

**St. Mark's Lutheran Church**  
**Sunday Morning Bible Study**  
**September 8, 2024**

**Christian Questions - Session One**

Introduction

Sometimes we Christians hesitate to get involved in discussions of religious questions. This may be because of apathy, fear of potential negative reactions to our Biblical convictions (fear of confrontation), or simply because we do not feel qualified to speak clearly and correctly on the topics in question. Have you ever felt that a discussion of an important Christian question was “out of your league”? Are there other “excuses” that we might give? Scripture tells us that we should not hesitate to give a clear testimony to others whenever we have the opportunity to speak the truth and express our faith. Consider the following statements from God’s Word that guide us when we face challenging questions.

- I Peter 3:15-16            *“Always be prepared to give an answer ...”*
- Acts 4:20                    *“We cannot help speaking ...”*
- Ephesians 4:14-15        *“We will no longer be infants ... Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ ...”*
  
- Luke 12:12                 *“The Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say ...”*
- Luke 21:12-15            *“For I will give you words and wisdom ...”*
- Colossians 4:2-6         *“Make the most of every opportunity ... Let your conversation be always full of grace ...”*
  
- Acts 6-7                     *Stephen speaks the truth boldly even when facing death.*
- Acts 5:40-42              *The apostles rejoiced ... “because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name ...”*

Should Christians talk freely about politics? Should they be politically active? What are God-pleasing ways for Christians to express political views?

- 1) We should understand the significance (or lack of significance) of taking a political stand in an election year. Can Christians make a difference?
- 2) We should recognize that elections don’t determine our future. God does.
- 3) The Bible teaches that while God is in charge, he has established and has given authority to earthly governments (reference: Romans 13 and I Peter 2:13-17).
- 4) Biblical examples confirm that we should respect and obey the government even when its leaders are not believers (references: Daniel 2, Habakkuk 1-2, Mark 12).
- 5) We have seen the hand of God at work during our lifetime and throughout the “modern era” of the 20th and 21st centuries, using government leaders and their authority to accomplish his purposes (World War 2, the Cold War, etc.). God has used both godly and ungodly leaders throughout the ages to accomplish his purposes.

- 6) Six truths, or principles, about government that Christians should know (reference: *Politics Is Driving Me Crazy, NPH 2024*). How are these different from the mission, role, and foundational principles of the church?
- a) Its **existence**: Every government is established by God.
  - b) Its **purpose**: Every government works for the good of God's kingdom, knowingly or unknowingly.
  - c) Its **tools**: The state wields the sword to accomplish its purposes.
  - d) Its **method of ruling**: The state uses rewards and punishments to move people to obedience.
  - e) Its **source of truth**: The state governs by natural reason, which is affected (and flawed) by sin.
  - f) Its **survival**: The state rises and falls. The Church, however, remains forever.
- 7) Generally, Christians should respect and obey the government; however, there may be times when we should "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:27-29). We should think carefully about when it is necessary to disobey. What are some situations that apply to this principle?
- 8) In an election year, Christians may struggle with decisions of how to exercise their right to vote or whether they can in good conscience vote for any of the candidates. What is the right path to follow?
- 9) Even if Christians disagree with the outcome of elections, the Bible teaches us to acknowledge the authority of elected officials. We should respect them, obey them, and pray for them.
- 10) Churches should speak up when political issues impact our Biblical convictions, but we should not allow politics to interfere with our primary focus, which is to preach the Gospel.
- 11) Do Christians refrain from "politicking" for the right reasons? For example, would it be wrong if we do not take a stand when a political position compromises biblical principles? What if our refusal to accept and comply with the "rules" of a government program affects our tax-exempt status or eligibility for government programs such as educational voucher programs or other forms of student assistance? (discuss other examples)
- 12) Is it right for the church to accept educational (financial or otherwise) aid from an ungodly government? When is it all right and when not? What are some examples that apply? (see Ezra 6:8-10 and 7:13-26)

## Resources

- *Your Questions, Scripture's Answers* (John F. Brug, NPH 2013, p. 261-287)
- *Politics Is Driving Me Crazy* (Charles Degner, *Forward in Christ*, NPH July-October 2024)
- *Concordia Self-Study Bible, New International Version* (CPH 1986)