

Prelude – Faith and Politics

Welcome to City Hope! Thank you for being here with us today. Your presence matters. Our teams work really hard to make this church feel like your church.

If this is one of your first times, we are honored. Stop by afterwards and we would love to connect.

I want to give a big shout out to Pastor Brad. I've gotten several calls and texts letting me know how great of a job he did last week. If you haven't gotten to listen yet, go check out our podcast. It will bless you.

Before I jump into today's message, I want to let you know a couple of things.

1. The Loop
2. Students - JP2 Gym at 4pm-6pm
3. Faith and Politics Series

Today is what I'm thinking as the prelude to the next series. I've been planning on doing this series for a while now, but just in the last two weeks I have felt the Lord giving me more urgency. So, we are kind of scrapping the plans we had and jumping right into this.

There are two topics that many people do their best to stay away from...Religion and Politics. So, we are just going to jump in and talk about both of them.

I believe the church should be the safest place to talk about anything.

We'll jump into the deep end next week, but I feel it is vital for us to start this series with a strong foundation.

Let me illustrate it like this: **Show Pictures of Wexner Art Center**

A prominent Christian apologist was doing a lecture several years ago at the Ohio State University. As he was being driven to the lecture, they passed what was then the "new" Wexner Art Center. The driver commented, "This is a new art building for the university. It is a fascinating building designed in the post-modernist view of reality."

He said, "The building has no pattern. Staircases go nowhere. Hallways abruptly stop, Pillars support nothing. The architect designed the building to reflect [the post-modernist view of] life. It went nowhere and was mindless and senseless."

The guest speaker said, "I turned to the man describing it and asked, 'Did they do the same thing with the foundation?'" And the man laughed [and answered]: "You can't do that with a foundation."

No matter if you are talking politics, apologetics, theology, strengthening your foundation is critical in order to make a difference.

Politics often brings out the worst in us. Most of those conversations end in anger, frustration, resentment, or even just flat out hate.

Does that have to be the case? The obvious answer is no. That's not what Jesus would want for His church. That's not what Jesus teaches His church to do.

So, what does He teach? What are the foundational teachings of God that should drive my conversations, and emotions, and feelings?

If you have your Bible, go to Matthew 7.

Jesus was preaching a sermon. He was giving a ton of wisdom on many different topics. When He was wrapping up His teaching, He brought it all together here in our reading for today.

Stand with me in honor of the reading of God's Word.

Matthew 7.24-27 | ²⁴ “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn't collapse, because its **foundation was on the rock.** ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. It collapsed with a great crash.”

Pray

For just a few minutes I want to look at what it means to build your foundation on the rock. For some this may be a new concept, for others this may be a time for you to check your foundation.

1. Believe the Bible...

Matthew 7.24 | “Therefore, everyone who **hears these words of mine** and **acts on them** will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

If we took a poll in here today the majority of us would raise our hands and say, yes I believe the Bible. Our foundation is the Bible.

But notice something here. There are two groups of people he's referring to here. Those who hear His word and do what it says. And those who hear His word and continue to do what they want.

So, this foundational truth is really broken down...You can say you believe, but do you live it out. That's the foundation.

So, point one here is really: **Believe the Bible...and do what it says.**

To do Christ's sayings is conscientiously to abstain from the sins that he forbids, and to perform the duties that he requires.

Our thoughts and affections, our words and actions, the temper of our minds, must be conformable to the gospel of Christ; that is the doing he requires.

All the sayings of Christ, all the truths he has revealed, must be done by us.

They are a light, not only to our eyes, but to our feet. His Word is designed not only to inform our judgments, but to reform our hearts and lives.

We cannot say we believe them, if we do not live up to them.

I want to give you some supporting passages that you can dig into on your own to strengthen your belief in Gods Words.

2 Timothy 3.16-17 | ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Luke 11.28 | ... blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.

John 13.17 | ... If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

Whether it's a political conversation or a parenting conversation, or anything in between,
The Bible must be your source.

A theological phrase used for this belief is ***Sola scriptura* - Scripture is God's inspired Word, it is the only inerrant, sufficient, and final authority for the church.**

Sola Scriptura teaches us, in the end, that all other authorities in the Christian life serve underneath Scripture, while Scripture alone rules over other authorities, for it alone is God's inspired, inerrant, and sufficient word.

If you are a follower of Christ...you should filter your politics through your faith...instead of filtering your faith through your politics.

So that means, my foundation must be strong. The Bible, and all that it says, should be my compass. (Sometimes we just don't really know what it says...That's why I believe

we need to do this series. To help guide you on the basis of what Gods Word says about some prominent issues....not what Fox News or CNN say)

Its true, it's just, its holy. Am I doing what it says? Am I treating people the way it says? Am I growing in my knowledge of what it says?

You have to start here, because all other foundations build off of this one. Which leads us to the second foundational truth.

2. Believe Christ Alone

Scripture, as the Christian's final authority, is a gift from God. It is a gift because in Scripture we are given Jesus Christ himself.

God gave us Jesus as our hope.

Government is not our hope. Red or Blue is not our hope. Choosing Donkey or Elephant is not going to promise you a better life.

John 14.6 I "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me.

Jesus alone can provide access to God because Jesus alone paid the penalty for our sins.

He is the truth, and all other claims are false. He alone is life.

John 1.4-5 I In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it.

The darkness of this world and even politics are competing for your trust. Church we must be united in understanding this truth.

Salvation is in Christ Alone

Identity is in Christ Alone

Hope is in Christ Alone

Peace is in Christ Alone

Trust is in Christ Alone

"If you get Jesus wrong, it doesn't matter what you get right, because your foundation is wrong."

He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Why do we see a decline in our world year after year...because hope is built on promises of politicians instead of being built on the promises of God.

When my hope is built on Christ Alone, all other ground is sinking sand.

The most political statement you can make is, Christ is King.

3. Believe in a Kingdom Mindset

Before the 20th century, the Church ministered to the poor, addicted, and suffering of society. Gradually over that century, the government began to be the safety net for the downtrodden.

The Church slowly surrendered this ground to the government, and with this, lost the privilege of giving practical hope to hurting people. Government influence grew; Church influence declined.

Because of this, many churches have stopped making a difference. (I'm not talking about buildings with steeples, I'm referring to people)

Many believers have stopped seeing people the way Jesus sees them.

A Kingdom mindset involves viewing the world from God's vantage point, aligning our lives with His purposes, prioritizing God in our decision-making, and pursuing His honor and glory with our words and actions. -Nichole Suvar

Jesus said it like this...

Matthew 5.13-16 | ¹³ "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The only way we live this type of live is if we have a Kingdom mindset. An earthly mindset doesn't care about people.

To become a kingdom minded believer, I must recognize my emotions and the place that they play in my life. However, I must also remember that I have been commanded to walk by faith instead of walking by how I may feel today.

People who only live from an emotionally based relationship will never become kingdom minded. They will eventually crash and burn.

A Kingdom mentality is one that makes an intentional decision to live life different than the rest of the culture.

When I'm having a conversation with someone, I disagree with...Kingdom or me?

When I am posting on social media...Kingdom or me?

This is not just for our involvement in politics...

When I am making parenting decisions...Kingdom or me?

When we don't have a Kingdom mindset, our identity, our leadership, our words, our actions will be shaped by cultural trends.

The lack of a Kingdom mindset creates distortion of truth, distrust of everything, dysfunction of community. Any of that sound familiar?

It is important that we, as followers of Christ, work to develop a Kingdom mindset. It's the only way that God can use us to the fullest extent for His plan and purposes.

We, the Church, must enter into this conversation with a Kingdom Mindset.

Conclusion:

I believe we can still make a difference, Church. I believe the world is searching for hope, and we have it!

A lot of people in the world today have a difficult time finding happiness and fulfillment in life because they are going about it in the wrong way.

Before you jump into the politic arena, make sure your foundations are right. Make sure you are leaning on the right things.

- The world says, "Do everything for yourself" The Bible says, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God's glory."

- The world says, "Do what feels good regardless of what God thinks" The Bible says, "Be not conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God."

- The world says, "To get ahead we need to step over some people." The Bible says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

- The Bible says, "But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will given to you as well."

How's your foundation?

Do you have a relationship with Christ?

Are you lead by your emotions or Gods Word?

Is it Christ alone or Christ and in your life?

How's your mentality? Focused on His Kingdom or yours?