

Politically Homeless: What Now?

- Pastor Andrew begins by addressing the current polarized climate, recognizing the anxiety surrounding the election. His goal: offer a pastoral word for navigating these months as followers of Jesus.
- **"Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, here in Your presence of love, joy, and peace that is all around us as close as the air, not just up against our skin but in the center of our being. We welcome Your presence. Come, Holy Spirit."**

State of the Nation and the Role of Fear

- Andrew refers to a **Politico** article, citing rising acceptance of violence among both Democrats and Republicans if their side loses. **"Among Americans who identify as Democrat or Republican, one in three now believe that violence could be justified to advance their party's particular goals."**
- This fear-driven division parallels the spiritual journey from fear to love that is central to following Jesus.
- **"80% of Americans said the country is out of control,"** highlighting a deep societal unease. This widespread fear challenges followers of Jesus to live peacefully in a divided world.

The Call to Peacemaking

- Quoting from Jesus' teachings on peace and the kingdom, Pastor Andrew calls on Christians to be peacemakers, not peacekeepers: "Our job is not just to keep the status quo but to bring people together at the table for repentance and reconciliation in love."

Jesus on Politics (John 18:28-37)

- The passage from John 18 shows Jesus' interrogation before Pilate, emphasizing Jesus' stance on a kingdom that is not of this world:
 - **Verse 36:** *"My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders."*
- **Pilate's Response: "What is truth?"** - Reflects relativism and cynicism, contrasting Jesus' call to embody truth.

The Core Message: Jesus' kingdom rejects violence, choosing truth over coercion, love over power.

Christians in a Political World

- Pastor Andrew emphasizes that Jesus' kingdom is not bound by earthly political systems or loyalties. Followers of Jesus today, like those in the first century, do not fit into a single political category:
 - **"Our primary citizenship is to Jesus' kingdom, not any earthly nation."**
- Referencing **Esau McCauley**, Andrew underscores that **"the church should be an ally when leaders do right and a relentless critic when they do evil, especially concerning the vulnerable."**

What We Are For, Not Against

Andrew lists several values rooted in Jesus' teachings that Christians support:

1. **The Whole World:** "God so loved the world," emphasizing love beyond national borders.
2. **Economic Justice:** Care for the poor is central to the gospel; **"We are especially for the poor."**
3. **Non-Violence and Enemy Love:** Jesus' command to love enemies leads Christians to non-violent paths.

Navigating Disagreement

- Pastor Andrew acknowledges that Christians disagree on *how* to achieve certain goals (e.g., helping the poor), but should not disagree on the *what*—the essential call to care for others:
 - **"Our allegiance is to another King and another Kingdom."**

Resource: **"Beautiful Resistance"** by **Jon Tyson** - A look at how Christians can counter cultural hostility with Christ-like values.

Kingdom Allegiance and Identity

Andrew explains that allegiance to Jesus' kingdom orders our identity, belonging, and hope. Our primary citizenship shapes how we engage our cultural or national identity without idolizing it:

- **"We are here to pray and work for the peace and prosperity of our city and nation... but we live for the kingdom, whatever comes."**

Practical Principles for Navigating Political Times

1. Remember: We Are Not in Control

- **Deuteronomy 29:** *"The secret things belong to the Lord our God."*
- Pastor Andrew reflects that true peace comes from surrendering control to God, trusting His sovereign purposes.

2. Kill Contempt

- Andrew points to the **Sermon on the Mount** as a call to reject contempt, which fuels division:
 - **Matthew 5:** *"Anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raka,' is answerable to the court."*
- Instead of judgment or condemnation, Christians are called to humility and love.

3. Embrace Enemy Love as Maturity

- Andrew quotes **Matthew 5** again, highlighting Jesus' command to love enemies, even in political discourse.
- **"Be mature as your heavenly Father is mature,"** calling for Christians to grow into love as the ultimate marker of spiritual maturity.

Closing Reflections

Pastor Andrew closes by acknowledging the sorrow he feels as a pastor, seeing Christians on all sides captivated by ideologies:

- **Paul's Warning:** *"We are not unaware of the enemy's schemes."*
- Christians are reminded that no political ideology will set them free, only Jesus. His call is not to wield power but to embody sacrificial love and truth, even at personal cost.

Resource: "Resident Aliens" by Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon - A profound exploration of how Christians can live faithfully in a society shaped by different values.