

**Hungering for a Godly Nation**  
**Making Public Goodness Attractive**  
**1 Peter 2:11-25, Matthew 16:24-26, 25:22-23**  
**Sermon Outline**

**Introduction:** If we are to love our neighbors as ourselves we will need to be engaged publicly. The Bible gives us wisdom on how to do this, both within the narrow world of power politics and in the broader world of public life more generally. We will note three principles today: (1) This world is not our home; (2) Engaging in power politics is not the only way to be an influential public Christian; (3) We don't have to win.

**I) This world is not our home**

*1 Peter 2.11: Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles...*

**A) In the world but not of it**

**B) Meaning for us**

**II) Engaging in power politics is not the only way to be an influential public Christian**

**1 Peter 1.12,15:** *Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable so that...they may see your good works and glorify God in the day of visitation...This is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.*

**Meaning for us**

**III) We don't have to win**

*Matthew 16.24: ...Let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me*

*1 Peter 2.20: ...If when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.*

**A) Jesus' modus operandi:**

- He was not passive—but he refused to be 'in charge of' results.
- *Matthew 25.23: Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter now the joy of your master.*

**B) Meaning for us**

**Take Away:** Keep public life human

## Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) On October 7 nearly 1500 American pastors, as part of “Pulpit Freedom Sunday”, publicly endorsed particular candidates during their preaching. They recorded their messages and sent them to the IRS to challenge, on First Amendment grounds, that agency’s legal right to remove tax exempt status from religious groups that are officially political. What is your response to this initiative?
- 2) Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 2:11 that we are ‘sojourners and exiles’—that this world is not our home, that Jesus is our sovereign and the church is our ‘nation.’
- 3) According to Peter we are to respect “all men” but we are to fear God. This will mean that we will not be satisfied in our public behavior by the answer to the question, “What can I legally get away with?” What will concern us additionally is the answer to the question, “What is the right thing to do in this situation—What will please God?”
- 4) According to Peter, Christians ought to live public lives that are above reproach so that the world will “give glory to God” and that “the ignorant will be silenced.” Why is this so important? Think of stories both good and bad of how a Christian figure’s public life has affected the public’s view of and interest in Christ. How has your public life added to or detracted from the credibility of the gospel?
- 5) In politics, as in so much of life, we find ourselves needing to win. How does Jesus speak to this impulse in Matthew 16:24 and Matthew 25:23? With what values and motivations does Jesus urge us to replace our need to win?
- 6) Reflect on the following: “Jesus is not asking us to be passive. We are to follow him—and he spoke up and healed people and fed people. But what he did not do was to take charge of results. In the wilderness Jesus refused Satan’s offer of a short-cut to glory, leaving timing and outcomes in his Father’s hands. Jesus came not to win but to serve—what drove him was faithfulness not results. If we are to follow Jesus, as he commands, this will be our pattern as well, in politics as in everything we do.” Analyze Christian activism in politics in the light of this statement—your own activism as well as the activism of others.
- 7) Take time to pray for the upcoming election, and more broadly for the moral and spiritual health of the country and its leaders.