

March 13, 2016
Walking and Speaking Free

Read Leviticus 26: 12-13



Right now, what is something you hear about every day? Well, you probably hear about a lot of things daily, but I'm actually asking about the election. Recently, an article in the *Dallas Morning News* caught my eye. It was about a preacher named Jeffress. Now it is not unusual to see his name in the news. The man writes some interesting sermons that are, doctrine aside, usually pretty morally sound. This time, Jeffress is in the news because he seems to be supporting trump in the election. This is his right. He is exercising his constitutionally given freedom to support whom he wishes. For this action, he is coming under some scrutiny from both sides of the religious playing field.

Christians attack him for supporting a man that goes against some of the teachings of Jesus. Let me remind you in this case of Luther's philosophy that could be paraphrased as this: "It is better to support a pagan fit to rule, than a Christian that is unfit." Please, do not hear me saying by paraphrasing Luther there that I think Trump is *fit* to lead. Rather, know that I will keep my political opinions to myself (at least in my church publications - kind of, anyway). Those on the non-Christian side of things seem to attack Jeffers for preaching within politics. I, personally, have not heard him doing this. That is not to say that he hasn't, but it appears to me that he is only encouraging Christians to vote, and that in his opinion Trump would end up being a friend for Christians in the White house.

Lest this get out of hand as US political discussions often do, the question I would like to raise here is this:

How should Christians handle the election of government officials? This is especially relevant when the options for candidates are as dismal and depressing as they have been in the last few elections (there is my political opinion in a nutshell). First of all, let me just say that you are free to vote however you wish, and perhaps especially if you think that my assessment of the leading candidates is incorrect. Second of all, let me just reiterate something that I have said many times, make sure you vote. As Christians, it is our duty and honor to lend our voice in elections in an effort to stand for the truth of the Gospel to a hurting and sinful nation and world.

Now, I would like to just take a few moments to reinforce these points. As God speaks to his people in our reading for this *Roots*, he has set his people free. For the audience in our reading he was primarily speaking of their freedom from Egypt. But, the same words apply to you in Jesus Christ where you have been set free from sin and death. Because of this fact you have been put in the world where you are to carry out ministry by your very life to the hurting world. One way you do this is by voting for the person you think is best qualified for the job. Use your reason and your God-given conscience to vote. The point is you are free. Does that mean you might vote differently than another Christian? Yes, it does. In these elections we are sinners voting for sinners. Christians will more than likely have similar values and standards by which they

judge the candidates, but we might come to different conclusions as to whom we shall vote for. That's okay, because we are *free* to vote. Remember, the point is you are *free*. And at the end of the day, the God who set you free is the one who is ultimately in charge. At the end of days, the rulers who led well will get their judgement just as the rulers who led poorly will receive theirs, just as we who are in Christ will receive our verdict of innocent on account of our King of kings, Jesus Christ.

In this coming election, no matter what your opinion is, or what your conscience tells you, please vote. You know what is right, you know what is wrong, so as Jeffress has chosen to do, support the person you think is right for the job. Whether you think that this is a choice of the lesser of two evils or that the right person is running, make a choice.

Before I finish this lengthy *Roots*, let me just commend Jeffress for something he said. At the end of the article the author made sure to note that though Jeffress publicly supported Trump, in the pulpit the pastor was concerned not with politics but with preaching to his people. When pressed the preacher said that just because he supported Trump didn't mean that he had to agree with everything that the man said, just like Trump surely didn't agree with everything that the preacher said. Let me just say when he said that, Jeffress spoke well for himself and expressed a good political attitude for all Christians. I hope that he keeps US politics out of his sermons, leaving the politics of Jesus and his Kingdom to rule there and in the hearts of his people. And when you vote, I pray that the politics

of Jesus and his Kingdom guide you and give you peace regardless of who wins the election. God bless you.

Pastor *Carl Jh*

