

Series: God & The Election #1826

Title: 2 Timothy 2, 4; 2 Peter 1

The Pastoral Practice of Reminding

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. It's especially good to have you today as we begin a short series. I want to speak to you from my heart about something, pastoral in nature, that the Spirit of God has been teaching me and impressing upon me to pass along to you. I can put the subject in the form of a question: as Christ's people, how are we to live in America during the time of the election? Surely you know we are about to have one? If you are not aware of this, I say good for you! As for the rest of us, we're likely sick of hearing about it. Or, we are so passionate about it, it's all we think and talk about.

Hear me on this: I will *not* be talking about specific candidates for any office. I will *not* be telling you who to vote for or who not to vote for. I will *not* be telling you to vote or not to vote. Be prayerful about this, and vote for whomever you would like. This will also *not* be about party, policies, and specific politicians. What this *will* be is a discussion on the ways in which we believers live, how we act, what is the tenor and tone and content of our language and message in a season when it seems everyone is talking about the election. To answer our question we will open our Bibles and learn, primarily, from Christ's teaching in the Gospels.

For international friends, hearing this as a podcast, while this upcoming, short series will directly impact the U.S. election, I hope you will still listen, because the principles and the practices also apply to you where you live. Believe me, they will. In fact, in conversation with my many friends who live outside America, learning how to live like Jesus in highly politicized environments is also an issue they struggle with. We are all human and humans everywhere need the teaching of Scripture in this very practical way. So, please continue to download and listen to the God Is Podcast.

For those of you who listen and you self-admit to not being a Christian, of course, and as always you are more than welcome here. My hope for you is that by listening in the days that follow you will find how God commands us to live and our struggle to live as He has commanded us, because we are fallen sinful people. And yet, by God's grace, we are committed to being who He says to be and we are trying to be Christ-like. This teaching will help us to live as He wants us to live so that we can love you more.

What I am saying is that wherever you are and by however you listen, welcome, welcome, welcome. As I said at the beginning what follows is coming from my heart as a pastoral message. So I thought it would be good to start with what I mean by "pastoral." Friends, I hope I am not your primary pastor. My prayer is that each one of us belongs to a local congregation of God's people that meet together as the church. And your church has a pastor. Do belong to a solid, Bible believing and Bible living church wherever you live. If you would like some wisdom to know how to discern and find such a church, email or write to me and ask. It is biblical that we be active members of such a congregation. Christian radio and podcasting cannot replace the local church and pastor.

Having said that, I am a pastor and I do possess a pastor's heart. I try to express that on this radio station and podcast, and so in a way you can certainly consider me to be one of your pastors! Also, some of you are not able to get out of your residence to a church, and so this can serve as a good way for you to hear the Word of God proclaimed in a doctrinally sound manner. Now, without going into detail on the duties of a pastor, one of them is surely this. As the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4, verses 1 and 2, "**I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.**" (2 Timothy chapter 4, verses 1 and 2.)

My responsibility before *God*, in the presence of *Jesus Christ*, is to "preach the word." I am instructed to first, be ready in all seasons, like this season we are in. I am instructed to second, reprove and rebuke. These Greek words, in part, mean to correct a believer's behavior *and motives* by carefully using the Scripture to help people understand the error of his and her actions. And third, I am instructed to exhort.

This is to call you, to encourage you, to summon, to invite, direct, and to beseech and entreat you to live according to the model and message of Jesus Christ.

And part of what any pastor who is obedient to God will do is to preach the word in these ways *by* reminding you of what you already know. In fact, in this same epistle of 2 Timothy, over in chapter 2 and verse 14 Paul says this to Pastor Timothy, **“Remind them of these things...”** There is that word “remind.” Timothy is to remind the Christians about the teaching of the Word of God. That means they already know what he is going to teach, but they require a reminder. Why? Because by their behavior they are showing evidence of having forgotten what the Scripture says. And I am afraid that today, as we approach this presidential election, many Christians have forgotten what the Bible says about our behavior and so we all need the forthcoming reminder.

Thus far I have quoted from the Apostle Paul and now let’s hear from another Apostle, this time Peter. Over in his second epistle, Peter writes the Christians reading his letter the following. 2 Peter chapter 1, verses 12-15, **“Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. ¹³ I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, ¹⁴ knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. ¹⁵ And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.”** (2 Peter 1, verses 12-15.)

Peter is nearing the time of his own death, and he writes to remind the early Christians of the truth, which is the content of his *awesome* letter. Do read it. He says he is reminding of these things, notice, “even though you already know them.” He wants to stir them up “by way of reminder.” So much of pastoring is reminding. It should not be that we go to hear the preacher preach and the teacher teach with the expectation that we are going to hear something brand new, never-before-heard content. Pastors are not saying something that is never-known-in-the-history-of-the-world until now. What pastors present is not new. It is old. It is the old, old story of Jesus and His Word. In fact, be very cautious when you hear a spiritual leader claim to have some new insight. Put up the red flag on such a person! And test carefully what they say by the Bible.

What I will be passing along to you is what you have already heard God say *if, assuming* you read God’s Word, hear God’s Word proclaimed, and you obey God’s Word. Now if you are a brand new Christian or not yet a Christian, then yes, this may strike you as new. But even then my guess is you are at least aware of how Christians are expected to act amidst heated, passionate, and often argumentative interactions around who should be the next president and vice-president of this nation.

As we proceed, keep Peter’s words in mind, especially when you feel like responding with, “I already know this.” If the Spirit of God has led you here then He wants you to hear this again, because you need to both hear *and* put into action what you hear. That is, it is not enough to hear the Word. We also need to apply the Word to our lives. The Bible must change how we live. That’s why the Bible is *practical*. It is pragmatic. It tells us how to live in the nitty gritty of everyday life.

I said at the very beginning that what I am going to talk about is something the Spirit of God has been teaching me and impressing upon me to pass along to you. Notice that what will be said was first a lesson for *me*. I am preaching to myself *first*. *I also need this teaching!* I really do! I need to be *reminded*. And I will share more about this along the way.

So this is what is meant by “pastoral in nature.” And so much of being pastoral is giving reminders. Will we be open minded and open hearted to hear what the Spirit of God will say to us in the coming days? I hope so. And I ask that you pray about this along with me. Ask Jesus to make you more like Himself. Ask Jesus to make *me* more like Himself. And ask the Holy Spirit to give me wisdom and discernment to teach the Word in this season and always according to how He wants it taught.

As Christ’s people, how are we to live in America during the time of the election? When you come back next time I want to begin by laying down foundational, biblical convictions as an answer. Then we will move around in the Bible to find specific instructions about our behavior. And, principally, that instruction will come from Jesus Christ. I hope I have wet your appetite. We will do this yearning to know more about who God Is and how to live for Him. ---END---