

SERMON - THE 23RD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY - 26 OCTOBER 2008
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

Philip. 3:20 (ESV)

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

I think it is somewhat interesting that we hear this passage from Paul and this passage from today's Gospel, ***Matthew 22:20-21 (KJV)*** *And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? ²¹They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.* right before our national election.

I was having a conversation with someone last week after the Eucharist and we were talking about the upcoming election and their concerns about the outcome and I remarked that this is all in the hand of God. God will decide who shall run this country for the next four years.

Listen to these words from the Book of Ecclesiasticus Chapter 10, Verse [4] *The government of the earth is in the hands of the Lord, and over it he will raise up the right man for the time.*

I don't believe in coincidences.

Everything that comes our way has a purpose, one way or another.

What we have to remember also is that no matter which party wins, we are to continue to have our true citizenship in heaven. We have to remember that we, as Christians, live in our own monarchy, with our own Lord and King, Jesus Christ.

Jesus tells us to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and to render unto God that which is God's. That tells me that we have a responsibility to be both good citizens and

good Christians.

That sounds like kind of a dual citizenship, doesn't it. But remember that Jesus warns us that we cannot serve God and Mammon, that we cannot serve both God and the world.

Being a good citizen does not, however, mean that we have to serve the world or to serve Mammon. If we look at the issues that affect us as Christians and the future of our nation rather than viewing the candidates like they are contestants on American Idol or The Biggest Loser, we are being good citizens.

From the beginning, Christians have been exhorted to be good citizens.

Paul wrote in *Romans 13:5-7 (ESV)* *Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.*

And again in *1 Tim. 2:1-2 (ESV)* *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.*

Saint Peter tells us in *1 Peter 2:13-17 (ESV)* *Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. ¹⁷Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.*

Today, we need to recall those words from the past. We need to bear in mind that all we do, including our support for a particular candidate, our vote for a particular candidate or party, should reflect our Christian beliefs.

We have turned away from God. We have arrogantly made greed our God and that is the reason the world's economy is what it is. Again listen to the words of the Book of Ecclesiasticus Chapter 10, Verse 8 *Sovereignty passes from nation to nation on account of injustice and insolence and wealth.*

Today, our nation is in trouble, our economy is in the tank, Today, many of us are concerned about rising costs and diminishing retirement funds. We may be afraid for our employment, that we may be downsized, that's the newspeak term for sacked, due to the downturn in business.

These are real concerns, real concerns to all of us.

And these are the concerns that we should keep in mind when we deciding which candidate or which party to support.

When we are rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's we should do that rendering in the light of how our rendering unto God is reflected.

And always bear in mind *our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

Amen.

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