

Theological Musings from Dave's Laptop

November 3, 2020

Well, here we are. The first polls close in an hour, and we'll begin the process that lies before us, whatever it may be.

As we await the election results, there is at least one thing on which I think every American is united: We all agree that the outcome of this election is absolutely critical for the future of our nation, and indeed, of the world; but we disagree quite strongly about which direction leads to Hope.



As the nation goes about the business of electing a President, I'm in the process of cleaning out files, shipping books to the Kumasi Baptist Seminary in Ghana, and various other things that have to be done in a transition between pastors. In that process, I came across an article in *Christianity Today* from two years ago as we approached the mid-term elections.¹

In that article, James Eglinton noted the many things that divide us. We're polarized between "progressives" and "populists," between "millennials" and "boomers," between "religious folk" and "secular folk," between "conservatives" and "liberals," and the list goes on and on.

Somewhere along the way, we lost the ability to build consensus and compromise in the service of the common good, and we transitioned to a "winner-takes-all" approach that treats everything like a zero-sum game of winning and losing. Dr. Eglinton's main point for followers of Jesus is that we seem to have forgotten that **our Lord commands us to love our neighbors . . . and our enemies.**²

My friends, Jesus challenges—indeed, He commands—us not to treat one another as "winners" and "losers," but as "neighbors." Neighborliness, Dr. Eglinton notes, "is an event. It happens when one person treats another humanely, regardless of their differences. Neighborliness does not flatten out those differences or assume that differing parties must find some kind of consensus as a precondition to kindness, civility, and seeking to do good for one another."



Neighbors do not abuse their power when they are in the majority. They do not then ignore or disparage their dissenting neighbors' concerns. Whatever happens tonight or in the days ahead, let's resolve to "love our neighbors as ourselves."

Dave

¹ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/september/who-is-my-digital-neighbor-cambridge-analytica-polarization.html> The article is by James Eglinton, who lectures at the University of Edinburgh.

² Matthew 5:43-48; Mark 12:30-31

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