

Reaching Out to the Politician Josiah Project: Needful Ministries

We are in the final lesson of the Josiah Project. In the beginning we discussed that all nations, civilizations and cultures have a beginning and an end. What can start out as a great nation can easily go the route of destruction if they adopt standards that are contrary to the values of God. The Bible is filled with nations that went the other way concerning the values of God and were destroyed. From Jerusalem to the nations surrounding her, they lowered the standards and paid the price through built-in and applied consequences.

Our nation is not immune to the immutable rule of God. We started out as a nation that feared God and based our law in puritan values found in the Bible. From the Declaration of Independence which mentions God four times all the way to our coinage that calls for us to put our trust in Him, we were and are a Christian nation. The a number of years ago, men and women “wiser” than all that came before, ignorantly began to defy the Word of God with the idea that the consequences could be sidestepped. We are only a shell of what we were before and have become a nation of fornicators, thieves, liars, blasphemers and baby-killers. We face the same fate as all other nations that have come and gone.

From there we covered the life of Josiah. It was during his time that the nation had already been condemned by God. The straw that broke the proverbial camel’s back was his wicked grandfather Manasseh. God said he had had enough and the nation was placed on His death row. King Josiah had a tender heart toward the Lord, implementing changes in the laws and cleaning up the corruption. He sought the ways of God and made changes as they were called for. He modeled repentance when the actual copy of the Law was found. The temple was restored and the idols were torn down. He could see the writing on the wall, but sought to make a difference. In the end, God allowed that generation to not witness the destruction and the result was a stay of execution.

I am persuaded that we are in a similar position today. We can be the repentant Josiah’s of our generation if only we allow God to use us. In the last section we have covered some useful ministries to make a difference for those around us. A ministry cannot be a ministry if there is not service, education and encouragement. In the first ministry, we covered the need to reach out to the homosexuals, for they are hurting and in need of Jesus to be in their lives. In the second we discussed the need to reach out to the soldier, for their responsibility and need is great. In this lesson, we will discuss the need to reach out to the politician.

Dictionary definition of Politician:

- 1) a person who holds a political office.
- 2) a seeker or holder of public office, who is more concerned about winning favor or retaining power than about maintaining principles.
- 3) a person who seeks to gain power or advancement within an organization in ways that are generally disapproved.

Politicians have always been around, even in the days of Jesus.

Matt 22:15-22 Then the Pharisees went and counseled together how they might trap Him in what He said. 16 And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and

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defer to no one; for You are not partial to any. 17 "Tell us therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to give a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?" 18 But Jesus perceived their malice, and said, "Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites? 19 "Show Me the coin {used} for the poll-tax." And they brought Him a denarius. 20 And He said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" 21 They said to Him, "Caesar's." Then He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's." 22 And hearing {this,} they marveled, and leaving Him, they went away.

- This was one of many accounts where the hierarchy of the leadership in Jesus' day had confronted Him. They felt threatened by the following of Jesus and reasoned it could threaten their power structure. They were willing to do what they could to keep Jesus from becoming their leader.
- They were willing to pay a man named Judas to betray Him.
- They were willing to lie about Jesus by twisting the truth and bringing forth false-witnesses.
- They were willing to have him put to death in the end.
- It was all about politics.

God's View on Governments and Leaders

Rom 13:1-2 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. 2 Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

- Paul is reminding us that God is in control and the government could not have come to power lest by His authority. They are there with the blessing of God, either to bless or punish the people.
- Note: This is not saying that the government trumps the rule of God. If the government imposes an ungodly law, "We must obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29.

Politicians can be Influenced

Acts 13:6-12 And when they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus, 7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the magician (for thus his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 But Saul, who was also {known as} Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze upon him, 10 and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? 11 "And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand. 12 Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord.

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- There was a Roman leader named Sergius Paulus. He was a smart man and wanted to know more about this “Jesus” that Paul and Silas were preaching.
- In 1877 an inscription was unearthed near this area that bears his name and title. He was an influential man in keeping the banks and channel of the river Tiber. The ancient records reveal that he probably returned to Rome about three years later after this account. Perhaps this is one of the ways the gospel made it to Rome?

Sometimes the answer is Maybe.

While Paul was in prison on appeal to Rome, a king named Agrippa wanted to meet him. So the governor took the king down to the prison and arranged a meeting with the apostle. The following is this account.

- Acts 26:22-29 "And so, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; 23 that the Christ was to suffer, {and} that by reason of {His} resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim light both to the {Jewish} people and to the Gentiles." 24 And while {Paul} was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! {Your} great learning is driving you mad." 25 But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth. 26 "For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner. 27 "King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do." 28 And Agrippa {replied} to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian." 29 And Paul {said,} "I would to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains."
- Paul was using this event to reach out with the gospel to the king and possibly the governor himself. This may have been the only time the king heard a gospel presentation. I know it is the only one on record.
- Even when Paul met insult from the governor, he was steadfast concerning the task at hand. He point-blank asked the king a closing question, "King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do." The king confessed that in a short time that he might well be persuaded to become a Christian. Paul was reaching out to a politician.

Sometimes the answer is NO.

Because the nature of the politician is to deal with the world, they have a tendency to reflect that in their actions. When Jesus appeared before Herod, it did not go well for Him.

- Luke 23:8-11 Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. 9 And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently. 11 And Herod with his soldiers, after treating

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Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate.

- They really were not interested in the truth, therefore Jesus would not give them even a word.

Sometimes the answer is YES.

If the church is doing what Christ expects, then conversions will always come. This appears to be the case with Theophilus.

- Luke 1:1-4 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, 3 it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write {it} out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; 4 so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.
- Theophilus was a Christian friend of Luke that went by the title “Most Excellent”. This was a title that was reserved for high ranking Roman officials as demonstrated with two governors from the Book of Acts.
 - Acts 23:26 “most excellent governor Felix”
 - Acts 26:25 “most excellent Festus”
- The purpose for Luke writing his gospel account and the Book of Acts was to provide a high level of documented research to further prove what Theophilus was taught, “...so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.” Somebody reached out to this man with the gospel of Jesus and the result was a faithful politician whose conversion has led to influence for the Christian even today through the some of the writings we have from the NT.

What can we do to influence the politician?

- 1) Letter Writing Campaigns: Let them know of your prayers for them and your thoughts about certain policies.
- 2) Personal Visits: We must take the time to personally know them, just like all relationships.
- 3) Politician Visitor Day: Invite them to a worship service and potluck meal.
- 4) Education on the Issues: We must take the time to learn about some of the issues that should be important to the Christian.