



The Righteous Vote: More Precious than the Right to Vote

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.”
1 Peter 2:9

When I approached the voting place to turn in my absentee ballot during a recent primary election, I suddenly fell into a long line of cars. The street was so overrun with people and vehicles that I had to park far down the block and walk a distance much greater than usual. *People must be really excited about this election*, I thought, attributing the crowded conditions to voter interest. Little did I realize that I had inadvertently picked 3PM to drop off my ballot at a polling place that was an elementary school, right at the time school let out.

In reality that particular California primary came and went with barely a whimper. The voter turnout was an all time low, just over 22%. I can kind of see why; the issues just didn't seem very exciting. Was I supposed to vote “Yes” on 98 and “No” on 99? Or was it the other way around? Anyway, I voted without regret, but next time I'll choose a different time than 3PM at a school.

Hopefully most of us value our freedom to vote, though we may not like some election results. We might see slippery politicians elected who, in the interest of securing their political future, tickle voters' ears with promises that are swept away and forgotten like the celebratory confetti falling to the floor after the victory speech. Or we might see starstruck masses won over by style rather than substance.

What a contrast these elections are to God's perfect election! And it's sobering to consider that we are God's elect. He chose us, not because of our performance or works, but because of His perfect work on our behalf. In other words, Almighty God voted “Yes” to our eternal future with Him as new creations washed clean with the Blood of Christ.

His vote is irrevocable. And unlike politicians who must be re-elected into office, we're elected once and for all. Christ declared, “It is finished,” and having believed in Him, we're justified, i.e., declared righteous (Romans 5:1) and sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). So our election can't be recalled--ever. Moreover, we now are free from the power of sin (Romans 6) and have access to the Holy Spirit's power (Ephesians 3:16). Turning from a past dead life, we've been born anew to walk by faith and live for His glory. Everyone seems to want change lately, what bigger changes could possibly happen than those resulting from spiritual regeneration?

Though reborn from above, for a time we must live below in a world fraught with evil. This causes anguish to the righteous soul (2 Peter 2:8). Still, if sin and evil weren't so rampant and justice was swift, no human political system could ever bring true happiness. It may offer earthly privileges, comforts, or monetary advantages, but never happiness. In fact, prosperity can deceive us into forgetting how much we need God. The Scottish hymn writer, Horatius Bonar noted, “In the day of prosperity we have many refuges to revert to; in the day of adversity only one.” Therefore, the wise heart fixes itself upon God through thick and thin, resting securely in the refuge of His everlasting arms underneath (Deuteronomy 33:27).

God controls history and can always turn the tide of human events, regardless of election results. Even if disappointed, we're promised that God works all things together for good for those called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). Furthermore, the peace of God surpasses all understanding, even amidst foolish political choices and hardness of man's heart. And present conditions may seem bad, but God is longsuffering (2 Peter 3:9). After all, we haven't reaped the judgment of destruction that befell Jerusalem in 586 BC as a result of their spiritual disobedience (Jeremiah 15:7). But we, like Jeremiah, can affirm, “Great is thy faithfulness (Lamentations 3:23),” remembering that it wasn't in national prosperity that he worshipped in this manner, but with a broken heart as he watched his people taken away captive to Babylon.

Human governments are flawed, but they're also temporary. God's perfect millennial Kingdom will ultimately replace all earthly political systems, including the United States government. In the glorious age to come, Jesus will rule a world where there'll be no more injustices, corruption or empty promises. The heirs of salvation will live to partake in this perfect reign, though for a time on earth we wait and groan. Still, our regenerated spirit clings to the hope to be absent from the body and face to face with Him. Only then, and never now, will our happiness be complete.

While sojourners in a fallen world where nations rise and fall, we should nonetheless take care to vote wisely in political elections. After all, the right to vote is a precious freedom. But more importantly, we should elect to lay hold of the eternal promises of God, which, unlike any human government, are righteous and everlasting.

By Mary Nixon