
Question Time: What is Our Christian Civic Duty?

--- by Priest Ryan Johnson



[Editor's note: Ryan was the guest speaker for the Oak Grove senior high class for two weeks this spring. An active worker in a number of political campaigns, including several of national consequence, Ryan shared his views of community involvement, making it clear that stewardship includes service beyond ourselves, our families and our local churches.]

While there is no one scripture that all consider the cornerstone of the gospel, we all have our favorites, scriptures that speak to us, jump off the page, enter our hearts, and sum up the extent of the good news. For me the latter part of Mosiah, Chapter 8 does that in verses 77-89:

“. . . he that persists in his own carnal nature . . . remaineth in his fallen state . . . Therefore he is as though there was no redemption made; being an enemy to God . . . And now if Christ had not come into the world . . . there could have been no redemption. And if Christ had not risen from the dead . . . there could have been no resurrection. But there is a resurrection . . . and the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ. He is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless . . . that there can be no more death. Even this mortal . . . shall be brought to stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him . . . according to their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil . . . For the arms of mercy were extended towards them, and. . . [despite] being warned of their iniquities, would not depart from them; And they were commanded to repent, and yet they would not repent. And now had ye not ought to tremble and repent of your sins, and remember only in and through Christ ye can be saved?”

These verses remind me of a great and essential truth: I am a great sinner needing to repent, and Jesus of Nazareth is the great Savior – my last best hope. Therefore, I have accepted His invitation, stepped towards Him, and then reached to grasp His outstretched hand rather than sink into the deep.

God is infinite, just, merciful and full of grace. Truly, God is love. With my faith firmly in mind I have a responsibility to God, myself, my family and friends, my church and my community. This responsibility is to care about what happens and be an active participant in the business of life. After all, wasn't it God who gave me (the least of all and chief sinner) the gift of this life, so who am I to waste it?

When we serve each other – men, women, and children, church and unchurch – we serve our Heavenly Father. With this on my heart, and knowing that this year is an election year, it is my sincere hope that you will become involved in the upcoming election. There is much at stake and much to either lose or gain.

Power abhors a vacuum, and wherever there is a void, whether it is the office of City Council, State Representative, Governor or President, it WILL be filled by someone. The question for you and I is who, and in whom will that person place his/her trust? Will they be a champion for life, individual liberty and religious freedom, property rights, and education? Does a candidate for public office believe in a fair and equitable tax system and will they exercise good stewardship over your tax dollars? Or will they implement policies contrary to those values and spend your taxes frivolously?



These are important questions, but may not be so important as asking yourself, “Am I exercising good stewardship over the life, liberty, and land that He has given me and my children?” When was the last time you made an effort to know what goes on in your government at the local, state, and national level? When was the last time you voted, wrote a letter or email, or picked up the phone and called your representative to add your voice to the discussion/debate?

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... (continued from page 6) **What is Our Christian Civic Duty?**

Have you personally considered the idea of public service? If you have not, now is the time. There is a dearth of Christians whose faith is exemplified by their lifestyle while engaged in public service. Whether talking about elected officials or staff members employed by them, there is an extreme minority of Christians who humbly serve and allow Jesus Christ to reign in their hearts and whose faith is displayed by choices made in the political arena.

Now is the time. You are needed and will make the difference on Election Day and afterwards. If there was ever an era that needed Christians to serve at every level, that day and age has arrived. It is my hope that you will step forward with your scriptures in hand and the love of God firmly ensconced in your hearts to fill the opening.

Junior High Class Activities --- by Lori Smith, Teacher



The Junior High Sunday school class has been studying 11 specific sins and how to overcome them. When we began this study about 2 months ago, we found that pride is the foundation of all sin. We specifically studied GREED, BOASTING, MOCKING, LUST OF THE EYES, ANGER, WORRY (FEAR), SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, GOSSIPING, UNFORGIVENESS, ENVY, AND REBELLION. We concentrated on these sins because they seem to be ones we all battle daily, and talked about how these sins are definite temptations with which Satan tries to trap us.

After searching the scriptures, the students had to figure out what scriptures applied to these sins. We then glued mouse traps with the words of these sins on them and the scriptures that apply to them on a fold-out board.

After studying the sins, we studied out how God's Word shows us how to overcome them. The students had to look at each sin and decide as a group what would be the opposite of that sin. They used concordances to look up scriptures in all Three Standard Books showing how God gives us the tools to overcome each sin. It was important to see how God's Word in all three books is consistent.



Brianna Freeze

I then typed up the scriptures they chose and we decorated another fold-out board showing how we can overcome these sins in our lives. We decorated this board with flowers signifying how we bloom when we apply the Word of God to our lives.



Joe Smith, Jacob Smith, Caleb Smith

We finished up the class by making cement stepping stones to signify how God leads us out of temptation "step by step." It is my hope that as the students look at these stepping stones year after year, they will remember to strive to stay in that straight and narrow path that leads to everlasting life.