

HOW TO VOTE
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The title of this sermon is “How to Vote.”

This week we are celebrating our nation’s birthday on July 4th, and so it is a good time to talk about doing our civic duty.

You may not be interested in politics, but politics is interested in you.

Politics affects every aspect of our lives.

We live in an era of unprecedented political prosperity, and it is because of the politics of our nation’s founding fathers.

We are still reaping the rewards of their work and wisdom and sacrifice today.

But if we do not get involved and do our civic duty, then we can very easily and very quickly lose the benefits and freedoms that we have.

As Christians we have a dual citizenship.

We are citizens of the Kingdom of God, and we are also citizens of the United States.

And in the United States we have a system of government called a democracy, in which politicians are elected and laws are passed by the people, the citizens.

If we pass just laws and elect wise, godly leaders, then our nation will thrive.

If we fail to pass just laws and elect wise, godly leaders, our nation will rot and self-destruct.

Someone asked **Dr. Robert Jeffress**, “Why do you feel that conservative Christians have the right to impose their values on a secular, pluralistic society?” He answered, “Society is always going to be influenced by someone’s set of values. The question is whose?”

There are only two kinds of values. Biblical values, and unbiblical values. There are no neutral laws. Our nation will either be governed by Biblical values or unbiblical values.

We have to do what we can to ensure that righteousness and justice prevail.

God calls us to love our neighbors. How you vote directly impacts your neighbors. You are morally and spiritually obligated to be civically engaged, and to vote when you have the opportunity.

How should Christians vote? The following **five guidelines** will help you to vote Biblically.

1. Religious liberty, not coercion.

Religious liberty is called our first freedom, because it is the first freedom protected in the Bill of Rights.

It is also called our first freedom because it is the most important, and most basic human right.

It is the freedom to exercise your religion as long as you are not physically harming or endangering others.

The First Amendment says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

Religious liberty used to be non-partisan. But lately it has come under attack like never before.

Religious liberty has two primary enemies right now.

Pro-abortion activists, who would like to make it illegal for medical professionals to believe that abortion is immoral.

And LGBTQ activists, who would like to make it illegal to believe that homosexuality is immoral.

They are confusing freedom with tyranny.

Once the government gives them the freedom to do what they want, they now want to force everyone to affirm that their choices are virtuous.

Medical professionals should not be forced to perform procedures that violate their religious beliefs.

Bakers, florists, photographers, and other wedding vendors should not be forced to participate in gay weddings, which violate their religious beliefs.

A little boy had a President Trump-themed birthday party, but his mother had to bake the cake because all of the bakeries refused to make a Trump cake.

Should they have the right to refuse to make a Trump cake? Sure.

When President Trump won the election, Melania asked a famous clothing designer to make her a dress for the inaugural ball, but the designer refused because she did not support Trump.

Should she have the right to refuse to make a dress for Melania? Sure.

A Christian went to a gay baker and asked them to make a cake with a Bible verse against homosexuality, but they turned it down because it offended them.

Should they have that right? Sure.

When a gay couple asks a Christian baker to make a cake for their wedding, should he have the right to refuse because of his religious convictions? Of course.

Don't be fooled by the language of the LGBT advocates.

They claim that they are fighting for equality, but that's not what they want; they want special rights.

They don't just want the freedom to be gay; they want to punish anyone who does not affirm their lifestyle.

They don't just want the freedom to get married; they want to force everyone to participate in their wedding.

They are not against discrimination; they want to make it illegal to discriminate against gays, but legal to discriminate against people of faith.

They are not anti-hate. They want to make it illegal to hate gays, but legal to hate anyone who is condemns the homosexual lifestyle.

In **Matthew 22:21** Jesus said, "Give, then, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

As Christians we have a dual citizenship. We are citizens of the United States, and citizens of the Kingdom of God.

We believe in obeying the law, but not if it means disobeying God.

The government is important, but it is not God.

The government must not overstep its bounds by forcing its citizens to put the law of man before the law of God.

We must not vote for a politician or a law that puts religious liberty at risk.

We do not want a theocracy; we simply want people of all religions to maintain the freedom to exercise their religion.

Without religious liberty, our faith will become illegal, and we will become outlaws and fugitives.

Our second president, **John Adams** said, “Nothing is more dreaded than the national government meddling with religion.”

2. Pro-life, not pro-abortion.

Everyone agrees that murder is immoral and should be illegal.

So why do some advocate for the right to abortion?

Abortion is nothing other than infanticide – child murder.

The abortion debate really comes down to one question? What’s in there?

Is it a human being or something else?

If it is a human being, then it has human rights – the same human rights that we have – the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

What does the science say? There is no debate. Human life begins at conception.

What does the Bible say? Human life begins at conception.

This means that murder is legal in America as long as the child is still in its mother’s womb. But the moment it exits the womb, killing the child is illegal.

As a result, more than 60 million unborn children have been murdered since 1973. That's more than 3,000 murdered children every single day.

Don't be fooled. Abortion is not about women's rights.

What about the rights of the unborn women who are being slaughtered?

Fifty percent of aborted babies are little girls.

Everyone believes in women's rights, but nobody believes that women should have the right to commit murder.

It's a free country, but that doesn't mean we have the freedom to do anything we want.

We still have to respect the rights of others, and that includes unborn children.

Voting pro-life is not about pushing your religion onto others.

Some people say, "I'm pro-life personally, but I'm pro-choice politically, because I don't want to push my views onto others."

That is like saying, "I'm against slavery personally, but I'm pro-slavery politically, because I don't want to push my views onto others."

Exodus 20:13 is very clear. "Do not murder."

We must not vote for politicians who are pro-choice.

Just as the evil of slavery was abolished, we must fight for the abolition of abortion.

3. Free speech, not censorship.

After protecting the freedom of religion, the first amendment also protects the freedom of speech.

It says that “congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech....”

To abridge means to shorten, to lessen.

In other words, the government cannot pass a law that will in any way restrict or censor speech.

Traditionally there are only a few kinds of speech that are unlawful.

You can’t yell “fire” in a crowded movie theater just for the fun of it.

You cannot threaten to physically harm someone. Legally that’s called assault, or attempted battery; battery is when you act upon the threat.

And you cannot order others to commit acts of violence. Other than that, the freedom of speech is the right to say whatever you want.

But today free speech is under attack.

Once again, it is under attack by the gay rights activists, who want to force T-shirt makers and bakers to produce messages that they find immoral.

And free speech is also under attack by the transgender activists, who want to force people to use a transgender person’s preferred pronoun;

they would also like to make it illegal to make statements like this:

“Homosexuality is a sin; marriage is only between one man and one woman; there are only two genders; transgenderism is mental disorder; etc.”

In his book, *We Cannot Be Silent*, Al Mohler said, “The notion of ‘hate speech’ has emerged in recent years as a way of proposing either moral regulations or laws that would prohibit certain speech in the public square because it might be considered derogatory to an individual or a minority. In both Europe and Canada, hate speech laws have been used to sanction and criminalize Christian speech, regardless if a pastor in the pulpit or an individual Christian in the public square is doing the talking.”

These activists claim that there is such a thing as “hate speech,” and that they do not want to censor all speech, just hate speech. They do not want to limit speech, just hate speech.

The problem is that there is no such thing, legally, as hate speech.

The reason is because hateful, offensive speech is very subjective. Things that I find offensive, you may not. And things that you find offensive, I do not.

For example, a gay rights activist might be offended when I say that their lifestyle is sinful. But I am offended when they say that traditional Christianity is hateful.

The activists against free speech are now labeling speech that they find offensive as violence.

And since your speech is violent, they have they right to physically harm you in defense.

This is the justification that is used by extremist groups like ANTIFA.

But speech is not violence. Speech does not physically harm or injure anyone.

Freedom of speech is not merely the right to unoffensive speech – to say things that don't offend people. If that was the case there would be no need to protect speech.

The only kind of speech that needs protection is offensive speech.

Offensive speech is actually the very kind of speech that the first amendment protects.

George Orwell said, “If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.”

In **Acts 1:8** Jesus said, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

God has called us to be His witnesses; to share His truth with a lost and dying world. But without free speech we lose the freedom to witness.

2 Timothy 4:2 says, “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching.”

The mission of the church is preach the word, even if that means condemning the sins of the culture.

But without free speech the church loses the freedom to preach.

We must never vote for a politician or a law that threatens free speech.

Without free speech we lose the freedom to debate. And if we are not free to debate and exchange ideas, then there is no way for the truth to be discovered and to win out.

Instead, only government-endorsed ideas will be allowed to be verbalized.

4. Racial equality, not special privileges.

One of America's most sacred values is that all men are created equal.

Those are the words of the Declaration of Independence.

And those words were used by abolitionists to overcome slavery in the 19th century, and by civil rights activists in the 1960s.

In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., people should be judged by the content of their character, and not the color of their skin.

And this is a Biblical value. The Bible teaches that all human beings are created in the image of God, and every human being has equal value and dignity, regardless of race.

Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female."

The Bible tells us in **Matthew 22:39**, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Racism is the opposite of love.

And by God's grace America has made great strides to rid itself of racism.

We fought a civil war over slavery, which killed 620,000 American soldiers.

In 1863 President Lincoln issued an executive order called the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the 3.5 million slaves in the south.

Then the United States government passed the three Reconstruction Amendments in 1869.

The thirteenth amendment outlawed slavery.

The fourteenth amendment gave blacks full citizenship.

And the fifteenth amendment gave blacks the right to vote.

In 1954 the Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation in public schools (Brown v. Board of Education).

In 1964 the government outlawed all segregation in public places, as well as discrimination on the basis of race (The Civil Rights Act of 1964).

And then in 1968 the government made it illegal to discriminate on the basis of race in home sales, financing, and rentals (The Fair Housing Act).

So now, it can be truthfully said that the American government has rid itself of racism.

Racism will always exist among individuals, just as all sin will continue to exist until the return of Christ, but racism is no longer a significant obstacle preventing black Americans from life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Today, black Americans have all of the same freedoms, rights, protections, and opportunities that white Americans have.

A black man can become a become a brain surgeon, like Ben Carson, or a leading movie star, like Denzel Washington, or business tycoon, like Michael Jordan, or Supreme Court Justice, like Clarence Thomas, or even the President of the United States, like Barrack Obama.

Unfortunately, however, since the 1960s racism has gotten worse, but not for blacks. The pendulum has swung. Now the targets of racism are white Americans. I call it **the New Racism**, and it is something that we need to fight against. Let me explain the New Racism.

- The New Racism refuses to allow white people to speak to the issue of racism because of the color of their skin.
- The New Racism allows black people use certain derogatory terms, but refuses to allow white people to use those same terms because of the color of their skin. Case in point. In the 2015 NCAA Final Four, Kentucky was defeated by Wisconsin. At the press conference, Kentucky's start point guard, Andrew Harrison, without realizing that his mic was on, said about one of the Kentucky players, "F--- that N-----." Andrew Harrison is black, and the other player is white. Andrew Harrison got a free pass. But if the white player had said the same thing about the black player, he probably would have been kicked off the team, lost his scholarship, and lost the opportunity to play in the NBA.
- The New Racism assumes that if a white person wrongs a black person, the motive must be racism.
- The New Racism allows people to vote for a black presidential candidate because he is black, but would condemn people if they voted for a white candidate because he is white.
- The New Racism expects businesses to hire black people just to prove that they are not racist, but it is fine with a business that has all black employees.
- The New Racism believes that a church is racist if most of the members is white, but it does not judge an all-black church by the same standards.
- The New Racism assumes that racism is the reason that most of the coaches in the NBA are white, but it is fine with the fact that the vast majority of the players are black.
- The New Racism blames a black person's lack of success on racism, even though there are plenty of other black people who have succeeded.
- The New Racism believes that all white people are racist, even if they do not mean to be. And white people need to apologize for their own unconscious racism, as well as the racism of all white Americans throughout America's history.
- The New Racism believes that black people cannot be racist, because they are a minority.

- The New Racism believes that America is an extremely racist country plagued by systemic racism, even though it cannot point to any laws or policies that are discriminatory against blacks.
- The New Racism allows businesses and colleges to give hiring and admissions privileges to black people because of the color of their skin.

This New Racism is causing black people to hate white people, because they are told that all whites are racist.

It is causing white people to resent black people because they are being accused of racism and are constantly told that they need to pay for all of America's past injustices.

In fact, the New Racism is the cause of the Alt Right Movement. The Alt Right is simply an extremely evil response to the evil of the New Racism against white people.

We must continue to fight against all forms of racism; white on black racism, and black on white racism.

People must be treated according to the content of their character, not the color of their skin.

We must fight against the New Racism, as well as government policies such as affirmative action.

5. Capitalism, not socialism.

Bernie Sanders ran for president in 2016 as a democratic socialist. And he was extremely popular among young democrats.

But what is socialism, and what is the difference between socialism and capitalism?

Capitalism is about liberty and justice.

Capitalism simply means freedom economics.

That's why capitalism is called free market economics.

People are free to buy and sell and trade as they please.

If you can produce a product or a service that people value enough to pay for, then you can make a good living.

In a capitalist economy, the harder you work, the more disciplined you are, the more responsible you are, the better you will do. However, if you do not work hard, if you are immoral, if you are irresponsible and lazy, then you will struggle.

Socialism is about equality.

Not equal opportunity, but equal outcome.

Socialism sees income inequality as injustice.

When they see that one man makes \$50,000, and another man makes \$500,000, they think it is an injustice.

And so they want to give the government the power to take money from the man who has more and give it to the man who has less so that they are more equal.

There are several problems with socialism.

First, socialism is immoral.

When you take money from someone, it is called theft.

The eighth commandment in **Exodus 20:15** says, "Do not steal."

When you take money from someone to give it to the poor, it is still theft.

And just because the government is doing the stealing does not make it right.

The government has the right to tax people, but only for the general welfare of society.

It does not have the right to tax one man to give to another; that is called theft.

And it is also called slavery because you are forcing one man to work for another.

Under capitalism the government cannot take a man's money and property. A man keeps what he earns.

Second, socialism punishes success.

Socialism assumes that if you are rich, you got that way by taking advantage of others; and if you are rich, then you are not generous and you are not going to share with the poor.

Socialism also assumes that if you are poor, it's not your fault. You are entitled to have just as much as the rich man.

And so the government must step in and take the money from the rich to give to the poor. So socialism punishes success.

On the other hand, under capitalism the government does not play favorites between the poor and the rich.

Capitalism simply rewards value.

Under capitalism, if you work hard, and treat people right, and develop a good reputation, obey the law, and produce a product or service that is valuable to the marketplace, then you will be rewarded accordingly.

And this opportunity is available to everyone.

Third, socialism assumes that income inequality is evil.

The assumption is that if one man makes \$500,000, and one man makes \$100,000, then that is bad. That is an injustice. And the government must step in to correct the inequality.

But the truth is that income inequality is not a problem.

Just because one man has less than another does not mean that an injustice has taken place, or that the man with less is suffering.

The real problem is not income inequality, but poverty.

The issue is not how much do you have compared to your neighbor, but whether or not your basic needs are met.

Capitalism does not try to solve a problem that does not exist.

Fourth, Socialism assumes that equality is possible.

Again, the big problem that socialism tries to solve is inequality. Economic inequality, specifically.

The idea is that if everyone had an equal amount of money, then we could achieve utopia – a perfect society.

But the problem is that equality is impossible.

First, as I said, income inequality is not an injustice. One man having more than another is not evil.

Second, equality is impossible. Imaging two men. One man is a multi-millionaire, and the other man earns about \$20,000 a year. So to correct this inequality the government takes the multi-millionaire's money and divides it between the two of them so that they are equal. Now, they may be equal for a day, but that's all. As time passes, inequality will emerge.

Why? Because the two men are not equal. They have different skills, different talents, different interests, different values, and they will make different choices. Eventually one man will have far more than the other, not because of injustice, but because equality is an impossible goal. It is unrealistic.

On the other hand, capitalism does not try to reach an unrealistic goal. And it does not assume that equality is a good thing.

Capitalism is about freedom – giving people the freedom to buy, sell, and trade as they wish, and to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Fifth, socialism worships the government.

Under socialism, the government's job is to right every wrong, solve every problem, cure every evil, fix all inequality, and heal every hurt.

The government is god.

If we would all simply give up our freedoms and our rights and our resources to the all-loving, all-knowing government, the government would make sure that we are all happy, healthy, and prosperous.

The problem is that history tells a different story.

The more power the government has, the more the government oppresses people rather than cares for them.

The more power the government has, the more society begins to crumble and fall apart.

The Bible tells us why. People are sinful. If you give too much power to sinful people, they will inevitably abuse it.

The founding fathers understood this, and this is why they created a very limited system of government with many checks and balances.

Capitalism does not worship government; it views the government as existing merely to keep the peace and to keep the rule of law; to ensure that nobody steals your stuff, or endangers your life.

Capitalism expects people to be responsible, self-reliant, and able to take care of themselves and to solve their own problems.

Sixth, socialism worships money.

All problems are economic; all solutions are economic; all evils are motivated by economics.

Why do people commit crimes? They are poor. If only they had enough money, then they would make good choices.

Socialism assumes the answer to every problem is to throw money at it.

For example, America's public education has gotten increasingly worse over the years.

What's the solution, according to socialist leaning Democrats? Not competition. The answer is to give the schools more money. And so

they do, every year. And every year, the schools continue to get worse.

The problem is that money is not God. It is not the solution to every problem. God is the solution. Virtue is the solution. Biblical values are the solution.

And money is not the cause of all problems. Human sin and wickedness is the problem.

Seventh, socialism attracts people by appealing to envy and greed.

Human beings are naturally envious and greedy.

So when a politician comes along and says, “This rich man has way more than he needs; if you vote for me, I’ll take his money and spread it around,” he naturally gets a lot of support.

When a politician tells the people that if they vote for him, he will pay for their college, and their childcare, and their food, and their healthcare, and their housing, and their cellphone, then many people are going to support him.

But again, this is called theft. It is legal plunder.

Eighth, socialism attracts people by deceiving them.

Proponents of socialism claim that they are all about equality; they are all about fairness; they are all about helping people; giving people a hand up.

And this is how they attract so many idealistic and naïve young people.

It’s been said that if you are not a socialist in your twenties, then you don’t have a heart. But if you are still a socialist in your forties, then you don’t have a brain.

The truth about socialism is that it is not about helping the poor and disadvantaged; it's about power.

It is about giving all power and control to the government, with the assumption that the government will take good care of us. Once they have all the power, all the control, then all problems will be solved.

It is the assumption that the government will take much better care of us than we can take care of ourselves.

It is the assumption that freedom does not work; government experts must be empowered to control every aspect of our lives.

As well, socialism is deceptive because they make themselves sound very compassionate; very caring; very generous; very loving.

And they make their supporters feel that way, too.

But the problem is that socialists aren't generous; they are thieves.

Generosity is when you take your hard earned money and voluntarily give it to someone in need.

Socialism is when the government steals your money and gives it to someone else.

Socialism isn't about compassion; it is compulsion.

Ninth, socialism doesn't work.

Wherever it has been tried, it has led to mass starvation, mass murder, the violation of basic human rights, the loss of freedom, religious persecution, and government tyranny.

2017 was the 100th anniversary of communism.

In an interview with the Daily Signal, Daniel Hannan said, “Communism, in terms of crude numbers, must be reckoned the most lethal ideology ever devised by human intelligence. The Atlantic slave trade killed maybe 10 million people. The Nazis killed maybe 17 million. Communists killed 100 million people. Every communist regime in the world—Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Cuba, all the way down—every single one has relied on Gulags, torture chambers, secret police, firing squads. You don’t find a single exception. Maybe the fact that every time the experiment is tried, it ends the same way is telling us something about the nature of what it is we’re dealing with.”

To see the failure of communism, all you have to do is note that communist countries put up walls to keep their citizens from leaving, while capitalist countries have to put up walls to keep people from entering.

Winston Churchill said, “The main vice of capitalism is the uneven distribution of prosperity. The main vice of socialism is the even distribution of misery.”

Let me make a few clarifications.

First, socialism and communism are the same thing. People are afraid of the word “communism,” so communists today like to use the word “socialism.”

Second, socialism is essentially the economic philosophy of the Democratic Party, while capitalism is the economic philosophy of the Republican Party.

Third, the Democratic Party has been slowly and deceptively introducing socialist policies in America under the guise compassion through income redistribution.

The idea is that the government will help the poor by taxing people who have money, rather than allowing poverty to be solved by the private sector – by churches, charities, families, and individuals.

We must not vote for any politician is advocates for socialist or communist policies.

Jay Richards wrote, “When we have all the facts before us, then, we discover that Christianity and capitalism are not bitter enemies. On the contrary, a good Christian can be, indeed should be, a good capitalist.”¹

Capitalism is not a perfect system, but it is the best economic system the world has ever known, lifting more people out of poverty than any government program has been able to.

CONCLUSION

So let me conclude with this.

Today I gave you five principles to guide you when you vote.

Now let me make it a little easier for you.

Today our nation is divided into two major political parties, the Republicans and the Democrats. Where do they stand on these issues?

- Republicans are for religious liberty; Democrats are for coercion.
- Republicans are pro-life; Democrats are pro-abortion.
- Republicans are for free speech; Democrats are for censorship.
- Republicans are for racial equality; Democrats are for special privileges for blacks.
- Republicans are for capitalism and free markets; Democrats are for socialism and communism.

¹ Jay Richards, Money, Greed, and God, 8.

Do not miss an opportunity to vote. Attend city council meetings. Run for office. Stay informed. Share your opinion with gentleness and respect (and without fear). And the next time you go to the voting booth, bring your Bible and vote for truth and justice.

Happy Fourth of July! God bless you, and God bless America!