

IN THE TIME OF ELECTIONS

This message is about righteous principles as it relates to democracy for the average citizen. It is particularly important for Nigerians at this time.

The elections are close in Nigeria, and so the campaign is on. How should a Christian react? Below a few points outlined to help.

1. Pray without ceasing (1 Tim 5:17).

Prayer is powerful; the Bible says that the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective (James 5:16). People of God can make changes in government and in the society by their prayers. The problem is that the generally do not pay the proper attention to this ministry or they ruin the power in their prayers by grumblings, faithlessness, lack of patience, and other behaviours of children of God that ruin spiritual power.

Whether it is democracy or any other form of government, the fact remains that God still rules in the affairs of men, and He is still that one that ultimately determines who will rule. Our votes are just the method that He uses under the scheme of democracy. Space will not allow me now to give testimonies upon testimonies that illustrate this biblical principle. I remember one brother who came to see me once; he told of how he won an election when he was not at all well-known among the political powers or even properly funded. He followed the instructions given Him in a dream by the Lord. Later when he had become very well-known he sought another elective office, the same Lord told him in another dream that no matter what he does he wouldn't win. At the end of the day, the votes were counted and he seemed to have won, then for certain reasons the elections were annulled. God just showed him that He was the one in power and not the masses by their votes or the men who seem to be in power.

We must approach prayer knowing that it is God who makes rulers. He appoints kings as it is written,

So then, let all people everywhere know that the Supreme God has power over human kingdoms and that he can give them to anyone he chooses — even to the least important of men.' Dan 4:17 TEV

So, in the time of elections, we pray for the Lord to choose the leaders that will do His will in the season. Pray that He will thwart the plans of the wicked ones who want to destabilize things for their own benefit. Pray that He will grant peace during the whole process.

It is important that you confess the sins of the land and ask Him for mercy. God will never appoint good leaders for a people that continue to walk in iniquity unless certain righteous ones therein specifically ask Him for mercy. Those that can thus ask for and receive His mercy are called the salt of the land. The salt must do its work of praying.

2. Do not condemn or criticize the government.

Condemning (wishing evil upon people) or criticizing the government are some of those habits of Christians that kill the power of their prayers and erode faith. Refusal to do these things does not mean you agree with or are pleased with everything the government is doing; it just means you are focused on God as the true source of blessing in your life and that you realize that the power still belongs to God even in the minute details. It also means you understand what you have been called to do as a child of God.

We are not called to criticize; we are called to pray.

You may not say evil of the judges, or put a curse on the ruler of your people Ex 22:28 BBE

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior. 1 Tim 2:1-4 NASB

Everyone in life has his God-ordained assignment, and that of the Christian is to pray for the government. Criticizing the government is the job of the opposition party and the numerous critics that we have in the society (many of whom are not at all better than the people than are criticizing). If you have a wise counsel for someone in power, do what you can to send them a word if possible, otherwise specifically pray about the thing that you believe is wise to do; you will be amazed at what the Lord will do. Criticizing, raving, ranting, judging and such activities do not change things; they only create an atmosphere of chaos in the realm of the spirit. Let your anger and frustrations motivate you to pray.

3. It is lawful to campaign

Sometimes because we say that God actually rules in the affairs of men, some think it is therefore wrong to participate in the political processes, but that is an extreme and wrong opinion. The sovereignty of God does not excuse us from working according to what is right within the context of the current form of administration in the society. We must continue to do our physical duties.

Spiritually, it is lawful for those involved in the political process to campaign for any candidate or party of their choice, even if it is the opposition party to the current government. That is different from just criticizing the government. If you are involved, be constructive in your campaign even as you point out where your party or candidate may be better than the opponent, even if they opponent is the current one in power. Christians are to set the example in civility.

3. Plan to vote

Again, the knowledge of the rulership of God among men in choosing who will rule doesn't mean we should not vote. I have heard people say things like 'I vote for God,' or for Jesus

Christ. These divine persons do not have a ballot box or space on the voting sheet. You can only vote for God in prayer and in your personal life.

Voting is a civic duty, so please do it. Don't worry about the possibility of rigging; if you do not vote God will find it rather tight to judge the riggers. Your vote is a spiritual indictment for the riggers; it will provoke the judgment of God on those who do so.

4. Vote based on righteous convictions

As you plan to vote, remember that your vote is a statement concerning your morals, so be careful as you make your statements before God. He is watching you. Your vote is also a statement about what you really desire. Do not vote based on tribal sentiments and such thought processes; vote for the person who you believe is the best of the available candidates and who is closest to what you are praying for God to do in the society.

I remember a room-mate of mine while I was a university student. He came back one day raving about the extreme incompetence of one of the candidates for the just concluded elections into the leadership of the student body in his faculty (he was a law student). He spent quite some time describing how the fellow in question was not fit for the office he vied for and how occupying the office would bring no good to the association. He really tore the fellow to shreds (apparently the fellow won the election, I think as president of the association). Then he concluded the tirade by informing us his roommates that he voted for the fellow.

Shock, shock!

"Why would you do such a thing? You just described how unfit the chap is for the office!"

His answer was, "because he is my brother." ('Brother' here meant they share the same geographical area of origin.)

What??!!

I was flummoxed, but thinking about it now helps me to understand why God doesn't often find it fit to appoint for us good leaders. God cannot appoint good leaders for us if we continue to tell Him that we are not concerned about it. That fellow just said to the Lord by his vote that, "I am OK with an incompetent leader as long as he is from my village." That is the real prayer of people like him; the words they use when they pray are negated by their voting pattern. These are some of the things we do as Christians that kill the power of our prayers. It is called double-mindedness.

For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. James 1:7-8 NASB

Remember, the way you vote is making a spiritual statement, therefore consider your ways.

5. What if he loses?

Please note that no matter how prophetic, holy and righteous you are in your choices and votes during the elections; the candidates you voted for may end up losing. God may choose some other persons apart from the ones you want, and you may not know the reasons He did that. Remember that your vote is a statement while the Lord is the chooser of who wins. You just make the right statement and keep moving. No matter the outcome, be thankful in everything.

6. Last point is - do not stop praying

Prayer is the main weapon we have, and it is potent. Continue to prophesy good upon the land. Speak positive words. Rebuke the spirit of chaos, violence and such negative things. Continually wage war in the realm of the spirit with your words.

It is well with this country, in Jesus' name.



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