



POWER and PRIVILEGE “Overcoming the political spirit” Part 1

Part 1 - The Highest Power

Part 2 - The Greatest Privilege (Policies, Platforms & Promises)

Part 3 - How The Church Overtook Rome

Part 4 - Jesus’ Throne and Inheritance

Share what this series IS NOT

- **It will not address nuance of the political election**
- **It is not meant to help you decide who to vote for**
- **It is not addressed to non believers but this series is specifically being spoken to followers of Jesus Christ**
- **It is not meant to exhaust everything that can be addressed but my commitment to simply cover what the Lord has put on my heart for this community here at Garden City**

The goal of this series

- 1. To be empowered to resist how the world engages during election season. There should be something different when they look at the Body of Christ.**
- 2. To invite God to help us navigate this and future election seasons in a way that glorifies Him and demonstrates that we care for one another.**
- 3. To establish increased faith, hope and confidence in the sovereignty of God and His plan to restore all things in the midst of uncertainty and shaking.**

I am believing as a result of this series God is going to be magnified He’s going to be seen rightly and made BIG again in our hearts and minds bringing us into freedom peace and hope that can’t be taken!

What is the political spirit?

Mark 8:15 Then He charged them, saying, “Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”

The Pharisees were among the religious leaders of Jesus' time and Herod was the regional king of Judea in Jesus' time.

(David Guzik commentary) Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees: This leaven wasn't merely yeast, but a pinch of dough left over from the previous batch, as in the making of sourdough bread. This was how bread was commonly leavened in the ancient world, and a little pinch of dough from the old lump could make a whole new lump of dough rise and "puff up." **So, the work of leaven was considered an illustration of the work of sin and pride.** The presence of a little can corrupt a large amount.

i. "Sometimes the Jew used the word leaven much as we would use the term *original sin*, or the natural evil of human nature." (Barclay)

b. **Take heed, beware:** Jesus essentially said, "Beware of the evil way the Pharisees and Herod think of the Kingdom of the Messiah, for in a short time I will reveal the truth of it to you." Both Herod and the Pharisees idealized the Kingdom as domineering power and authority ([asserting](#) one's will over another in an [arrogant](#) way.). Herod saw it more as political power and authority, and the Pharisees saw it as more spiritual power and authority, but they still saw the kingdom in this high-minded, and prideful way.

It should be noticed that Jesus expresses the same concern regarding both the religious and political leaders. It shows us that the sin He was warning the disciples about was not something that only worldly/political leaders could find themselves guilty of but that religious leaders could just as easily find themselves guilty of this same sin.

The impact of the the political spirit

1. Pride
2. Fear & Anxiety
3. Hatred anger/rage
4. Division

We know that there are times and moments that righteous anger is permitted and necessary. We know that the scripture says that God hates sin and even tells us to as well.

Psalms 11:5 The LORD tests the righteous, But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates.

Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.

God's ability to hate never contradicts that He is love, He is divine, holy and perfect in every way. We must remind ourselves that God's hatred for sin was manifest fully on the cross of Jesus Christ! His hatred for sin resulted in sending His Son to die for us while we still sinners and in His mercy to pay the debt we could never pay on our own!

So please hear my heart in this. I am talking about living in a constant state of anger and hatred that is not righteous but fueled by the flesh and not the Holy Spirit. A pride, fear, hatred, anger and division that takes us away from God, that distracts us from seeking the Lord in prayer, and that makes us feel hopeless. This is what I am talking about today.

Pride

Proverbs 6:16 These six *things* the LORD hates, Yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him:
17 A proud look

1 Peter 5:5 for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

Anxiety

Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; **7** and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Hatred Anger/ Rage

Ephesians 4:30-32 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice (the desire to do evil/ having ill will towards another) . **32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Unity

Ephesians 4:1-6 I, therefore, the prisoner [a]of the Lord, [b]beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, **2** with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, **3** endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in [c]you all.

Psalms 133:1-3 How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! **2** It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on

Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. **3** It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

John 17:22-23 (NIV) I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— **23** I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

At the end of the day Jesus is the one who said that the “meek will inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5), yet its way more attractive to the flesh to take the path of pride, dominance, and control. We have been saved into a Kingdom that is not of this world. When people look at the church and how we engage in politics can they tell that we are a part of a Kingdom that is not of this world?

Loving our “enemies”, humbling ourselves, going low, laying our life down, being kind to the unthankful and the evil (Luke 6:35), these are keys to putting the Kingdom of Jesus Christ on display.

It is our flesh that wants permission to be outraged in an unhealthy way, it is our flesh that wants permission to write people off.

Hear me today. There is money to be made in exploiting the unhealthy fear, anxiety, rage and anger that is being tolerated in the church. Entire ministries are profiting from this, political leaders are leveraging the unhealthy fear, anxiety, rage and anger that exists among believers right now. The goal is to say the most polarizing and provoking thing, social media is being used to smear, make terribly inappropriate jokes, disrespect and speak in disgusting ways about people, Jesus died for and it's being applauded by the church. The goal is to come up with the most sensational and emotionally stirring headline to manipulate and divide. It's wrong and it breaks the heart of God that His children would participate in this. Ask yourself what you are liking, sharing and promoting on your social media? Is it pleasing to God?

Some of us are better evangelists for our favorite political leader than we are for Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior and it's not ok!

I am afraid that many of our hearts, many of our souls are sick, they are infected by this political worldly spirit. We need to repent and ask the Lord to heal us so we can engage in the political conversation from a pure and healthy place!

Hear me today. I am not suggesting that every pastor is being called to address this topic exactly the same way. If you want to go to a church where everyone votes republican, where almost everyone is going to vote for Donald Trump, I know where those churches are and I'll point you to them if that's what you want. If you want to go to

a church where everyone votes democratic, where almost every one is going to vote for Kamala Harris, I know where those churches are and I'll point you to them. That is not something I desire or envision ever being the case here at Garden City, so we better figure out a way to navigate these seasons together because they are coming every four years!

Civic Duty as Christians

Civic Duty—a responsibility that a citizen of a town, state, or country has because they live and benefit from the services provided to them there. In the United States, the main responsibilities are voting, obeying laws, paying taxes, and jury duty.

Mark 12:17 (NIV) Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.” And they were amazed at him.

We can engage in our civic duties without being influenced by the political spirit. I want to give even more language as we lay the groundwork for this series for how the political spirit influences us to treat each other.

How the political spirit influences us to treat each other

1. Dismiss
2. Dehumanize
3. Demonize

Instead we should

1. Empathize with each other
2. Embrace with each other
3. Empower each other

How powerful would it be if during the election season instead of walking on eggshells or preparing for arguments, tension and division we saw it as an invitation to discover and learn more about each other?

My personal journey has been interesting when it comes to engaging in politics. At first I thought it was all pointless. Let's be real, the whole system is set up to divide us. Only being able to choose from two candidates. The winner of the election only has four years to make a difference. We know it's impossible to make any lasting change in four years.

We spend every election season watching and listening to grown ups lie to our face and be nasty to one another and it's only gotten worse over the years. I remember when I was 18 and I got to vote the first time in the 2008 election. I just had my Dad send in an absentee ballot for me. I didn't want to participate. It didn't sit right with me that I was content being so disengaged. The right to vote is a right that I knew was at one point stripped from black people in America. The reality that black people died fighting for my right to vote compelled me to approach things differently in 2012. I remember committing at that point that if for nothing else I was going to vote to ensure that the sacrifice of those who went before me wasn't wasted or taken for granted.

I come from a very opinionated and passionate family. Almost everyone in my family voted the same way. I was unprepared for how even suggesting that I was taking a look at the other party's policies began to create tension between my family and I. It saddens me that I haven't been able to glean from the wisdom and experience of family members who have seen so much and learned so much, because it is almost impossible to have a political conversation without it becoming so unhealthy.

No one should ever feel like being welcomed into community, being loved, and being respected is at risk when it comes to their political opinions, at least not in the church. With that said there should be room for healthy/mature discussion, debate, objective evaluation of thoughts and political opinions without people getting offended when they disagree. The Word of God and the facts of the policies should be the filters we use in such conversations without stooping down to personal attacks, hiding behind sarcasm, or demeaning remarks. It is lazy, immature and ungodly to behave this way and it shouldn't be tolerated. We look and sound like the world instead of believers when we do this and more importantly we misrepresent Christ!

Faith and obedience to the Lord should determine how we engage when it comes to voting and engaging in politics.

Romans 14:23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does not eat* from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is sin.

When it comes to voting, do your research, pray, search the scriptures, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what pleases God (Ephesians 5:10) and then respond accordingly with conviction and confidence.

No matter what, here are four things I believe God wants us all to be convinced of at the end of the day.

When it comes to the issues please know:

1. God sees
2. God hears
3. God cares
4. God is involved

I want to end our time today unpacking the simple truth at The Lord is and has the Highest Power period. We see this expressed by Jesus in one on one conversation with Pilate the governor of Rome who had Him crucified. Let's look at this together.

Jesus stands face to face with the political leaders of His day

John 18:33-38 (NKJV)

Then Pilate entered the [h]Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, **“Are You the King of the Jews?”**

34 Jesus answered him, “Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?”

35 Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?”

36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.” (READ AGAIN)

37 Pilate therefore said to Him, **“Are You a king then?”**

Jesus answered, “You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

38 Pilate said to Him, **“What is truth?”** And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.

John 19:6-12

Pilate said to them, “You take Him and crucify *Him*, for I find no fault in Him.”

7 The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.”

8 Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, **9** and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Then Pilate said to Him, “Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?”

11 Jesus answered, “**You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.**”

Power defined: The capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events.

Sovereignty: Supreme power or authority.

The Lord has sovereign and supreme power and authority, no one else!!

Isaiah 9:6-7 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.**

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”

Daniel 2:21 Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. **21** And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding.

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

I want us all to be encouraged today by the history we can look back on related to God's interactions with human leaders. I want us to be encouraged today by the words of pagan kings who were convinced of God's power and authority!

God's interactions with human leaders

Pharaoh (King of Egypt) - Exodus 9:12 But the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the Lord had spoken to Moses.

Nebuchadnezzar (King of Babylon) - Daniel 4:1-3 To all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! 2 It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. 3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Daniel 4:34-35 And at the end of the [a]time I, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom *is* from generation to generation. 35 All the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

Darius (King of Babylon)- Daniel 6:25-27 to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: "Peace be multiplied to you. **26** I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. **27** He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

Cyrus (King of Persia)- 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 (NKJV) Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying, 23 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who *is* among you of all His people? May the LORD his God *be* with him, and let him go up!

Saul - 1 Samuel 8: 6-8 But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. **7** And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. **8**As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you.

What we need to be asking ourselves

1. In whose power are we putting our faith?
2. In whose power are we putting our trust?
3. In whose power are we putting our hope?

Remember what Jesus said to Pilate

John 18:36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

John 19:11 Jesus answered, “**You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.**”

John 10:17-18 “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. **18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.** This command I have received from My Father.”

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Altar Call: prayer for those who know they need to realign their faith and trust and hope in the one who has all power, our Lord and Savior Jesu Christ!