

Don't Forget

I am a conservative, evangelical, Bible-believing Christian. The laws, court decisions, and social movements in this country often conflict with my deeply-held beliefs. That will not change until Christ returns. Like most of you, I wrestle with how I should live as salt and light in this *crooked and perverse generation* (Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 2:15, NASB).

I can't tell you how you should respond to the moral issues that will continue to stir societal tensions. But I can urge you to remember some basic truths that are easily forgotten in the heat of cultural combat:

1. As children of God, our most basic calling is to show those around us just how much God loves them (Ephesians 1:6). Our responsibility is to love them as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:39). Nothing is ever more important than love. Nothing! Without love, everything we say is as meaningless and obnoxious as a *noisy gong or a clanging cymbal* (1 Corinthians 13:1, NASB).
2. Jesus didn't respond to people as classes. He resisted labels. He dealt with people as individuals, and always with respect. His Spirit should guide every personal interaction. Remember that each individual is unspeakably precious to Him. Treat them that way.
3. Jesus said: "*God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world*" (John 3:17, NASB). He didn't condemn the morally disreputable of His day but openly befriended them and socialized with them. The religious conservatives accused Him of being a "friend of sinners", a charge which He gladly owned. If He did not come to judge sinners, neither have we.
4. People do not become righteous by externally-imposed laws, but by grace through faith. They are drawn to God from the inside, not driven from the outside. Righteous laws don't make a righteous people, nor does a perfect president, a perfect court system, or a perfect Congress. Old Testament Israel was given a perfect legal code, dictated by God Himself, with Moses as their leader. Did that make them a godly nation? Not even close. Neither would Christian laws make America Christian. The Biblical agent for changing individuals and societies is not law, but grace. Shouldn't grace be our focus?

*Father, keep us Christ-like,
not only in our opinions,
but in the way we express them.*

Hymn: God Is Calling

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