowed was Caesar. Jesus, over several verses, agrees that he is a king but "not of this realm" meaning he was not king of the physical world. YET!

In chapter 19 Jesus is mistreated and Pilate wants to release him to the Jews but they refuse and Pilate says "I find no fault in him." Again the political Jews threaten Pilate.

Verse 7-15 the Jews answer him,

"we have a law, and by that law He ought to die because he made himself out to be the Son of God."

Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid."

In Roman times Caesar was also considered the primary god of the empire and swift and painful judgment fell on anyone who claimed or supported that he wasn't god. Pilate again tries to release Jesus but the Jews' final threat is "if you release this man you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar."

Pilate is cornered by these statements and sits to judge Jesus whom he calls "King of the Jews," but the politicians are not done! In John 19:15 Pilate asks "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answer: We have no king but Caesar." They really weren't concerned with anything but their political place of power and so they denounce and removed the threat they feared.

We would like to think that today we are above that kind of behavior. We are not! I see the fight for control in every aspect of life. Families war for control. Judges sit and hear family members battle over child support and visitation with little concern for the pain the children are suffering. In many cases it's about control, driven by pride, and not what is best for the children.

I hear people say they hate politics in church but it is prevalent as one group tries to control of some or all of church life. One of the warnings in James 4 is that we fight and quarrel, we ask and do not receive because of wrong motives.

Verse 7 ...

*God opposes the proud,
but gives grace to the humble.*

We don't like to think of ourselves as proud but we all struggle with it. In Mere Christianity C.S. Lewis writes about pride: "There is no fault which makes a man more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have it ourselves, the more we dislike it in others."

As elections approach it is my prayer that we would realize that the hostile climate in our nation can be a reflection of the pride and unhealthy behaviors in many homes and churches.

James 4:10 "

*Humble yourselves before the Lord,
and he will exalt you."*

Thank you for your faithfulness to the Lord's work at Alpha. Together we are making a difference!

God Bless you,

Richard

Alpha Counseling
/20370 Bond Rd. Poulsbo, WA
Suite 108 \ [\(360\)7793624/ alphapoulsbo.org](http://(360)7793624/alphapoulsbo.org)