

WEEK 6 - What Now?

Government

Spring Emphasis 25 // Canopy Guide

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

These questions are great for breaking the ice and getting your group talking. Pick a question or two that fits your group for an all play conversation.

- If you were going to run for office, what would your slogan or platform be? (Serious or humorous answers are welcome.)
- What emotions do you bring to the table as you realize that our conversation is focused on government this week?
 - If your group is having this conversation during Holy Week, how does this impact your emotions leading into this conversation?

WEEK 6 VIDEO INTRO: [CLICK HERE](#)

DISCUSSION AND SCRIPTURE

The question of citizenship is central to how the NT authors talk about government and what it means to be a follower of Christ. We live on earth in a community under a complex system of government and powers, but we also live with allegiance to God. There is tension between these two realities, but Scripture is clear that every Christian is first a citizen of the Lord's kingdom, no matter the government under which they live. Take a look at these verses on citizenship:

Philippians 3:20-21 "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."

Matthew 6:33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these

things will be added to you.”

Colossians 1:13-14 “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Ephesians 2:19 “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,”

- Which of these verses stands out to you for what it means about our citizenship in heaven?
- What might it mean for our citizenship under the government if our “citizenship is in heaven?”

At Grandview we often pray the Lord’s Prayer together with the words Jesus gives to his disciples as a guide for prayer. It includes the phrase, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). This prayer emphasizes not only that we are citizens of another kingdom, but that God is bringing the kingdom of heaven to earth. When we pray this prayer, we invite this kingdom marked by self-giving love to break through into the world and into our own lives. As Kingdom-bearers, our action is not motivated by a commitment to any kind of political ideology (be it left, right, or even centrist). Instead, people committed to the work of the Kingdom are committed to acting for the sake of love, restored relationships, and service.

Rather than avoid politics or any questions of government, Christians can engage the world differently. Living as citizens of God’s kingdom means we work in our communities of faith to find creative and practical ways to confront society while loving our neighbors. We are loving servants of all people—we pray for the government and those we disagree with, but we are also the prophets who speak and act when power is wielded against those Jesus calls us to care for.

It’s worth recognizing that this is a tough task, and lots of Christians disagree about what that looks like. Remember, we all want to see God’s kingdom come to earth, and it’s ok that we have different ideas of what that looks like. So as you share together, share trusting that we are all on the same journey together, united as one body—strengthened by our different perspectives and concerns that God has placed on our hearts.

- Think about your relationship to the government and political action (voting, military service, activism). What questions or thoughts come to mind as you think

about acting as citizens of a different kingdom?

- What's an issue or space where you long for God to bring healing--where you want to pray, "let your Kingdom come"? In whatever you drew to mind, what would it look like to pray and act as someone bearing the good news of Christ?

RESOURCES

These resources are great for leader prep and for group member follow up if you're interested in learning more on the topic today.

[Political Engagement in the Restoration Movement: Historical Perspective](#), Richard Cherok

This article from the Christian Standard was written by their managing editor in September 2024. It's a great summary of the different political ideologies held by leaders in the Christian Church movement.

["Letter From a Birmingham Jail"](#) - Martin Luther King Jr.

You may have read this before, but it is worth revisiting to sit with how King describes his motivations for nonviolent action and how his commitment to the gospel led him to violate the law and lead others to do the same.

[Resident Aliens](#) - Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon

This book from 1989 explores how Christians are called to live as "aliens and exiles" in the world (1 Peter 2:11). What does it mean to be the church and live the gospel in relation to politics?