



THE PASTOR'S PEN

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The Almost Chosen People

In addressing the Illinois Senate, Abraham Lincoln used two phrases that came to be almost a hallmark for the kind of administration, the kind of memory that he would give to the nation. He said that America was the “almost chosen people-the last, best hope for earth.”

I must confess that deep down in this Pastor's heart there is special affection when I see the waving of Old Glory. I love it, not because of some kind of civil religion in America, but I love it because **we are** God's almost chosen people. We are not the old Israel. We may not be the new Israel. But there is a distinctive message that we have taken to the world that the world needs to hear. Simply, the liberty to worship and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ is a liberty that is rarely found across the face of this earth, and has been found rarely in the history of humanity. Under God, we have been given the privilege and the responsibility and the right and the joy to freely, without coercion, worship our God and proclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a sacred heritage that is.

And yet, now what must we do, especially with perhaps the most polarizing presidential election in our nation's history only a few short weeks away? Here we are in a free society, living in almost two kingdoms: secular and heavenly. How do we do this? I'll guarantee you that a good and sensitive and mature Christian will be a mature citizen. As such, I ask you to consider two things. First of all, as believers in Jesus Christ, I ask you to be a better citizen. Indeed, a Christian needs to be as good a citizen as he or she can be. I believe good and faithful Christians can run for public office. Likewise, regardless of political party or affiliation, the good and faithful Christian should be involved in the political process, voting for whomever he or she feels led to.

The second thing, is that you need to understand that because you are a citizen of two worlds, you live in one and exercise citizenship in the other. In short, you're a good Christian, a good citizen and you will participate in the governmental process, and above all, you will faithfully share in the life of your community of

faith, witnessing, worshiping, studying the Bible, serving, giving all these things together-because you have a dual responsibility.

Indeed, we are citizens of two lands. When we talk about liberty and freedom as American Christians it should and does have a special meaning for us. Simply, regardless of the outcome of the upcoming election, we thank God for the privilege and will continue to exercise the privilege of sharing the gospel as free men and women, freed under the living spirit of Jesus Christ and a free nation.

May the liberating peace and blessing of our gracious God continue to guide us.

Pastor Mark