

Following Jesus in a Politically-Charged Season

John 10: 14-16 & 27

Introduction:

Words are abounding these days. Slogans, yard signs, and commercials are filled with voices, bidding us to listen to their perspective and direction.

Now, more than ever, we need to know how to hear, know, and follow the voice of the Good Shepherd. The pastors and elders at Redeemer are encouraging us to consider a list of 10 commitments (borrowed from Redemption Church in Arizona). These commitments will help us keep Christ at the forefront in a politically-charged season.

1. **Worship (Ex 20:2-3; Psalm 115:1-8, Phil 2:9-11).**

I commit my allegiance to King Jesus over all other idols and ideologies.

2. **Love of neighbor (Phil 2:1-11, Matt 22:34-40).**

I commit to participating in civic life as a means of loving and serving my neighbor rather than just serving my own interests.

3. **Image of God (Gen 1:26, James 3:9).**

I commit to honoring the image of God in all people by treating them with respect and abstaining from dehumanizing caricatures.

4. **Biblical wisdom (Psalm 119:2, 2 Tim 3:16).**

I commit to having my views challenged by the Biblical Story rather than using the Bible to proof text my predetermined positions.

5. **Fruitful speech (Gal 5:22-23; James 3).**

I commit to engaging in political discourse with speech that's marked by the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

6. **Humble learning –(James 1:19; 1 Cor 12:12-26).**

I commit to being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger as I seek to learn from the various perspectives within the body of Christ.

7. **Remove the log (Matthew 7:1-15).**

I commit to giving more attention to critiquing the potential flaws in my own political leanings, conduct, and sin than I give to scrutinizing others.

8. **Biblical justice (Is 1:17; Micah 6:8, Matthew 23:23).**

I commit to face to understanding and pursuing justice as I engage in civic life, not minimizing Scripture's repeated call to seek justice and allowing Scripture to critique popular conceptions of justice in our culture.

9. **Peacemaking (Matthew 18:15-17; Romans 12:17-21).**

I commit to face to face conflict resolution rather than arguments on social media.

10. **Loving enemies (Matthew 5:43-44; 1 Timothy 2:1-4).**

I commit to loving and praying for my so called political "enemies", especially those whom I have the hardest time loving and praying for. This includes a commitment to pray for our government leaders regardless of who wins the election.

Discuss:

1. What resonated with you from this week's sermon? What challenged you?
2. What makes it difficult for you to hear, know, and follow the voice of the Good Shepherd in this season?
3. Read John 10:14-16 and 27. Spend some time communally praying and thanking God for the ways he loves us as a shepherd (ie. What do shepherds do for their sheep?)
4. Which of the ten commitments comes most naturally to you personally? Which are hardest for you personally?
5. Describe a healthy encounter you have had with someone with whom you differed in this season.
6. **Missional Living:** If we aspired to live according to these biblical commitments, what would our lives communicate to a watching world?

Apply:

It is safe to say that all of us have already failed at one or all of these commitments. These are aspirational statements worth reaching towards from the strength of grace given us in Christ Jesus. We will not be able to attain these commitments by our own resolve or grit. In fact, any attempt to live this way for the coming months (and hopefully beyond election season) will necessarily force us to our knees in prayerful dependence.

Every time you stumble in your heart or even fail at one of these commitments, practice the three-step dance of the gospel. Repent, Believe, Obey. Remember Christ, the only One who has perfectly embodied and accomplished these

commitments. Let even faltering lead you to worship. And offer each other the grace of Christ in this tenuous season!